

SESSION 5

IMPACTED BY GRACE

This final week is about identity in Jesus. It's the culmination of the weeks of evaluation and declaration you have experienced. It's a reality forged by the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's a connection point with God best illustrated through a deepening prayer life. Being forgiven of sin and impacted by grace transforms a person. This week's Bible study is an examination of what that transformation can truly be like.

BUT TO ALL WHO DID RECEIVE HIM, HE GAVE THEM THE RIGHT TO BE CHILDREN OF GOD, TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME. ([JOHN 1:12](#))

Welcome to week five. Begin this week by sharing portions of your individual study experience together. Take time for each participant who is willing to answer one or more of the following questions:

- *How did God speak directly to you this week through your personal Bible study?*
- *In what ways have you seen God's Spirit active in you this week?*
- *Who has been the most influential person in your life regarding your identity in Christ? Why?*

One of the most interesting undertakings of any faith-based film is the journey of a character. It's one thing to see where a character begins and note where they are as the movie ends. It's another to note the specific parts of the journey that take them there. Taking off an old self and putting on a new one is an active part of being a Christ follower. As we learned in week three, it's called sanctification and it's the work of the Holy Spirit shaping us into the image of Jesus. That process is worth noting in each of our lives.

As you start this week, take time to list five to seven characteristics of a transformed life.

Now make it a little more personal. What has been the most transformational experience in your life as a believer? Share with the group.

Charles Stanley explains that Christian transformation, like restoring old furniture, is a two-stage process. First, one must take off the old. Then, you have a clean slate to put on the new.¹ This week's clip offers a glimpse into that process. As you watch, consider the work that God has done in your life to help you take off the old and put on the new. As you do, remember that the process of pruning in your life is an important step towards God's desired outcome, and recognize that God is still working in your life to shape you into the person He created you to be.

1. Charles Stanley, *A Touch of His Freedom* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 27.

WATCH

MOVIE CLIP



As a group, take time to view the [“Tony’s Apology” clip](#) (3:29). Read the summary statement below before watching the clip. Then take a few moments to discuss the clip using the questions provided.

SUMMARY

The movie *WAR ROOM* is full of turning points. By far, the most significant is Tony’s. From self-focused to Christ-centered. From proud sinner to humble and repentant. From absentee husband to devoted believer. Grace and forgiveness can change a person. So can prayer. This scene paints a picture of repentance and forgiveness that viewers need to see. It’s a picture of answered prayer resulting in life transformation.

OPEN DISCUSSION

1. *Why is it so important that Elizabeth declare to whom she truly belongs?*
2. *Tony doesn’t understand the nature of Elizabeth’s forgiveness. Have you ever wrestled with the idea of being forgiven? How?*

3. *How have you been changed by someone’s prayers for you? How have you seen change in someone else as an answer to your own prayers?*

4. *What difference did it make in Elizabeth’s life when she discovered from where her contentment must come? How did it affect her relationship with Tony?*

Read [Galatians 2:19b-20](#). Underline the phrase, “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.”

How do you see that phrase present in Tony’s life?

Based on both this week’s and last week’s clips, how is that phrase present in Elizabeth’s life?

Think through your own story. What is something God has done in you (through sanctification) to make [Galatians 2:20](#) true in your life? Share that with your group.

READ JESUS’ WORDS TO HIS DISCIPLES IN [JOHN 15:1-8](#).

As a group, list Christ’s primary instructions for His followers.

What does Jesus say about Himself and what does He promise to do in this passage?

The word for *remain* or *abide* in this passage is the Greek word *meno*. In addition to simply remaining or abiding, it means *to continue to be present* or *to be held, or kept continually*. There is the idea of lasting or enduring. Jesus wants us to stay in close fellowship with Him and never pull away.

Fruit is the Greek word *karpos*. It is the outcome or result of remaining connected to Christ, the Vine. Look up the following verses and discuss the types of fruit God seeks.

[Galatians 5:22](#)

[Hebrews 13:15](#)

[Romans 6:22](#)

[Colossians 1:10](#)

[Romans 10:13-15](#)

How are you intentionally staying connected to the Vine? What fruit is present in your life as a result of remaining close to Christ?

USE THE FOLLOWING PRAYER AS A PROMPT TO CLOSE THIS FINAL GROUP TIME.

Heavenly Father, we cannot be more like Christ or produce spiritual fruit in our own power or ability. We need You not only for salvation, but to daily produce spiritual fruit in us and through us. Change us and make us living testimonies of Your transforming power. Please help us stay closely connected to You in prayer, in Your Word, in confession of sin, and in obedience. Fill us with Your Spirit daily and produce eternal fruit through our lives as we abide in You! Thank You for Your amazing grace. Amen.

DAY ONE

"I WAS READY TO DEFEND MYSELF. EXCEPT THIS TIME I CAN'T. I HATE SAYING THIS. BUT I DESERVED TO GET FIRED. I WAS DECEIVING THEM. I WAS DECEIVING YOU."

~TONY JORDAN, WAR ROOM

Confession is hard. It's admitting fault. Accepting guilt and responsibility. There is a step beyond confession, however—repentance. Tony's tone and the remainder of the film are an indication that his confession led to a total heart of repentance. Repentance is not only admitting sin, but also turning away from it. That is the divine work of God in our lives.

It is repentance that establishes forgiveness in our relationship with God. A believer can rightfully say that he is grateful for God's mercy regarding his sin. We may also say, "I am thankful for God's justice regarding my sin." That's less often said but just as much true. In God's justice, sin must be punished. In God's mercy, He provided Jesus to endure it. It would be unjust then to charge your sin against you since Christ already paid the price. Tim Keller writes regarding forgiveness in his book titled, *Prayer*: "It would be unjust for God to deny us forgiveness because Jesus earned our acceptance."¹

There are two important keys to forgiveness.

