

UNIT 3 - ELEMENTS OF TRANSFORMATION

Truth, Equipping, Accountability, Mission, Supplication

TRUTH

"God equipped me with strength and made my way blameless"

Psalm 18:32

IN BIBLE

So far in Discipleship Foundations, we have experienced the elements of transformation as each unit has focused on truth, equipping, accountability, mission and supplication. In this unit, we will explore some key Scriptures to see how God uses these elements to cause spiritual transformation. We will look at each element and describe practical ways to lead the group time so meetings are not "curriculum-on-life," but "life-on-life." Consider reading through the Gospel of Mark and write down the examples of how Jesus used elements of transformation in His ministry. You will see Jesus did not spend much time preaching to crowds; instead He spent more time with His disciples and apostles. While preaching and teaching have their place, it is interesting that Jesus didn't use them as a primary means to make disciples. He had a "come and be with me" approach to making them. The results are fascinating, and the implications are significant as to how we, as the church, carry out our ministry.

Read the following verses and write down how they relate to Truth.

Psalm 119:160

Matthew 22:1

John 1:14

John 14:6

Read the following verses and write down how they relate to Equipping.

Psalms 18:31-32

2 Timothy 3:16-17

Luke 6:40

Ephesians 4:12

Read the following verses and write down how they relate to Accountability.

Romans 3:19

Romans 14:12

Proverbs 27:17

Hebrews 10:24-25

Hebrew 13:17

Read the following verses and write down how they relate to Mission.

Genesis 12:1-3

John 20:21

Acts 1:8

Revelation 7:9

Ephesians 2:10

Read the following verses and write down how they relate to Supplication.

Mark 11:17

Matthew 21:22

Romans 12:12

James 5:16

TO SUMMARIZE

Something powerful happens when we are consistently exposed to the elements of transformation, which are truth, equipping, accountability, mission and supplication. We become mature and equipped followers of Christ! The foundation for life transformation and the renewal of families, churches and cities is the truth of God, incarnated in Jesus, the Word of flesh who lived among us. The psalmist wrote, "The sum of your word is truth." Jesus was recognized as a faithful teacher of the truth and, in fact, is the Truth! His glory comes from the Father and He is full of grace and truth. For the follower of Jesus, we know that the Word of Truth – Jesus – now dwells in us! God's Spirit uses truth, equipping, accountability, mission and supplication to transform us into a mature and equipped follower of Christ. Let's summarize what we have studied from the Scriptures and consider practical ways we can apply that in a group setting.

Truth

Disciples need to get into the Word of God to develop a habit of personal worship, grappling with verses, and giving their best effort to answer thoughtful questions. The "To Summarize" section fills in some of the gaps and explains the unit's focus.

Open meetings with prayer, share the Scripture memory verse, and ask members to give a brief update on the state of their hearts before moving on to the truth section. Keep in mind these groups are not Bible studies but do include a Bible study. You don't need to review the answers to every question; while you may teach a short time to get discussion started, resist the temptation to become a Bible teacher. Leaders don't have to know all the answers but should be able to direct a disciple to find the answers themselves. You can ask the group questions such as, "What part of the truth section impacted you the most?" or "What questions do you have about the truth section?"

Equipping

Paul told his disciple Timothy that all Scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, reproof, correction and training in righteousness so men and women of God will be complete and equipped for every good work. Consider how effective this teaching, reproof, correction and training is when it is experienced through intentional relationships with people we know well. Jesus explained equipping when He said, "A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone, when he is fully trained, will be like his teacher." Don't interpret the word "teacher" as someone who gives content in a classroom setting. The influence of Western education philosophy has caused us to think that if we present content, people will be able to understand, embrace and apply that content – but reality and research show us otherwise.

The book *TransforMissional Coaching* by Greg Ogne and Tim Roehl includes statistics about how learners apply a new skill into their practice.

5% will apply a new skill into their practice with theory
10% with theory and demonstration

20% with theory, demonstration and practice within the training

25% with theory, demonstration, practice within the training and feedback

90% of learners will apply a new skill into their practice with theory, demonstration, practice within the training, feedback, and coaching.

When Jesus referred to a disciple being like a teacher, He was describing a mentor spending time with hungry learners in the context of a life-on-life relationship. The purpose of the equipping section is to make the truth understandable and usable, allowing the disciple to engage with the truth in a personal way. As a leader, you will choose the questions you think would be the most helpful for the people in your group.

These equipping questions will open up opportunities for you to pursue people's whole hearts (thoughts, emotions, deep desires and choices). Resist the temptation to talk about the equipping section in theory, but press for personal application and follow up with group members at individual times to help them develop these areas. Paul says in Ephesians that the role of the pastor is to equip the saints for the work of ministry, therefore building up the body of Christ.

Accountability

The word accountability usually has a negative connotation. In fact, some cultures don't even have a word for it! It is important we understand what the Bible means when we think about accountability so it can be renewing, rather than defeating. Paul told the Roman followers that the whole world is ultimately accountable to God, and the root of all sin is unbelief and rebellion to the authority of God. Our natural inclination is to resist authority and any accountability.

The writer of Hebrews instructs us to consider ways to stir up one another to love and good works as we regularly meet together. In an athletic event, the coach, other players and the crowd are cheering on the athletes to compete well. In the same way, we encourage one another because we know that the Day of Judgment is drawing near. Believers are also told in Hebrews to obey spiritual leaders and submit to them because the leaders keep watch over souls and they will give an account. Leaders need quality of character to lead in such a way that their followers will willingly submit to them.

