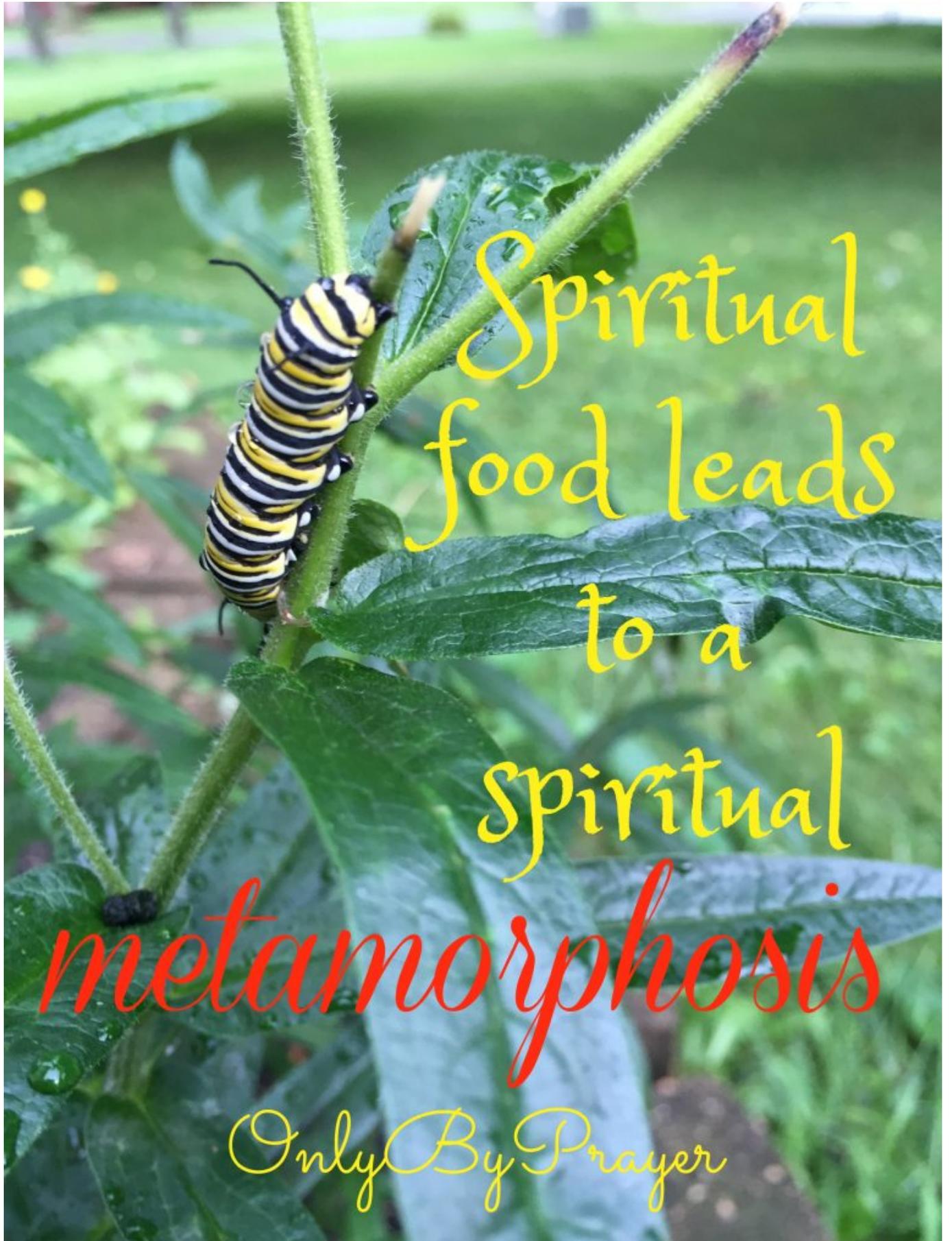


Has Your Spiritual Life Ground to a Halt?



Spiritual
food leads

to a

spiritual

metamorphosis

Only By Prayer

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image

from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. 2 Corinthians 3:18

Are you frustrated with the progress you're making in your prayer life? Or just in your spiritual life in general?

You know, I've found that being conformed to the image of Christ is rarely a fast process. It often involves times of struggle, pushing ahead, falling back and eventually making slow, steady progress. Sometimes change can happen quickly, but most often, I am in it for the long haul. And at times, it can seem that I'm not making much progress.

A few days ago, I discovered some fun caterpillars in my garden, and I've been keeping tabs on them. I discovered they're Monarch butterfly caterpillars. It's been exciting watching them. Now, exciting may seem like an oxymoron when used to describe a caterpillar, especially after you look at the short video clip I have of them here. **Take a few seconds to look at the video, if you can.**

You may think that outwardly nothing exciting was happening at all, but on the contrary, much is going on.

What tips can we learn from my friend the caterpillar to help us in our struggles?

1. **Be focused.** The caterpillar has one thing in mind—and that's eating. That is his sole purpose at the moment. What is your focus right now? Identify the change you want or need to make. Do you want to grow or mature in your prayer life? Do you have a fruit of the spirit you need to cultivate? Write it down—make it official.

Confess any sin that may be entangled in this change and then ask God to equip you through the Holy Spirit to make the change.

2. **Choose your source of nourishment carefully.** The Monarch caterpillar loves the milkweed plant as his host plant and will slowly eat his way through the leaves. But, I learned that the Indian hemp dogbane plant resembles the milkweed—it even has a milky substance; one major difference is that it is poisonous to the caterpillars and will kill them if they keep eating the dogbane. Think about what you're taking in as your source of nourishment during this time of change or struggle in your life. Are you surrounding yourself with scripture, good music, prayer, biblical teaching, books and wise counsel? Or are you feeding on a diet of questionable TV, movies, music and activities that are slowly poisoning you?
3. **Be diligent.** Just like the caterpillar eats a bite at a time, keep plugging away, doing what you know is right. We can only break a sinful pattern or cultivate a new habit one decision at a time. As Christians, we have the wonderful resource of the Holy Spirit to help us.
4. **Look to the inside.** Realize when it seems from all outward appearances that everything has ground to a halt, profound changes are happening on the inside. The Holy Spirit changes us from the inside out into Christ's image.
5. **Rest when you need to.** The caterpillar sometimes takes breaks from his eating to just rest. At times, we need to do that too. It's hard work changing. Do something fun. Read a good book, go for a walk, sit on the beach or take a nap. Recharge yourself for the next phase.
6. **Submit to God.** When the caterpillar is inside the chrysalis, he is submitted to the creator who is changing Him. We also need to allow God access to all areas of our lives as we are in the chrysalis of change so that He can slough off the dead and replace it with

life.

7. **Spread your wings.** In the fullness of time, dare to fly into what God has for you now.

What habit have you now attained? Is there a new ministry opening up for you? **As you celebrate what God has accomplished in your life, be open to what God has for you next.**

As you feel led, leave a comment on a struggle that God has brought you through. Your struggle may encourage someone else to keep on.

Pray on!

