

Embracing Transformation Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one way you have changed in the last few years?
2. Who is one person with whom you think it would be interesting to trade lives for a day?

Read the following passage: Genesis 17:1-14

Many of the key elements of the Gospel message emerge in Abraham's experiences with God: the call to leave his old life of idolatry; God's promises of fruitfulness and blessing; a covenant which God promises to keep even if it costs him his own life(!); and, here in Genesis 17, a transformed life (demonstrated by a change in Abraham's name and the rite of circumcision). Abraham's walk with God is a model for our walk with God. So how do we experience transformation? Abraham's experiences show us several key realities: 1) Transformation begins with God; 2) Transformation requires humility; 3) Transformation involves a change in our identity; 4) Hope fuels transformation; 5) Transformation requires our participation.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. God told Abraham to "walk before me and be blameless." God called Abraham to live a transformed life by living continually in relationship with God. This instruction points to the importance of outside inputs—particularly God's input—for catalyzing transformation. Why do you think transformation is so difficult to achieve on our own? How do outside inputs help us? What can we do to practically experience fresh "input" from God on a regular basis?
2. Not all outside influences are helpful in producing the kind of transformation God desires for us. Are there any inputs in your life that you need to cut off or minimize? Explain.
3. Read Proverbs 13:20. Are there any key relationships you need to add to your life this year to help promote your growth? Explain.
4. Why is humility important for transformation? Are there areas in your life in which you need to be more vulnerable or more deliberate about seeking help or feedback? Explain.
5. Read 1 Peter 1:22-25. What does the idea of being "born again" communicate and how does this relate to transformation? What should we do if we have made a commitment to follow Jesus and have been baptized but we don't feel like we're thriving spiritually?

6. In Genesis 17, God once again tells Abraham about the many things he is going to do for Abraham and his offspring. Are you excited about your future with God? Explain. Why is hope so important for transformation?
7. God instructed Abraham to keep the covenant by circumcising all the males in his household. Circumcision symbolized a life set apart for God. What are some ways we should participate in our own transformation? Are there any clear ways in which you are living a life set apart for God? Explain.

Pray