Accountability is not forcing people to do something or being controlling over their lives and decisions. It is not behavior modification or adding new rules that are not found in Scripture. The Journey curriculum has questions you might find helpful in establishing accountability within your group. There is also freedom for you as the leader to design questions that address the specific needs of those you are discipling. Consider how you can focus accountability questions on a person's heart and not just on their behavior. Behaviors will only change as the power of the Gospel penetrates the whole heart of a person.

As the leader, choose one question and ask everyone to comment on it, or ask each person to choose the question they need the most help with. Two people can pair up for the accountability time to discuss a question and then pray for one another. The Gospel is the power of God for our past, present, and future salvation. It would be an incomplete view of this truth to think it only relates to our justification.

Accountability is most effective when we access the power of the Gospel for sanctification also. This means we repent, believe and obey in the power of the Spirit, also known as the "Gospel Waltz." We could call this "grace accountability," because God gives us the power and desire to obey since we are deeply loved by Him.

Mission

The story of God's mission starts in Genesis and concludes in Revelation. We see four great acts of God in creation, fall, redemption and restoration. God blessed Abraham and told him his generations would be a blessing to all nations. As followers of Christ, we are part of this larger story of being an ambassador of blessing. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He told the infant church that He would give them power to be witnesses to all nations. This mission will be complete when people representing every nation, tribe, people and language will stand before the throne and before the Lamb praising God. Paul also restates the Great Commission when he says in Ephesians 2:10, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." In other words, every follower of Christ is part of God's mission.

In the most practical way, Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship helps equip people to be actively and enthusiastically involved in the mission, which will be carried out where we live, work and play. Rather than adding something else to our busy schedules, we can consider how God has already providentially placed us where we live, work and play to be ambassadors of grace. Many groups have found that the mission section is the most difficult part of the elements of transformation. As a result, the leader needs to be very intentional about focusing on this area.

The importance of mission can be compared to hunger. When we "eat" spiritually – without living a missional life – we can become complacent and full, but as we use our gifts and serve others in mission, we become spiritually hungry to do more. A Life-on-Life Missional Discipleship group that is serious about equipping its members in mission will find a deep hunger for God, the Scriptures and prayer. Leaders should resist the temptation to let the missional aspect of the group slip away as this will be the one area that makes a good group great.

A whole church can transition from being an inward-focused church to an externally focused church when just a few people are intentional about living in a missional way. An externally focused church can explore ways to collaborate with other externally focused churches in the city and, together, the Church of that city can become a greater influence for good.

Supplication

We conclude the group time with supplication. Jesus uses the Old Testament image of the temple when He says, "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations." One of the means of grace God uses to carry out His mission is the prayers for all nations by His Church. The group is a microcosm of the wider church and can be a very powerful force through prayer.

Jesus also tells His disciples, "Whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive, if you have faith." In a specific sense, our faith in prayers for spiritual fruitfulness and multiplication will be answered because God wants His followers and church to be fruitful and to multiply.

Paul encourages the Roman followers of Christ to "rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer." These Roman Christians were living out the Gospel in a secular society and were being persecuted. A band of committed men or women who are following Jesus in any culture strengthens everyone, because they are constant in prayer.

The weekly exposure and experience of prayer will fortify group members, so they become effective prayer warriors. Protecting time for supplication or prayer in the group is vital for transformation to take place. It is important to make prayer a priority in every meeting, especially if little time was spent praying the week before!

EQUIPPING

If you have a meeting that lasts an hour and a half, how would you plan the time for each of the elements of transformation?

Truth

Accountability

Equipping

Mission

Supplication

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**As you think about your leadership, what elements of transformation would be easy for you to lead?
Which would be a challenge?**

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**What would be some ways you could use the elements of transformation to help a disciple with an
issue that the curriculum doesn't cover?**

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**Since the mission element is usually the most challenging, what are some ways you will make sure
this is a high priority in your group?**

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ACCOUNTABILITY

Without looking at the previous information, answer these questions.

What are the key points you would use to briefly describe the benefits of the truth element of transformation to someone in your group?

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What are the key points you would use to briefly describe the benefits of the equipping element of transformation to someone in your group?

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What are the key points you would use to briefly describe the benefits of the accountability element of transformation to someone in your group?

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What are the key points you would use to briefly describe the benefits of the mission element of transformation to someone in your group?

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What are the key points you would use to briefly describe the benefits of the supplication element of transformation to someone in your group?

MISSION

Last week, you reviewed the equipping you’ve received in missional living this year and were challenged to be intentional about engaging in missional living. Remember that your mission is to take up Christ’s mission to make the gospel known to all people through word and deed.

Your Mission assignment for this week is to prayerfully evaluate the spiritual condition of one person on your prayer list and create a simple plan to make the gospel known to that person. An example of your assignment is provided below. Do this assignment prayerfully, asking God to give you insight to understand this person’s needs and spiritual condition. S/he may or may not be open to hearing the gospel from you at this time, but you may still be able to show Christ’s love through deed. If this person is spiritually curious and searching, it may be a good time to tell your story or bring Jesus into a conversation. If not, you may be able to demonstrate the love of Christ by serving him or her in some way. Be prepared to share about this person at your next Journey Group meeting.

Name and relationship:

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Spiritual assessment:

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Current needs:

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Why I'm concerned:

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What I'm praying:

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What I've done so far:

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What I plan to do:

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SUPPLICATION

“For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”

Genesis 18:19 (ESV)

When God chose Abraham, His desire was for Abraham to teach his children and his children’s children to keep the way of the Lord. Pray, with God’s help, you will be able to teach your children and your grandchildren to love God, to know God, and to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice.

My prayer request regarding the truth for this week:

My prayer request regarding a situation in my life:

My prayer request regarding living a missional life:

Prayer requests from others in my group:

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