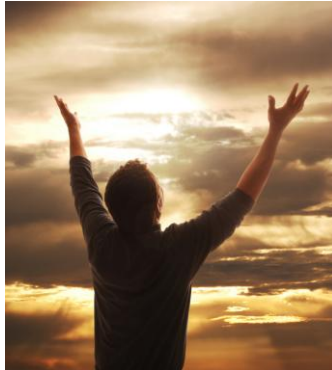


July 19
Reformation of the Heart, *Daily Disciple*, page 209



[Psalm 44:20-21](#)

[Acts 13:47-48](#)

Digging Deeper: Finding out, discussion and sharing

1. What does it mean for God to know the secrets of our heart?
2. Should this realization cause us to live differently? How?
3. To “forget the name of our God” and to “spread out our hands to a strange god” are phrases used by the Psalmist to express breaking covenant fellowship with God. What phrases do we use today to express the same thing?
4. What would God discover in each of us today that is on the verge of breaking fellowship with Him?
5. Barton W. Stone in our devotional meditation mentions three reasons that we need a greater reformation of the heart. Explain each one below and suggest practical ways we can demonstrate them in our lives.
6. The Scripture from Acts 13:47-48 is an interesting passage. How do you see it fitting into the topic of “Reformation of the Heart”?
7. Can you find a copy of Luther’s 95 theses? If you can find them online, which one or ones of those theses refer to reformation of the heart?
8. Alexander Campbell referred to his work and that of others working with him often as “the present Reformation.” Do you think it makes any difference whether we refer to our heritage as “The Restoration Movement” or “The Present Reformation?” In your mind, what difference in meaning does each convey?
9. What is there about the human heart that needs reforming? Read Galatians about the works of the flesh.
10. Why did Paul find it necessary to “be renewed day by day?”
11. One interesting passage where Paul mentions the process of reformation for him is [Galatians 2:20](#). Why would Paul use “crucifixion” to picture this process?
12. What was Saul on his way to Damascus to do?
13. The Lord got Saul’s attention on the road by blinding him with a bright light. When we think of transformation and conversion in terms of a process, we certainly see that in the case of Saul. Why does it take a “blinding light” experience for some people to open their eyes?
14. What evidence or examples can you provide that God still works in our world today and transforms human hearts?
15. Reformation of the heart may be the same thing as spiritual maturation. What connection do you see between reformation and maturation. How can we tell that we are being reformed and in the process of spiritual maturation?

16. Write down your own prayer of reformation for the heart. What do you believe is significant to mention in the prayer? Would such a prayer sound differently if prayed privately and prayed publicly? How?
17. How would Highland View Church of Christ be different if we all took reformation of the heart seriously? What things might change as a result?
18. Look up the Anabaptists and share what you found about them. In what sense did they believe reformation to be an ongoing work?
19. Explain how reformation is God's work in the human heart and what He specifically does according to [Acts 3:19 and 26](#).
20. Look up all of the verses you can on the idea of transformation. Start with [Romans 12:1-2](#) and discuss what it means. What other verses of Scripture can you find?

Reform. The idea of "reformation" is fundamentally that of changing from one thing to another. Think of how the word "reformation" is used to describe the religious movement started by Martin Luther. All through church history there have been individuals who, with a spirit of wisdom and discernment, could see so many things wrong with the current church. Their work and leadership would lead a reformation to return to personal holiness and a reverence for the word of God. Reformation of the heart was one of the hallmarks of the Reformation. The same thing was true originally with the Restoration Movement, of whom Barton W. Stone was considered one of the pioneer leaders.

The idea of reformation is central to the concept of salvation. The Anabaptists, a religious group that began in Europe in the 16th century, believed in the freedom of the individual to be engaged in the process of reformation. They believed in the separation of church and state. As such, they rejected the notion of baptizing babies, and held that only believing adults could choose to be baptized. They saw baptism as a part of the ongoing reformation of the heart, which in turn would reform the corrupt religious practices of their day.

Ongoing process When we think of reformation we need to think of a daily, ongoing process. The apostle Paul pointed out that he "died daily" to be a follower of Jesus and the cross. Additionally, according to [2 Corinthians 4:16-18](#), Paul says that inwardly we are being renewed day by day. This reformation of the heart is ongoing because we are constantly changing and growing more and more into the likeness of Jesus. For Paul, this reformation has two goals in mind: being a witness for Jesus and being found blameless when Jesus returns.

Paul as an example The reformation of Paul is a remarkable study in and of itself. In the narrative of the book of Acts, we watch Saul the persecutor move to being Paul the persecuted. His reformation of heart begins with the blinding light on the road to Damascus. Paul is humbled and broken; consequently, in his state of blindness (both physical and spiritual) he needs someone like Ananias to bring the Good News of God. Paul has to learn to submit his will to that of God. Paul uses the language of reformation many times in his letters with words such as "formed," "transformed," and "changed." Paul sees in his own life an example for others to see the transforming power of God involved in reforming his own heart. Probably the most fundamental reformation of heart for Paul was believing that his good works performed under Judaism needed to be replaced with a grateful heart responding to the grace of God.

God works Reformation of the heart is essentially a recognition that God continues to work in our world. God is the one who reforms the human heart. God knows the secrets of the human heart. In order for God to work, we have to submit our wills, our interests, our pride and our self in order for God to be working in us and on us. We often forget about Peter's second gospel sermon found in Acts 3 where he speaks to people on

Solomon's Colonnade where the crippled beggar was healed. In this message Peter speaks about God working and the process of reformation. "*Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways*" ([Acts 3:19, 26](#)). Notice what God does: wipes out sins, sends times of refreshing, blesses us and turns each of us from our wicked ways. Reformation is God working in the human heart to His ultimate glory.

One of my favorite verses having to do with the reformation of the human heart is [Romans 12:1-2](#). Paul indicates that Christians need no longer live or be conformed to the pattern of this world. Rather, they are to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. This renewal allows one to test and approve what God's will is.