

Ambition In His Body

Text : **James 3: 13-18 ; Philippians 2: 1-8**

- A. Few people in this world grasp the significance of Christianity's impact.** S#1.
S#2.
1. Jesus said that one must become completely different in order to a His disciple.
 - a. **John 3: 3** – Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
 - b. When one is conceived he is given the blueprint for his physical characteristics.
 - c. Being "**born again**" means that one receives a different blueprint of characteristics.
 2. God through His Apostle reaffirmed the need for a total makeover. S#3.
 - a. **Rom. 12: 1-2** – Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - b. "**be transformed**" { *metamorphoo* } **1** to change into another form, to transfigure.
 - c. Christians undergo the same process as a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. S#4.
 3. It's the word used to express the change Jesus made on the Mt. of Transfiguration. S#5.

Matt. 17: 1-2 – Six days later Jesus took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up on a high mountain by themselves. **2** And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light.
 3. This transformation occurs from the inside out. "**renewing of your mind**"
- B. This transformation, new "birth", "renewal" of mind is a conscious decision.** S#6.
1. The body does not change just because the mind has changed.
 - a. Addictions do not suddenly disappear. ... *tobacco, drugs, gambling, food*, etc.
 - b. James warns Christians that we are continually being tempted by the body.

James 1: 13-15 – Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death
 2. We have to make a conscience decision not to fulfill the desires of our flesh.
 - a. **Eph. 2: 3** – Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. S#8.
 - b. Everyone has the desires, but Christians DO NOT INDULGE them.

3. The Christians makes a mental decision to change, to turn away from the old self.

a. **Eph. 4: 22-24** –That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside **S#9.**
the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts
of deceit, ²³ and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, ²⁴
and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been
created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

b. Notice the similarity between the command to the Romans and to the Ephesians.

1) Romans ... **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.**

2) Ephesians ... **you be renewed in the spirit of your mind,**

c. The new mind is empirically commanded to perform an action; put on the new self

C. When the new self has been successfully put on, it make one different. S#10.

1. He is different from what he was before, not just reformed. (**Luke 11:26 seven other**)

2. He is different from those who have not been “**born again.**”

Rom. 12: 2 – And do not be conformed to this world

D. Being different from others causes them to think the Christian strange.

1. **I Cor. 1: 18** – For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are **S#11.**
perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

2. **I Cor. 2: 14** – But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God,
for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them,
because they are spiritually appraised.

One of the things that the people of the world cannot understand is S#12.
the scripture’s condemnation of personal ambition. (*different worldview*)

I. The culture of this world places a positive value on personal ambition. S#13.
S#14.

A. The world encourages parents to teach their children to have big ambitions.

1. Encourage them to dream big. ... Someone has to be president; why not you?
2. Challenge them to try new things and to do increasingly difficult things.
3. Expose them to a variety of possibilities.
4. Celebrate their successes and encourage them when they fail.

B. Ambition has to do with achieving one’s definition of success.

1. “Ambition” is defined as :

- a. an ardent desire for rank, fame, or power
- b. desire to achieve a particular end

2. Ambition is the promotion of self and personal desires, often above others.

C. This material world defines success in material terms ... things acquired.

1. He who has the most wins.
2. They believe happiness is found in things. (*toys, trips, houses*)
3. The world links security to one's bank account or 401K or liquid assets.

