

Main Passage: 1 John 3:1-10

Purpose: To understand that for Christians, though we have been transformed by faith in Christ, the ultimate transformation is yet to come.

Session Snapshot: By this time in your study, you know what a difference transformation makes in the lives of those who have come to saving faith in Jesus. We are new creations, and nothing is the same. But the wild thing is that the transformation from being dead in our sins to alive in Christ is just ONE of the transformations God works in us. There is a final transformation that will take place when Jesus returns to initiate God's ultimate rescue plan. This lesson will help you unpack this truth and discuss how this hope should motivate us in our everyday lives.

GETTING STARTED

Kick off your time together by reviewing what you did in the last session or checking in with your group.

FIRST, remind your group that this is the final week of their video series on what it means to be transformed by Jesus, part of the larger Be Disciples curriculum line. If you're continuing in another five-session series next week, remind your group of the next series you'll be doing.

THEN, if you want to start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks, do so.

FINALLY, if there are no questions or other input, transition into the *Digging In* section of your leader's guide.

DIGGING IN

Jump into the session by watching this week's video.

FIRST, play the video. You can access the video by logging into your Iron Hill Press account.

THEN, when the video is over, lead men in a short discussion based on what Rick covered. Feel free to come up with your own questions, or consider asking some similar to those below:

- **What is the difference between "practicing sin" and struggling with sin?**
- **As human beings, we all have a sin nature. We are naturally inclined toward sin. Paul says this is our spiritual inheritance from Adam. We will always struggle with sin on this side of heaven. But the Bible is clear: we cannot be truly transformed by Christ and be people who "practice sin." How have you seen this in the lives of other men you have encountered in your life?**
- **What does it mean in your own words to abide in Jesus?**
- **Is it possible for a man to abide in Christ who has not been transformed by faith in Christ? How about the other way: is it possible for a man to be transformed by Christ and not abide in Him? Think about your answer, then share why you believe the way you do.**
- **Why do you think it is so uniquely challenging to attempt to live life as a Christ-follower and not be connected to Him through regular Bible reading, prayer, and worship?**

FINALLY, transition into the *Opening the Word* portion of your time together by saying something like the following:

- **Rick focused on the second half of 1 John 3:1-10. The call to abide in Christ and live lives of righteousness is a hallmark of the transformed life. But in the Bible study portion of this last lesson in the transformation series, we're going to look at what it means to live out the hope we have in who we will one day become in Christ.**

OPENING THE WORD

Spend time going deeper into a specific concept Rick introduced in the video.

FIRST, explain that you're going to take a more in-depth look at the first few verses of 1 John 3. Rick provided a little of the context for the book, but just to make sure your men have it, use the following bullet points to supplement Rick's comments:

- **Author:** 1 John was written by John the Apostle. John was one of Jesus' disciples and was referred to as "the beloved disciple." John was probably only a teenager when he spent three years with Jesus. In addition to 1 John, he authored 2 John, 3 John, the Gospel of John, and Revelation.
- **Timeframe:** 1 John was probably written sometime after the Temple was destroyed in 70 AD, but probably no later than 90 AD.
- **Purpose:** John was writing to a population (1st Century Christ-followers) who had seen their ranks diminished at the onset of Roman persecution. John was calling his audience to a doctrinally sound and application-oriented faith. He reminded his readers of the teachings of Christ and urged them to put them into practice.

THEN, once you've reviewed the context for the book, read or have a volunteer read 1 John 3:1-3. When you've finished, lead the group in a short discussion. Ask:

- **What does verse 1 say is the motivation for God's welcoming us into His family through salvation?**
 - *Answer:* It is God's love that motivates His desire to adopt us into His family.
- **Why is it hard for us at times to grasp the fullness of this truth?**
 - Answers will vary. But you could bring up the idea that we know ourselves and know what sinners we are and are thus surprised that God could or would love us; you could bring up the idea that most everywhere else in our lives, we earn rewards through our achievement or performance. God's grace is unmerited, and He loves us even though we don't bring anything to the table.
- **The "so we are" at the end of verse one is encouraging. What's so profound about that seemingly insignificant phrase?**
 - *Answer:* John affirms the whole concept of salvation succinctly and boldly. Let there be no doubt: when we come to saving faith in Christ, we are transformed from enemies of God to God's children. Period. There is no reason to doubt it.
- **Verse 2 is really important. Rick alludes to this in the video. Did you catch Rick mentioning the theological doctrine that John refers to here?**
 - *Answer:* Glorification.
- **Can anyone define glorification?**
 - *Answer:* Glorification is the doctrine that says that once we are resurrected and joined with Christ, we will receive new bodies, free from the effects of sin. We will be, in a sense, perfected.

- **John says that this new reality for us, the glorified existence we will live, has not yet happened, but it will. When Jesus returns to usher in His forever Kingdom, we will be like Him in our bodily existence. What does John say in verse 3 about how this truth impacts us?**
 - *Answer:* It gives us great hope.

NEXT, pause the discussion and say something like the following:

- **This is a huge point that is easy for us to overlook. It's a big part of being a transformed follower of Christ, and yet, we overlook it often. As disciples of Christ, we should live our lives on earth with great expectancy toward the life that awaits us. In God's economy, this life isn't the ultimate life. It's not the one with the richest experiences. It's not even the "realest" version of the life God has for us. This life is a blessing full of joy, and it's a gift from God. But the eternal life we will live as glorified children of God is the ultimate life for Christians. THAT is the life that should motivate us. This truth is reflected repeatedly in the Bible by multiple different authors. And yet, if we're honest, it's difficult for us.**

Ask:

- **Why** do you think this is the case? Why is it difficult for us to live our lives on this earth motivated by a great hope of the eternal life we have with God awaiting us?
 - Answers will vary.

Say something like:

- **Is there a better way? How can you enjoy this life, be useful in this life, and get the most out of this life all for the sake of God's Kingdom but STILL live in hope for the future? This is the question I want us to ponder as we wrap up our time together.**

Ask if there are any questions about what you have discussed so far, then move to *Accepting the Challenge* so that you can begin applying what you've learned.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE

Focus your group's attention on the takeaways from your time together.

FIRST, explain that the takeaway for this lesson starts with answering the question you just asked: How do we live as people who are motivated by the hope for our forever future with God?

Allow this question to drive your discussion. Challenge men to consider the practical side of this. What does it look like day-to-day to have this mindset?

THEN, if necessary, supplement your discussion with the following application points. Say something like:

- **One of the reasons we can't seem to be motivated by our hope for the future is that we don't have a clear understanding of what that looks like.**
 - **When was the last time you made it a point to dig into Scripture to learn more about our forever future with God? Consider undertaking a study of the future all believers can look forward to. Look for resources online or ask your pastor for guidance. But do the work to get a better understanding of what is awaiting us forever with God.**
- **Another reason it may be difficult for us to be motivated about the future with God is because we don't make room in our lives for that level of reflection.**

- If you are someone who constantly fills his idle time with music, podcasts, talk radio, or TV, make it a point to carve out some space to reflect on God, His place in your life, and what it means to you that you're His child and can look forward to spending eternity with Him. Listen for God to show you what He wants to show you, and make mental and spiritual space to process it.
- **Maybe we struggle because we don't ask the Holy Spirit for help.**
 - When was the last time you asked the Holy Spirit to guide you in understanding this or any other concept more? The Holy Spirit is an amazing resource, but we don't often seek Him out. Make it a point to do so this week.

FINALLY, encourage men to continue to marinate on these points in the week to come. Challenge them to listen to what God is trying to tell them and respond accordingly. If there are no more questions or input, close your time together in prayer.