

# Glimpsing the Glory of God: a study series for fellowship groups

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The Christian life is about building relationships, rather than about adopting roles, and this series of studies, concluding here, has been about coming to know God better and having a deeper relationship with him.

## (7) Glimpsing God's Glory which transforms



Have you ever stopped to take in the marvellous process of metamorphosis by which the caterpillar turns into a butterfly and the tadpole into a frog? The word metamorphosis means a change of outward appearance, but we all know that it is more than that which takes place. The creature takes on a new identity and follows an entirely different lifestyle.



**Q** 1 Do members of the group feel more like spiritual caterpillars or spiritual butterflies?

The powerfully descriptive word *metamorphosis* is a Greek one which is used to great effect in the original Greek of the New Testament – just four times. On the first two occasions, it occurs in passages which were looked at in the last study (part 6 – Glimpsing God's Glory shown to us in His Son – available on the website above). These (Mt 17:2; Mk 9:2) recorded that the appearance of Jesus was transfigured (*metamorphosed*) in the presence of three chosen disciples.

It was not, of course, just a question of change in outward appearance, nor should be the changes in us when we become Christians just be external ones. Everything should change (2 Cor 5:17)! Paul uses this powerful word as he urges us to allow our minds to be transformed (*metamorphosed*) by the work of the Holy Spirit (Rom 12:1-2).

**Q** 2 What has changed in our lives since we have become Christians? Is it at most, limited to external appearances, or is there a deeper process at work which has begun with renewal of the mind?

**Q** 3 Are there some landmarks which we could help define to measure how far we have come along the path so far?

*Read 2 Cor 3:1-18* This is an important, if difficult-to-understand passage which takes the idea a stage further. It is the last to use the idea of *metamorphosis*. There was a time when God's people saw the transformed appearance of Moses (Ex 34:29-35) after he had met with God (Remember, he, with Elijah, appeared alongside Jesus at the Transfiguration referred to above.) but this was a fading phenomenon. Now there is an ever-increasing change in the lives of Christians, brought about by the Holy Spirit, and which will come to completion only at the return of Jesus. Meanwhile it is in God's purposes that we should reflect to others something of the Lord's Glory and should ourselves be progressively transformed (*metamorphosed*) in his likeness (v.18).

**Q** 4 What aspects of the nature of Jesus could we possibly mirror to non-Christians?

**Q** 5 Do we genuinely have the ambition to be more like Jesus? Isn't that why we're called Christians? In what ways can we help this process?

**Q** 6 Those that had come to Christ in Corinth were better letters of recommendation to Paul's ministry than anything he could write – they were letter written not with ink but by the Spirit. Sadly, sometimes what we do doesn't measure up to what we say. How can we make the opposite true?