

# Vital Signs III

## Created to Become

March 30, 2025



**Today we're gauging our growth.** Cuz after exploring *what we believe* and *where we belong*, it's time for part *three* of our *five-part spiritual physical*; **who are you becoming?** Cuz as we talked about these last two weeks, we better *prepare* an answer for our *actions* once we're *aware* that:

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ ... for the things done *while in the body*, whether good or bad. – 2 Corinthians 5:10 NIV

And as we discussed, the *things* done in *this body* that *Christ* is concerned with – center on how we handled *believing*, *belonging*, *becoming*, *branching*, and *bestowing*. Because each area represents *our response* to the God-given *purposes* behind every God-given *life*. Which means **how we live is how we answer what God asks.** Cuz He brilliantly *designed* life in such a way that *whatever we do* produces exactly what *He* wants to *know*!



And just like *what we believe* and *where we belong*, **God must want to know who we're becoming because giving an answer is unavoidable!** It was *baked into* our creation when God made *change inevitable*! No matter how *hard* we *wish*, we simply *can't* stay the *same* – every single one of *us* is under construction *all the time*. We're *all* constantly *transforming* without even *trying*! And *that's* because human life is *defined* by ever-changing *bodies*, erratic *environments*, and unpredictable *events* – all of which make *stability* impossible and *change* inevitable. *However*, even though the *choice* to change may be *out of our hands*, the *trajectory* of our transformation is *under our control*. **Growth isn't up to us – but our aim is.** And because *we* get to choose *who we become*, **the life we live reveals what identity is our destiny.**

So, God's design prompts us to ask the million dollar question: **who are we supposed to be?** What's the *right answer* to God's *unavoidable question* and how do we *live* it to *give* it? Well, we're gonna have to go all the way back to the beginning to get our *bearings*. Because God had a plan for *who we'd be* from the moment *we came to be*:

Let Us make mankind in Our image, in Our likeness – Genesis 1:26 NIV

But *hold your horses* right there – once *we* hear *we* were made in the image of *God*, we *Christians* have a way of thinking we're hot snot and *tune out* the rest. Yes, we *were* made to share His image *and* likeness, but *that's* just the beginning of a *long* story we're *still* living out! And to see the *whole* picture, it might help to understand the *difference* between *image* and *likeness*.

**Image is a substance of resemblance; it's a representation but likeness is a correlation of character; it's a reproduction.** So our *image* is what *God gave us* and our *likeness* is what *we become*!



I know it's *tricky*, so imagine it *this* way: Picture a young apprentice walking into a master craftsman's *workshop*. The master hands him a *uniform* and says, **"You're hired. From now on, you work for me and whatever you do, you represent my name and my company."** Now, the *uniform* doesn't make the apprentice *skilled*—but it *does* give him *identity* and *purpose*. And everyone who sees him automatically *knows* where he *came from*; **that's like being made in God's image** – we are stamped with *His identity* and called to *represent Him* in the world.



But, the apprentice *isn't* meant to just *wear* the uniform and *do nothing*. He's been hired to become *like* his boss; he's expected to *learn* by *watching* the master's hands, listening to his *wisdom*, copying his *technique*, and absorbing his *values*. And because of *that*, as *time passes*, the *apprentice's* heart and hands naturally begin to *look like* his teacher's. **That's likeness.** And similarly, *we* weren't *just* created to *represent* God in *image* – *we're* meant to *become like Him* in character. And back at the beginning, *we did*. But when we decided to *contradict* God and do what He *never would*, **our sin made us unlike Him and tainted our image.**

So, we may still *bear* God's *image*, but until we *act like* Him, it can be hard to *see*. Cuz **what we're like can't unmake our image – but it can affect its appearance.** And *that's* something we all *inherently* understand, cuz we know what it means when someone says, "You're not acting like *yourself*." It's the same way my *wife* is *always* my *wife*; but *sometimes* she doesn't *eat* – and she *don't act* like my *wife*! And it's hard to tell *who* she *is* cuz her *image* may not *change*, but her character *becomes* more *bloodthirsty dictator*! **"Don't tell me to calm down or I'll burn your house to the ground!"** And when it gets *real bad*, I even hear a hint of a *German* accent in there.



And if you *don't know* what I mean, just think of how cute *babies* are – and then *remember*, the very *same* sweet face *is* still there *somewhere*, even when it gets *buried* behind the *blinding* rage of a temper tantrum.



Well, I think *that's* a great picture of what *we* look like when we *don't act like* our Creator – cuz *we* were all *created* adorable and *easy-to-love* but **sin can make us look like unlovable monsters!** Because *sin* just means "*missing the mark*" – and "*hitting the mark*" just means *acting like* the true you; cuz **to be who we were created to be, we have to live like we were created to live.** We have to *become like* the *image* we bear. That is, to *represent* the uniform well, we need to *reproduce* the company's *character* when we're out and about. And *that* takes constant *reminders* of exactly who it *is* that we *represent*. Which *in turn*, takes a close relationship with *Jesus*, because:



No one has ever *seen* God, but the one and only Son, who *is Himself* God ... has made Him known. [And how? Well,] – John 1:18 NIV

The Son *is* the *image* of the invisible God – Colossians 1:15-18 NIV

And that's why we're called Christians. We fix our eyes on Jesus as the *character* we want to *copy* because **Jesus lived in the likeness of the image we're all meant to represent**. He hit the mark and therefore *became* who we were *created* to be! So now,



We all, who with unveiled faces *contemplate the Lord's glory* [as Christians are called to do], *are being transformed into His image* – 2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV



Y'see, in the *beginning* we were created in God's image and likeness but since *sin* meant *losing* our *likeness*, we need Jesus to show the *way* back to the *true life* that *mirrors* the image of God. Cuz like He said:



I am the *way* and the *truth* and the *life*. No one comes to the Father except through Me. *If you really know Me, you will know My Father as well*. [and therefore, know the *image* you're created to *represent*], From now on, you *do* know Him and *have* seen Him. – John 14:6-7 NIV

And now, when we become *Christ-like*, our image becomes *visible* again!

