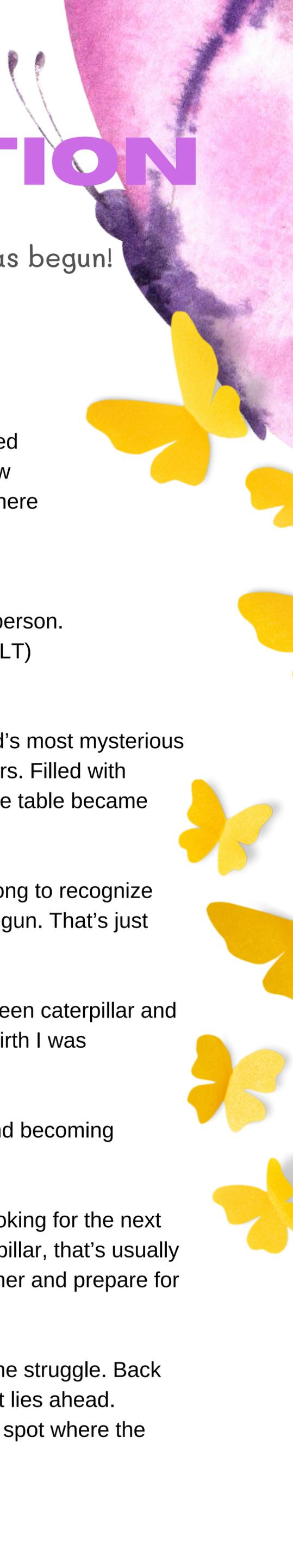


TRUST IN THE TRANSFORMATION



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2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT

Cindy Wilkins www.myseaofthought.com

It's always amazing how God teaches me lessons right where and when I need them using what's familiar. Honestly, I think that's why so many happened in my Second Grade classroom. He knew I required the "elementary" version! Now retired, I can look back and see how, like my students, the foundation I received there helps me continue to build on and trust those basic truths I've learned.

"This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)

These words came alive during a favorite project of mine that included one of God's most mysterious miracles! Every year, my students and I would begin to collect Monarch Caterpillars. Filled with Milkweed to feed them and long twigs to climb on, a large, glass jar on the Science table became their new home and the venue for us to observe an incredible transformation.

Metamorphosis (a profound change) doesn't happen overnight, but it didn't take long to recognize that once a caterpillar moved as high as it could go on a stick, the process had begun. That's just what one of our "guests" did while I was working late at school.

Determined to watch the process from start to finish I settled in. Somewhere between caterpillar and chrysalis, this teacher became the student. It no longer was just a caterpillar's rebirth I was witnessing; I was also gaining a better understanding of my own.

A familiar unit, alone in my classroom, at a time I felt stuck between the old me and becoming "a new person", amazing God at work? No doubt about it!

I don't know about you, but I often feel like a caterpillar, slugging along, always looking for the next best, tasty thing to consume, hoping it will satisfy my hunger. And just like a caterpillar, that's usually when we begin to feel something stirring deep within that compels us to think Higher and prepare for change.

Surprisingly, what struck me the most as I witnessed this wonder of nature, was the struggle. Back and forth the caterpillar swung, writhing as if fighting with all its might against what lies ahead. (Something else we have in common!) Then I blinked. On the branch in the same spot where the caterpillar had been resisting change, hung a chrysalis. *The fight was over.*

Maybe, like me, as a Christian you too find yourself suspended between old ways and the new life Jesus offers. Fear, worry, perfectionism, and so much more seem to continually worm its way back into our lives, but here's the heart of the lesson: The struggle is real, but my friends, the fight is over! Jesus hung in our place and was encased in the tomb, taking our sins with Him.

For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism.
And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the
glorious power of the Father,
now we also may live new lives.
Romans 6:4 (NLT)

Excitement always built as the children and I waited for each butterfly to emerge. Through every opened chrysalis that released a new creation with furred wings and shaky legs, The Teacher continued His lesson. Even though the cycle was complete and the old caterpillar nature was replaced with the new nature of a butterfly, it took time for each one to stretch its wings, to be a butterfly. I'm learning, and I hope it encourages you, that the same is also true for us.

"Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know
your Creator and become like Him."
Colossians 3:10 (NLT)

Did you catch that? **Becoming more like Christ is a profound change. As we learn to know our Creator, we become like Him.**

Becoming more like Christ doesn't happen over night.
It's a life long process of learning, knowing, and trusting.

Just like the Monarchs in my classroom project, with patience, practice, and lots of love, God takes who we think we are and completely transforms us into who He knows we were always meant to be! As we spend time in our relationship with Christ, we can be certain He is working within us and that our "new life" has begun..

"And I am certain that God, who began the good work
within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished
on the day when Christ Jesus returns."
Philippians 1:6 (NLT)

We can trust that!



The fight is over!
Jesus hung in
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~As you read 2 Corinthians 5:17 what does it mean to you to “become a new person”?
For more, read Ephesians 4:22-32.

~Looking at your own life, can you think of a time you felt you were (are) “suspended between old ways and the new life Jesus offers”?

~List examples of the changes that God has helped you make as you “put on your new nature”.

~Write a prayer based around Philippians 1:6.
Dear God, I am certain.....



Cindy is a “MiMi” of 3, Mother of 2, Wife of 38 years, and a Retired Teacher after 32 years.
A little “wacky”, this left-handed, curly-haired, procrastinating-perfectionist loves to share stories
with others of the everyday ways God is teaching her.
You can read more at www.myseaofthought.com