

Main Passage: 2 Peter 1:3-11

Purpose: To understand that transformation is the beginning of our journey, not the end.

Session Snapshot: In this passage, Peter uses some pretty complex language to say something fairly simple: we're transformed by our knowledge of God, and our transformation is the beginning of a life of spiritual growth.

GETTING STARTED

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

FIRST, remind your group that this is week 4 of their video series focusing on the truth that in order to be a disciple of Jesus, you have to have been transformed by faith in Him. Of course, this section is part of a larger look at what it means to be a disciple.

THEN, if you want, start with asking men for prayer requests, checking in on how their weeks have gone, or any other housekeeping tasks. You may also consider asking men what application or important points they have taken away from the last few sessions so far.

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:

- **Make a list of common sins and/or temptations Christian men struggle with.**
- **Isn't it interesting that, as Rick said in the video if we have been transformed by faith in Jesus, we have been given power over sin? We are no longer slaves to sin but slaves to righteousness. So, why do we still sin?**
- **What should our relationship with sin be as men who have been transformed by faith in Jesus? Think for a moment; there are several ways to answer this.**
- **Rick made a statement that the only hope for us as men to live a transformed life is in the power of the Holy Spirit. Can you give an example of how you experienced the leading of the Holy Spirit in your life?**
- **How do you answer the question Rick asks his children? Are you impacting the world? Or is the world impacting you? Where are you on that spectrum?**

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

- **As Christians, we have to be mindful of our faith lives. As we're about to see, our spiritual transformation that starts with saving faith in Jesus is only the beginning of our spiritual journey.**

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 2 Peter 1:3-11, but before you do so, it's important to examine the context for the passage you'll be studying. Do so by reviewing the bullet points below:

- **Author:** 2 Peter was written by Peter, one of Jesus' most trusted disciples and one of the key leaders of the growing movement of Christ-followers.
- **Time frame:** 2 Peter was likely written between 64-67 AD, shortly before Peter was martyred.
- **Purpose:** 1 Peter was written to a people under persecution, likely under the reign of Nero, similar to 1 Peter. 2 Peter deals with some of the same themes, though focuses a great deal on grace in the face of persecution.

THEN, read or have a volunteer read 2 Peter 1:3-11. Before jumping into the discussion, make it a point to stop and say something similar to the following:

- **This is the beginning of Peter's letter, and as you may have noticed, it was customary at this time to have a theologically rich, fairly stylistic introduction. It can be difficult for us to make sense of the various run-on sentences and separate clauses. But if we slow down and take it piece-by-piece, we can connect with what Peter wants us to know about the faith we've been blessed to be a part of.**

Direct your group's attention to the first few verses of the passage. Ask them something similar to the following questions:

- **In verse 3, Peter says that God has given us all we need for our life and faith through what?**
 - *Answer:* Through the knowledge of God. It's easy for us to forget how profound of a truth this is. The all-perfect, all-powerful God of the Universe allows us to know Him. And this knowledge of Him transforms us.
- **Verse 4 is Peter's way of saying that through knowing God, we can know the Gospel and be saved by our belief in it. Peter uses some descriptive language at the end of verse 4 to refer to the transformation we experience when we come to saving faith in Christ. What did he say?**
 - *Answer:* We "escaped the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire."
- **What would be another way of understanding Peter's meaning when he says, "escaped the corruption"?**
 - Answers will vary. But it's Peter's way of saying that through Christ, we defeat death and will know the promise of eternal life.

NEXT, explain that Peter is about to make a transition that you want to focus the rest of your time on. Peter says that for the sake of this new life in Christ, we should undertake a specific course of action. He introduces this in verse 5. Have someone re-read verses 5-8. When they have finished, say:

- **For the purpose of our time in this lesson, we won't focus individually on each of these qualities. Instead, let's focus on the group as a whole, specifically what Peter says in verse 8 about these qualities. What does Peter say about these qualities in verse 8?**
 - *Answer:* Make sure you focus on the word "increasing." Peter paints the picture of a transformed person GROWING in their faith. This is the expectation. On top of the eternal life

that God promises when we come to saving faith in Jesus, we are to partner with the Spirit and GROW in our Christian characteristics.

- **Peter has some pretty strong words for those not committed to spiritual growth in verse 9. Put what Peter says into your own words.**
 - Answers will vary.

FINALLY, say something like:

- **In verse 10, Peter says that we should be “diligent to confirm [our] calling and election.” As discussed in our last session, our godly acts don't save us. Our godly acts are *evidence* of our salvation. Peter says that in our desire to become who God intends us to become, we must be diligent in pursuing the transformed life. Let's wrap up by focusing on this word, diligent.**

Remind your group that we study the Bible to apply the truths it contains to our lives. 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 you want to challenge the group to focus on the takeaways from this session by considering the word diligent. Ask:

- **What does it mean to you to be diligent in your spiritual maturity?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **What does it look like to NOT be diligent in your faith growth?**
 - Answers will vary.
- **Be honest: Have you had a season in your life where your diligence slipped? What was the result? What did it feel like?**
 - Answers will vary.

Wrap up your discussion by mentioning the following application points. Say something like:

- **Our diligent commitment to growth is one of the keys to becoming who God intends us to be.**
 - Spiritual growth doesn't happen by accident. It takes intentionality and commitment.
- **If we don't grow in our faith, we have to accept that we are outside God's design for us, which we have to accept is sin.**
 - Not growing in our faith should be something we repent of to God. We have to take it that seriously.
- **Peter ties our spiritual growth to our usefulness to God's Kingdom.**
 - Don't you want to be someone who God sees as an asset to His Kingdom? It starts with a commitment to spiritual maturity.

If it feels appropriate, allow some discussion about the kind of processing they find themselves doing.

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.