

## **Spending Time With God**

This article is an excerpt from the booklet *Spending Time With God*, written by Pastor Danny Hodges of Calvary Chapel St. Petersburg in Florida.

Fellowship with God is a tremendous privilege. It's also meant to be an amazing adventure every believer can experience. With inspiration and personal insight, Pastor Danny presents practical steps for developing a vibrant daily devotional life. Discover the privilege and the adventure as you learn the keys to spending time with God.

Several years ago our kids had a toy called "Stretch Armstrong," a rubberized doll which stretched about three or four times its original size. I used "Stretch" as an illustration in one of my messages. The point was that Stretch could not stretch himself. The stretching required an outside source. That's how it was when you first received Christ. What did you do to become a Christian? You simply said, "God save me." He did the work. He changed you.

And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

(2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV)

In the progression of the Christian life, that's the way it is. We are transformed into the likeness of Jesus by the Spirit of God. Sometimes we fall back into the rut of trying to change ourselves, and we end up frustrated. We forget that we can't change ourselves. You see, in the same way we submitted to the Lord in our initial salvation experience, we must daily submit to God. He will change us, and He will stretch us. Interestingly enough, we will never get to the point where God stops stretching us. In this life we'll never come to a place where we have finally arrived, where we can "retire" as Christians, and just kick back. The only true retirement plan God has for us is heaven!

We'll never be perfect until we get to heaven. But that's still our goal. Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10-14:

I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death...Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. (NIV)

So then, we must be changed on a daily basis. It may sound overly simplistic, but continuing change in the Christian life comes from spending time with God.