

Week 4: We believe Jesus changes lives (period).

INTRODUCTION:

It seems like now maybe more than ever people are into some kind of self-improvement. Whether that's with eating, exercise, kicking a bad habit, leadership development, etc., people seem to be looking to become better people. As Christ followers, we know that with a little extra motivation and willpower, people can quit a bad habit or become a little nicer. But ultimately, true transformation cannot happen apart from a relationship with Jesus. We may be able to mask the symptoms of a dark and depraved heart for a season, but deep down we know we need more than a "fixed" heart. We need a new heart. Thankfully that's exactly what Jesus promised us when we enter into a faith-based relationship with him. And that's why at the end of the day, we know we can't change ourselves or other people, but Jesus can!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1) If you could change one thing about yourself what would it be?

- 2) For Christ-followers, what was your life like before you started following Jesus? What is it like now? Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. What is Paul's point?

- 3) Read Jeremiah 17:9 and Matthew 15:19. What is our primary problem?

- 4) Read Ezekiel 36:25-27 – Even though Ezekiel was written hundreds of years before Jesus, how did God promise to change our lives?

- 5) Religious people can seem to have it all together on the surface. Read Matthew 23:25-28. What was Jesus' warning to those who were most religious (Pharisees) in his day?

- 6) Read David's prayer in Psalm 51:10-12. If God answered that prayer in your life, how would your life be different?

- 7) According to Romans 8:29, what is God changing us into? How does knowing that help in the transformation process?

- 8) Read Colossians 3:5-15, Paul describes this process of transformation like a wardrobe change. What old parts (vv. 5-9) do you have a hard time taking off and which new parts (vv.12-15) do you find difficult to put on?

- 9) Jesus doesn't just change our hearts but he also changes the way we think. Paul encourage us to "be transformed by the renewing of your minds" in Romans 12:2. What does that look like and how does that happen?

- 10) We know that transformation is a process rather than event. Read Philippians 1:6. In your own words, what is Paul's promise about that process?

- 11) Jesus never promised to erase our past, but he does want to redeem it. Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. According to Paul, how was God able to use his past failures?

- 12) Read John 15:4-8 What must we do to ensure the change that Jesus wants to do in us?

- 13) Read Ephesians 1:3-14. List as many ways as you can in which Jesus changes us. How does that help you understand the Gospel?

WHAT WILL YOU DO? We can't manufacture Jesus' heart, only Jesus can do that in us when we abide in him. Would you be willing to commit to spending time with Jesus each day this week and be willing to surrender to what he wants to do in you and through you?

CHANGING YOUR MIND

Memorize John 15:4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.