

Radical breakthrough transformations are rare, but they happen. Have you experienced a breakthrough moment in your life?

More often our transformation happens through a process over time as we abide in Jesus. It is typically through these process moments that we develop the fruit of the spirit. Our part is to keep in step with God's Spirit in order that He can do the work in us.

James 1:2-4 NIV - 2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

Sometimes God transforms us and gives us freedom in an instant, but often it is in our hardship and our pain that God refines, transforms us and sets us free.

In what area would you say, I'm not where I want to be but I'm not what I used to be. How are you in the process of changing?

WRAP-UP

We were created to live in freedom. But that doesn't mean freedom to do whatever we feel like. It is freedom from the bondage of sin that enable us to choose to live a Godly life. We can't find that freedom through will power alone, it takes partnering with the Holy spirit. When we create an atmosphere for the Spirit to transform us, then we will find ourselves living in freedom.

Memory Verse

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. - 2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge: Set aside time daily to contemplate God's glory through spiritual practices so that you will be transformed and experience God's greater freedom and greater living.

“Greater Freedom leads to Greater Living”

“Power of the Holy Spirit” #3

INTRODUCTION

This weekend we celebrated Memorial Day; a remembrance of our military who have sacrificed themselves for our freedom. We would all agree that freedom is precious. But we might not all agree of how to define freedom. The bible tells us greater freedom and greater living come through the power of the Holy Spirit. And it is only through our partnership with God the Holy Spirit that we experience the kind of freedom God wants for us all.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

How did you celebrate Memorial Day?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Conflicts Between Flesh and Spirit

Romans 7:14-15 NLT - 14 So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. 15 I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate.

We fall in a “gap” between living as the Godly person we want to be, and the reality of how we actually live our daily lives. This gap arises from a conflict between the flesh (our natural inclinations) and the spirit (God inspired desires). We aren't able to accomplish that Godly life by merely working harder. It requires a partnership with God to produce the greater freedom and living that we desire.

Pastor David gave an example of this in his struggle between choosing fruit to snack on versus chocolate peanut butter cups. What are some areas where you recognize that gap described by Paul in Rom 7:15, between what you want to do and what you actually do?

A good summary of the Godly life we desire to live is given in Galatians 5:22-23. It is not the fruit of hard work or the fruit of trying my best, it is the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22-23 NIV - 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

It would be easy to justify satisfying our natural impulses as “freedom” if we simply defined freedom as doing whatever we please. But having freedom in Christ does not mean doing what we please. It is the freedom to choose the right thing.

Why isn't Paul free to do the things he wants to in Romans 7:14?

To break free from your bondage to sin, you need the power to choose what is best over the attraction of immediate gratification. There are two sources of power you can apply; your will power and Holy Spirit power.

Your will power diminishes when it is not exercised, just like a muscle. And to get the most benefit from it you cannot neglect applying it regularly. Spiritual practices like prayer and fasting and the studying God's word exercise and strengthen your will power. Involvement in a spiritual community also helps strengthen your will power.

What are some areas in which you have had the greatest success applying will power?

While will power is a part of the equation, it is finite and limited. Ultimately will power alone is inadequate to live a Godly life.

2. Transformed into God's Image

In Exodus chapter 34 we find the story of Moses as he received the law from God and brought it to the Israelites.

2 Corinthians 3:13-18 NIV - 13 We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. 14 But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. 15 Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. 16 But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

After spending time in God's presence Moses' face would glow. The Israelites recognized God's power on Moses' face and even feared him because of it. But the glow he reflected when he received the law faded. In contrast, Paul says we are not like Moses whose glory faded, we have the Spirit of the Lord with us at all times, and the more we gaze upon Him, the more we shine with a reflection of Him. Paul called it every-increasing glory which comes from the Lord.

To enjoy God's freedom for us requires that we partner with His Spirit and we need to “contemplate the Lord's glory” to do this effectively. Spiritual practices are one way we reflect on the Lord's glory. How are you doing with spiritual practices during this period of isolation? Are they staying steady, fading, improving? Have your unique circumstances allowed you to explore different practices than you normally would?

3. Breakthrough and Process Transformation

Acts 9:3-6 NIV - 3 As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?" 5 "Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked. "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6 "Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

There are different ways that God transforms us. On the road to Damascus Paul experienced what can only be called a breakthrough moment. Suddenly he encountered God in an unmistakable display of power that changed him in an instant.