Because Jesus didn't just *represent* who God was, His *reproduced* God's *character* in His life! And so do we when we reproduce *His*. And **when our created identity and current character agree, we feel harmony!** And *nothing* is more *satisfying* than living life the way it was *designed* to be lived.

Which brings us to the critical step: *taking action*. Cuz **the life of Jesus wasn't meant to merely clarify our character – it was meant to motivate our movement!** If we want to *share* in the satisfying *harmony* between our *character* and *identity*, we have to take *tangible* steps to *become like Jesus* – so that *like Him*, we can *actively live* with the perfect *power* and *purpose* that comes with God's intended *image*. Cuz **restoration takes transformation, not just information**. As Paul explains:

Christ Himself gave the *apostles*, the *prophets*, the *evangelists*, the *pastors* and *teachers*, to *equip* His people for *works of service*, so that the body of Christ may be built up until *we all reach unity* in the *faith* and in the *knowledge* of the Son of God and [therefore, achieve the *ultimate goal*; to] *become mature*, [which means] attaining to the *whole measure* of the *fullness of Christ*. Then we will no longer be *infants*, ... Instead, speaking the truth in love, *we will grow to become* in every respect the *mature body* of [Christ]. – Ephesians 4:11-15 NIV

Remember, change *ain't* up to *us* – we're *gonna* grow into *something different* – but **life was designed that way to give us the opportunity to reclaim our identity**. It's a setup to *dissect* our *decisions* and *acknowledge* our *image* by *choosing* the life that most faithfully *follows* our created *qualities*. And since *Jesus* lived *that* life – **faith isn't just believing in Jesus, it's becoming like Jesus**.

Because *believing* can't *create* change, it can only *inspire* it. **We have to actively aim what we're becoming by choosing our character daily**. You ever find yourself buying books you wish you'd read but never do? Or do you ever collect every healthy recipe on Pinterest but fail to cook any of them? Well just *imagine* the life you'd lead if you actually *took action*! You'd naturally *become like* the brilliant authors and chefs you wish you were! Well, likewise, imagine if you didn't just collect *Bible verses* – but 'cooked' *them* into your life! You'd *become* like the Son of God Himself!

Which means it *all* comes down to *this* question: **is your faith aimed at the *information* or the *transformation*?** Cuz *what we believe* may show, **“I trust what Jesus said,”** but *who we’re becoming* can show, **“I’m living like Jesus lived.”** And when we stand before His *throne*, presenting a collection of *information* seems *less likely* to get His *approval* than presenting a *life* of godly *transformation*.

[So, start the process! As Paul says:] Put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. [And] Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. – Ephesians 4:24-25 NIV

And since our whole body shares *one* identity it’s a *binary* proposition: **we’re either living like Christ or we’re not.** So we can gauge our growth *two ways*: by the character we’re *putting on* or the character we’re *putting off*. Because **becoming Christ-like means avoiding becoming sin-like.** And it takes *effort* to aim our *daily change* in the *right* direction and *away* from *false* identities.

[Like we’re warned from the beginning:] Watch yourselves very carefully, so that you do not become corrupt – Deuteronomy 4:15-16 NIV

And there’s no better way to *steer* the *trajectory* of our transformation than following the *“do’s”* and *“do-not’s”* that *God Himself gave* to *guide* our growth – so use *His Word* to check *your changes*:

[And] Do not become slaves of human beings. [But remember that] – 1 Corinthians 7:23 NIV

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. – Romans 6:18 NIV

**Everyday, ask yourself if you’re becoming more obedient to worldly worries or righteous routines?**

[And] Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other. – Galatians 5:26 NIV

[Because] If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become *“fools”* so that you may become wise. – 1 Corinthians 3:18 NIV

**Are you using your daily interactions to grow the humility that forms the foundation of wisdom?**

[If so] Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. [And until then,] – Galatians 6:9 NIV

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure – Philippians 2:14-16 NIV

**Have you kept your Christ-like character consistent from day to day so the change will stick?**

[I hope so! Cuz] We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. – Hebrews 6:10-12 NIV

[So] Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light. [Cuz that identity is the ultimate inheritance promised to all who pursue!] – John 12:36 NIV

**Do you see every part of your life as an opportunity to seize your identity by becoming who Christ would be if He were in your shoes? That’s the goal!** Because *we* and *He* were *always* meant to be the *children* God wants to *love* above all else. And since fulfilling *our purpose* satisfies *His desire*, **“What you are is God’s gift to you, what you become is your gift to God.”** – Hans Urs von Balthasar