

Inward Renewal and Fainting Not

“For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Corinthians 4:16).

When a butterfly or a moth enters into the point of its life when it wraps itself into a cocoon, it is undergoing metamorphosis. During this stage, the butterfly doesn't eat or drink anything. Instead, it enters a form of hibernation that will last from a few days up to several months. We are told that some butterflies go into their cocoons and stay there throughout the entire winter, and then emerge as adults in the springtime.

A butterfly's cocoon is known as a chrysalis. This is a word that has been derived from the Greek word for gold. Some cocoons of butterflies are suspended from a silk pad that has abdominal hooks. Other butterflies have a silk girdle that supports their mid-section. Normally, one day before the adult butterfly emerges, the cocoon becomes transparent. An example of this is the Monarch butterfly.

I have mentioned all this to point out that, much like the cocoon, our outward man is in a dying process. The butterfly within the cocoon, however, much like our inward man, is going through various transformations that will be gloriously revealed when it flies from its cocoon. As the butterfly experiences metamorphosis, so our inward man must go through a spiritual metamorphosis to make us what we are to be. Here are a few thoughts regarding this process.

Inward renewal is contrastingly necessary! Whereas the outward man, commonly known as the body, will not live forever and is already in a process of dying, the inward man, or the regenerated spirit, will live forever and can never die. Thus, our biggest concern should be the nourishment and care of the inward man, not the outward man. We should make sure the inward man is “renewed,” or “strengthened, reinvigorated,” that we might not faint.

Inward renewal is consciously necessary! Drawing on the inexhaustible mercy of God, always seeking Him in earnest prayer, the inward man is reinvigorated. Temporal things, “things which are seen,” may satisfy the deteriorating body, but only eternal things, those “things which are not seen,” can aid the quickened spirit. To keep from fainting, therefore, we must keep our attention on eternal things.

Inward renewal is constantly necessary! Renewal is not a one-time function in the spiritual life. We are to work on this “day by day.” The year is made up of months, which are made up of weeks, which are made up of days, which are made up of hours, which are made up of minutes and seconds. Constantly, then, while we wait for our ultimate transformation, we must draw on God's mercy, pray, and set our affections “on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2).