

Put up the Shuttering and let God fill it an analogy of how God transforms us.

Larry Christenson in his book *The Renewed Mind* uses the following analogy to describe the process of transformation. He describes it as being like putting up a concrete structure. Before the concrete can be poured in, wooden frames ('shuttering') are put up which form the shape that the cement will take and act to hold it in while it is setting. After the concrete has set, the wooden structure is taken away and the concrete remains.



This wooden framework he says, represents *our role*. We are to construct the outward form of Christ, the 'outer temporary framework' into which God will pour his enduring work of transformation (the 'concrete') by his Spirit. We construct this temporary structure by choosing to go God's way (e.g. choosing to 'put on' patience, love compassion etc. and choosing to follow the way of the spirit and not our sinful desires). But it does not end there, for if it did, when we did not keep it up it would all fall down again and we would have to start from scratch. No, into this temporary framework that we 'put on,' God pours his spirit to transform us from the inside in a permanent way. He transforms us and gives us a new heart and new desires (Ezekiel 36:26-7) aligning them with his.

Therefore being transformed to the likeness of Christ is about us co-operating and working together with the Holy Spirit. ***We are called to do the temporary outer work (imitation), for God to pour his grace in, and bring the inner and lasting work of transformation.***

Live it out...

Using Larry Christenson's analogy

- a) Identify a specific issue that you want to ask God to bring transformation in.
- b) Identify four things that *you* could intentionally do (this is the "wooden shuttering") e.g. pray blessing for my difficult neighbour, speak words of affirmation to my spouse, put on a worship CD when I am tempted to view internet material that is unhelpful etc. and seek to live them out.
- c) Pray each day for the specific 'grace' that you are desiring e.g. 'I pray for the grace to be patient with my neighbour and to love them as you love them.'