

Introduction: Be Transformed

Session Aim

This session is designed to help group members begin thinking about some of the specific things that are part of the transformation process—both results and processes. The session expands the concepts that will be explored throughout this study series.

Preparation

Read Romans 12 several times. Especially note verses and statements that relate to our identity as Christians, our shared life in the faith community, the importance of integrity, and the importance of service.

Also begin a list of items that are important parts of the transformation process, for example, a new way of thinking, a different attitude toward God's mercy, etc.

Bible Text

Romans 12

Introduction

Despite the fact that we sometimes do not like change, transformation is a major theme of the New Testament. Biblical transformation is internal and results in genuinely changed lives. Despite the fact that most people who come to Christ anticipate significant changes in their lives, the contemporary church has not consistently expected changed lives as a requirement for faithful Christians.

[Note: some groups may wish to reverse the time of shared singing and prayer and the discussion lead-ins/icebreakers.]

Welcome/Icebreakers

What is one of the most difficult changes you have ever experienced?

Share a goal that you reached (or did not reach) that required some kind of major transformation in your life.

What are the most significant changes in your life during the past year?

What are the most significant changes in your spiritual life during the last year?

Worship

Sing songs relating to the four major concepts of this study series: Christian identity, shared life (fellowship), integrity, and service. Suggestions: Give Me the Heart of a Servant; Change my Heart, O God; Have Thine Own Way; Make Me a Servant. Share a time of prayer, accepting prayer requests that especially related to changing our lives and the lives of others.

Bible Study

Study Romans 12. [The group may want to read the passage together.]

What is the significance of Paul's beginning point: "in view of God's mercy...."?

If a person clearly sees God's mercy, what impact does that have on the person's self-identity (according to this chapter of Romans)?

What impact does it have on a person's lifestyle?

Spend some time discussing the difference between externally motivated change (conformation) and internally motivated change (transformation, metamorphosis).

Why do you think changing our lives is so difficult for us?

Do you agree or disagree with the point made in the introduction section above that the contemporary church does not have a high expectation for changed lives among its members?

Application

How does the world squeeze us into its mold?

What are some of the strongest pressure points today for the average Christian?

What are some of the strongest pressure points today for a teenager?

What are some of the strongest pressure points today for our families?

What does it mean to you to present yourself (your body) as a living sacrifice in everyday life?

How does presenting yourself relate to the gifts that are mentioned later in the chapter?

How does presenting yourself relate to the practical admonitions (vv. 9ff)?

Conclusion

Your assignment is to be spiritually aware of the way the world would change our lives or move us away from the value systems of Christianity.

Spend some time in prayer (individually, with your family, or with a Christian friend) about the way God wants to transform your (our) lives in Christ.

Choose one person that you will try to influence for good by letting them see the changes in your life or relationship. Look for times to explain your commitment to living a changed life.