The first key is atonement. Without the atonement of sin, there cannot be forgiveness.

READ 1 PETER 2:24 ABOUT ATONEMENT AND THE SACRIFICE JESUS MADE.

Whose sins did Jesus bear?

Greek Word: Autarkes

Meaning: strong enough to need no aid or support; sufficient; independent of external circumstances; contented with one's lot, with one's means, though the slenderest.¹

Contentment is an illusion in the American landscape today. The drive for more in every arena has created a culture where nothing is ever close to enough. More money. More status. More education. More busyness. More. More. More. Not necessarily all bad things, but the adage "too much of a good thing" certainly applies.

Where have you attempted to find contentment?

In what areas of life have you struggled to find contentment or to remain content?

Read [Hebrews 13:5](#) and write it in your own paraphrase.

According to the writer of Hebrews, what promise from Jesus allows for contentment?

The nearness of Christ allows contentment regardless of circumstance. James writes to the dispersed believers in the early church, "Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you" ([Jas. 4:8a](#)).

When you find yourself plagued with discontentment how could drawing near to Jesus help you find contentment?

As Elizabeth's marriage was shattering, she learned to be content in Christ. The test of whether Christ is enough rarely happens when life is great. Your truest answer to the contentment question may come in your worst moments.

Name some difficult moments in your life when you felt the nearness of God. How did that bring contentment despite your circumstances?

Can you exude joy and remain content when the earth gives way underfoot? That's what Paul was saying. His response to imprisonment when writing to the church at Philippi was a message of contentment regardless of circumstances. Then came the famous quote in verse 13. "I am able to do all things through Him who strengthens me." Paul did not see contentment and comfort as synonymous. He knew he could be content even while being imprisoned for preaching the gospel. Why could Paul be so bold? Because he had learned the secret of contentment.

What things in this chapter helped Paul find contentment?

[Philippians 4:6-7](#) -

[Philippians 4:8](#) -

[Philippians 4:9](#) -

[Philippians 4:13](#) -

[Philippians 4:19](#) -

Turn the things above into a prayer asking God to use these things to teach you to find your total contentment in Him regardless of your circumstances. Write your prayer and then pray it.

1. Thayer and Smith. "Greek Lexicon entry for Autarkes," *The KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon* [online] (cited 2 March 2015). Available from the Internet: www.biblestudytools.com.

DAY THREE

◀ "I ASKED GOD TO FORGIVE ME. BUT I NEED YOU TO FORGIVE ME. I DON'T WANT YOU TO QUIT ON ME, LIZ."

~TONY JORDAN, WAR ROOM

"I FORGIVE YOU."

~ ELIZABETH JORDAN, WAR ROOM

For your final personal Bible study, we present to you three of the most powerful words uttered in the film and an opportunity to read and reflect regarding their significance in your own life.

I. Forgive. You.

READ [MARK 11:25](#).

What does this verse say we should do when praying?

READ [HEBREWS 4:16](#).

What does this verse invite you to do?

In what manner does it invite you to do it?

In order to understand why we may approach God's throne so boldly, we need to look at the verses just prior.

GO BACK AND READ THE PREVIOUS CONTEXT FOUND IN [HEBREWS 4:12-15](#).

From verses 12 and 13, we understand that the Word of God serves as a living judge, seeing and knowing all that everyone must give account for in his or her life. However, we are able to hold to a confession of faith because, via verses 14 and 15, we know that atonement has been achieved and sins have been forgiven by Jesus our High Priest. It is because of Christ's work of redemption that we might approach heaven confidently. ▶

Without forgiveness, there can be no boldness, no confidence.

That is a change you see immediately in Tony.

Without forgiveness, there can be no generosity in relationships.

This is the change we have been waiting for in Elizabeth. Miss Clara explained earlier in the film that no one deserves God's grace. Now, content in Christ, Elizabeth knows that she belongs to Jesus before she belongs to Tony. That high view of God in her life enables her to extend forgiveness. It fosters a clear view of the gospel applied to life.

J.D. Greear explains that truly experiencing the gospel of Jesus means that no relationship is ever the same again. When presented with the challenge of being wronged or hurt, the gospel will remind you to look at yourself as sinner first and sinned against second. He writes that the "clearest mark of God's grace in your life is a generous

spirit (think forgiveness) toward others.¹

You may pray to God because you have been forgiven by God. You may offer that same forgiveness to others because it has first been given to you.

AS WE WRAP UP THIS STUDY, USE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS TO KEEP GROWING TOWARDS CHRISTLIKENESS.

How will you continue to examine your walk with Christ and seek to line it up with Scripture?

How will you help another believer grow in his or her walk with Christ?

How will you continue to lean on God's grace and submit to Him?

In what ways will you continue to resist the Devil?

Use the prayer of Miss Clara as your own.

HELP ME TO STAND ON YOUR WORD ABOVE ALL ELSE. HELP ME TO FIGHT ON MY KNEES AND WORSHIP YOU WITH MY WHOLE HEART. HELP ME TO PROCLAIM WITH MY LIFE THAT YOU ARE KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. GUIDE ME TO PEOPLE WHO WILL CALL UPON YOUR NAME. RAISE UP THOSE WHO LOVE YOU AND SEEK YOU AND TRUST YOU. CALL US TO BATTLE, LORD.

1. J. D. Greear, *Gospel* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing, 2011), 120-121.