

Weekly Study

Transformation in a Stagnant World | Ryan Wekenman | September 11, 2022

**A note to leaders: there have been two additional questions added to the “grow” and “move” portions of the Weekly entitled ‘Dive Deeper’. This is designed for you to help guide your group into deeper relationship with Jesus and each other, and take an additional step for owning their relationship with Jesus throughout their week.*

S T A R T

Go around and check in with your group with the following questions:

- What are you most looking forward to this week?
- What is the most impactful or challenging thing you learned during Sunday’s sermon?
- What did that thing teach you about God? About yourself?

S H A R E

Lots of things that Jesus said sound upside down to us. Yet, the reality is that the world we’re living in is upside down; meaning that Jesus came to turn things right side up. If we want to experience the life and love that Jesus came to bring, it looks like following the way of Jesus. On Sunday, Ryan finished our “Right Side Up” series with a powerful message about transformation in a stagnant world. He came to bring true transformation in a world that tells us that staying the same is good. There is a gap between where we are and where we want to be, and with Jesus, he makes it possible to move forward toward that place day by day.

G R O W

Read 1 John 4:7.

Ryan talked to us about how this verse was hard-fought for John throughout his life. It beautifully illustrates the transformation that is possible with Jesus — when John was walking around with Jesus during his time on earth, Jesus gave him the nickname “son of thunder”, but by the time this passage was written, he was known as the apostle of love. In this lies an important message: the love of Jesus transforms us into people of love. When we live from that place of knowing that we’re loved, we can then go and help other people be transformed by the love of Jesus as well.

Our upside-down world often sees humans as incapable of change at our core. But with Jesus, he always sees who we are becoming. That’s why it’s so important to see walking with Jesus

as more than an intellectual ascent. Information and inspiration are good, but He wants even more for us. Transformation is not just possible with Jesus, it's guaranteed.

- Until now, have you believed that people can truly change? Give an example.
- How does it feel to know that with Jesus, true transformation really can happen in your heart and the hearts of the people you know? What is one thing you want Jesus to transform in your life?
- *Dive Deeper:* Transformation continues to take root as we learn to abide with Jesus (John 15:5). Abiding is simply the practice of spending time with Jesus. Listen to this podcast from one of our favorite Bible teachers, John Mark Comer: <https://bridgetown.church/teaching/practicing-the-way/be-with-jesus/>

M O V E

Read Romans 12:2.

Much of the fight for our transformation is rooted in our minds, since 80% of our thoughts are negative and 95% of our thoughts are recycled from the day before. Romans 12:2 tells us to not be conformed to the patterns of this world, so how do we live right-side up in light of these statistics that are encouraging us to stay stagnant? We follow Paul's instructions found in this verse along with what he writes to us in 2 Corinthians 10:5 — "we take every thought captive to make it obedient to Christ."

The inverse of these statistics are also true: once we start infusing gospel truths into our minds, those will become our new normal, recycled thoughts. Do not feel pressure or cause this to stress you out in your discipleship to Jesus by making you feel as though you are not doing something correctly — transformation takes time, so don't give up! As you become aware of the negative thought patterns in your life, call them out for what they are and find biblical truth to replace them. Preach those truths to yourself until that becomes your automatic response, and ask God and your community to help you walk toward truth. Then watch as the Holy Spirit renews your mind and heart from the inside out!

- Take a minute to think and then share with your group: what is one negative thought you seem to have on a regular basis? Once you figure it out, write it down then commit to finding one or two bible verses that will help you combat those thoughts.
- What is one step you can take this week to let God in on the process of transformation in your life?

- *Dive Deeper:* Who is one person in your life that seems to be full of life; who speaks grace-filled, truthful words? Tell your group about that person and commit to seeking them out this week and ask them what they do to stay in step with the Holy Spirit. Ask them what truths they hang on to to help them renew their minds.

P R A Y

Spend some time sharing prayer requests. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into separate groups to share more freely.

- Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal to you which beliefs and thought patterns in your life need to be taken captive and replaced with truth about God and what He says about you. If some of you have already identified those places, share with each other and pray for each other.
- Ask God to help you on the journey of transformation and bring friends to you who will rally around you (and you can rally around them!) as we walk in the way of Jesus together.