D. The bible sets forth several examples of people with personal ambitions. S#15.

1. The book of **Esther**. (Esther the Jew replaced Vashti as Queen)
 - a. A rich man named Haman who was an Agagite (Amalekite) was promoted.
 - b. He wanted respect and homage by all, but was not given it by Mordecai the Jew.
 - c. There was hatred (prejudice) between the Amalekite and the Jews. **I Sam. 15:8f**
 - d. Haman plotted to kill Mordecai and all Jews, but was hanged on his own gallows.
2. **Matt. 20: 20-27** ... The mother of James and John.
 - a. **Matt. 20: 20-21** – Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Jesus **S#16.**
with her sons, bowing down and making a request of Him. **21** And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left."
 - b. No one may be great in the kingdom by seeking to benefit himself.
Matt. 20: 26-27 – It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to **S#17.**
become great among you shall be your servant, **27** and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave;
3. Even preachers in the early church struggled with selfish ambition.
 - a. **Phil. 2: 20-21** – For I have no one else of kindred spirit who will genuinely **S#18.**
be concerned for your welfare. **21** For they all seek after their own interests, not those of Christ Jesus.
 - b. Even today worker for the Lord struggle with placing a priority on themselves. **S#19.**

II. It isn't wrong to have ambition, only wrong to have personal/selfish ambition.

A. We are commanded to have an ambition for our life in Christ. S#20.

1. We must make it our ambition to lead quiet lives.
 - a. **I Thes. 4: 11** – But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, **11** and to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands, just as we commanded you,

- b. **I Tim. 2: 1-2** – First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, ² for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. S#21.

2. We are to aspire to please God with our lives.

II Cor. 5: 9 – Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

B. Christians should be ambitious to serve God more and more effectively. S#22.

1. We must seek to service the brethren any way we can.

a. **I Tim. 3: 1** – It is a trustworthy statement: if any man aspires to the office of overseer, it is a fine work he desires to do.

b. It takes preparation and spiritual maturity to be an elder.

2. It should be our ambition to be increasingly more godly to His glory.

II Thes. 1: 11-12 – To this end also we pray for you always, that our God will count you worthy of your calling, and fulfill every desire for goodness and the work of faith with power, ¹² so that the name of our Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. S#23.

3. Our ambition to live godly will bring about negative responses from the world.

II Tim. 3: 12 – Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

S#24.

III. A significant aspect of the transformation is learning to think outside of self.

A. The transformed Christian seeks the welfare of others above his own. S#25.

1. **I Cor. 10: 23-24** – All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but that of his neighbor.

2. **Rom. 15: 1-3** – Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. ² Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. ³ For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "*The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.*" S#26.

3. **Phil 2: 3-4** – Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. S#27.

* This doesn't forbid doing good for one's self, it just prioritizes others. S#28.
It's the opposite of being ambitious to advance one's own interests.

B. The foundation of worshipping God and of all Christianity is love. S#29.

1. **Mark 12: 29-31** – Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord S#30.
our God is one Lord; 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all
your strength.' 31 "The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as
yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."
2. **John 13: 34-35** – A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, S#32.
even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By
this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love
for one another.

C. No matter how loving we may be, we must continually seek to love still more.

1. **I Thes. 3: 12-13** – and may the Lord cause you to increase and abound in love S#33.
for one another, and for all people, just as we also do for you; 13 so
that He may establish your hearts without blame in holiness before
our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints.
2. **I Thes. 4: 9-10** – Now as to the love of the brethren, you have no need for S#34.
anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one
another; 10 for indeed you do practice it toward all the brethren who are in
all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, to excel still more, 11 and to make
it your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and
work with your hands, just as we commanded you, 12 so that you will
behave properly toward outsiders and not be in any need.

D. Love is the mortar that binds Christians to each other and to God. S#35.

1. The Spirit though Peter gave a similar admonition to that He gave through Paul.
I Pet. 4: 8 – Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another,
because love covers a multitude of sins.
 2. We are all imperfect people so we can all be irritating to others at times.
 3. Love binds us together because each one is seeking the best for the other.
- * **In order to develop this love which binds the body of Christ together S#36.**
each of us must forgo personal ambitions in favor of advancing others.

Phil. 2: 5 – Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, S#37.

INVITATION :

S#38. ... Communion slide

Lesson Text :**James 3: 13-18**

13 Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. **14** But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. **15** This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. **16** For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. **17** But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, unwavering, without hypocrisy. **18** And the seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Philippians 2: 1-8

1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, **2** make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. **3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. **5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, **6** who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. **8** Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.