

Transformed: Growing with Integrity, Ministering to Others, Glorifying God

Session Aim

As we come to the end of this small group series, let us pray that hearts have indeed been touched and lives transformed. The final session in the series attempts to tie together the guiding principles of the series. The session gives an opportunity to review the main points, and to ask about how our lives are transformed as we use these principles to attain maturity in Christ.

Remember the focus of the series—the Christian life involves:

knowing your identity in Christ,

so that....

you can make yourself known to others in a Christian community,

so that....

you can pursue a lifetime of growth in the context of community,

so that....

you are best equipped to glorify Christ by serving others.

Preparation

Review the sequence of the main themes of our studies. Here is a brief summary to remind you of the journey we have shared. Take time to pray about each aspect of our study (**words in bold** in the description below).

After introducing the theme, “**Touching Hearts, Transforming Lives**”, we spent some time thinking about what the Bible says about transformation.

The first step is to know our **identity in Christ**, escaping faulty assessments and low spiritual self-esteem. Every Christian is of great value to God and God has the power to make us new and fresh through our re-creation in Christ.

When we are confident of our identity and security in Christ, it is easier to participate in the faith community where **we are known** and where **we can know and support others**. Actually, our participation in a community of faith (church) is a significant part of our continuing transformation into the image of Christ (Eph. 4:11-16).

In the context of the faith community, we are changed as we share the heartache and vulnerability of **confession** in the midst of **difficulties and trials**. We are also changed the presence of the **Holy Spirit** in our lives and the promise of **resurrection** which was secured as we were baptized into Christ, thus becoming participants both in Jesus’ death and in his resurrection.

All of these dynamics help us mature in Christ, becoming **people of integrity**, with hearts dedicated to **serving others** and **glorifying God**.

Bible Text

Ephesians 4:1-32

Introduction

Our Bible text, although lengthy, summarizes the journey we have taken.

4:1-3 reminds us of our identity in Christ and our changed lives. (Note how 4:1-3 points back to all of the transformation concepts of chapters 1-3.)

4:4-6, 12-16 outline some of the dynamics of participation and sharing in the body of Christ.

4:7, 13, 16, 17-32 describe how individual lives are changed and blessed in Christ. As a result we become people of integrity.

Throughout the chapter are references to the challenges of life and the power of God's Spirit within us.

Finally, the chapter outlines how we can serve one another and others, and the importance of glorifying God through imitating Him. (Note that many of these concepts continue into chap. 5.)

Welcome/Icebreakers

Using the assignment to note how the resurrection changes our lives, share as the group desires.

What is the closest group you have ever been associated with?

What made the group so close?

What blessings do you especially notice or feel when you participate in a small group?

What challenges or obstacles do you find most difficult in small groups?

Worship

Share a brief time of song and prayer as desired.

Bible Study

What qualities do you use to identify a Christian? What results do you expect when believers live out the presence of Christ in their lives? (4:1-3).

What connections do you see between the unity of the body and our willingness or ability to be known and to know others? (4:4-6)

What differences exist between the unity that is (4:4-6) and that which is to be developed (13-16)?

How does participation in the body of Christ help us mature? (4:12-13)

How could a small group help members develop and use spiritual gifts so each part does it work (16)?

What are the biggest problems with trying to live a Christian life apart from the church?

What blessings do you need from others? What blessings could you pass on to others as you minister to them?

What are some of the ways you see Christians glorifying God?

Application/Conclusion

As your small group comes to a close and we anticipate new groups forming for the next cycle, celebrate your fellowship and the successes of your group. Pray for each member of the group (those present and those not present) that all hearts might be touched and lives transformed.