

GOD'S LOVE TRANSFORMS US

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM IN CHRIST
SERIES: GOD IS HOLY—I AM A SINNER/SAINT

BIG TRUTH: GOD'S LOVE TRANSFORMS US

Galatians 5:22-25; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15; 13; Hebrews 12:1-3

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:17-19

“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

BIG IDEAS

- The Holy Spirit makes us more like Jesus.
- God's love for us is supernatural and transformative.
- God's purposes for His children are beyond their imagination and for His glory.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 3:14-21

TRANSFORM - I AM IN CHRIST

The Transform Year is an exploration of what it means to become a “new creation” in Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17) In order for this to happen, we must first find our identity in Him. Many of us live in a consistent state of identity crises. We wrestle with questions like who am I, where do I belong, why do I exist? The answer to these questions is found in Jesus. Our prayer for this semester is that like the Apostle Paul we would be able to say, “I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Galatians 2:20).

SERIES AIMS



Every student should know that...

- God is holy and we are separated from Him in our sin.
- The gospel transforms sinners into saints.
- The Christian life is about becoming who we already are in Christ.



Every student should feel...

- The depth of their sin against the holy God.
- Wonder and awe at the good news of the gospel.
- Secure in the identity that they now have in Jesus.



Every student should strive to...

- Read the entire book of Ephesians
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week during the Ephesians series.
- Learn how to use a commentary.



Every student should want to...

- Be transformed by the gospel.
- Put sin to death and pursue holiness.
- Share the good news of the gospel.

GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 3:17-19

“so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

Saving faith results in a heart change.

“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—“

- Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was a prayer for their spiritual growth and he expressed his understanding that it is God who gives faith to those who believe in his prayer. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was a prayer for their spiritual growth, and in his prayer he expressed his understanding that it is God who gives faith to those who believe.
- This indwelling results in our lives being changed. We are no longer held captive by our sin nature. Instead, we are set free to live for Christ. Because Christ dwells in our hearts, our thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes are different. Through His power working in us, we can live in such a way that brings God glory.

Through Christ, we can grow in our understanding of God.

“that you being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge...”

- Christ's love is the foundation upon which we are granted faith. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that they would be rooted and grounded in this love. Christ's love is the foundation upon which we are granted faith, and Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was that they would be rooted and grounded in this love. We cannot be truly grounded in this love apart from saving faith. Just as we cannot have access to God through any other person except Christ, we cannot know the love of God unless we know Christ.
- Understanding God is a life-long pursuit, yet Paul prays for believers to comprehend God's love now. Paul's fervent prayer reveals what every believer should pursue---to grow in their knowledge of Christ. Even though Christ's love surpasses our knowledge, we can still seek to understand it by seeking to know Him through His Word.

Knowing Christ results in being filled with the fullness of God.

“that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

- Knowing Christ is a life-long pursuit and it means that we are daily seeking to grow in our knowledge of Him. As we grow in our knowledge, we will grow in our understanding of who He is and we are filled up completely with Him. He permeates every part of our lives.

BIG IDEA #1: THE HOLY SPIRIT MAKES US MORE LIKE JESUS.¹**[THIS]**

In Ephesians 3:14, Paul begins his prayer for the Ephesian believers acknowledging God as our heavenly Father. As he prays, he acknowledges the Holy Spirit who lives inside of every believer and gives power to redeemed sinners to become more like Jesus. Paul's prayer reveals a truth for every believer. The power of God makes us like Christ. It is not in our own power that we become like Jesus. This process of being made like Jesus is called sanctification. As we rely upon God's Spirit and submit to His will, we will grow to be more like Christ in every part of our lives. Our strength to live for God and to be His ambassador comes from the Holy Spirit inside of us. We can try to change our outward behavior, but we do not experience a lasting change unless it comes from within.

[THEREFORE]

What does it look like to rely on the Holy Spirit to make us more like Jesus in everyday life?

1 Thessalonians 5:23 tells us that sanctification is the work of God. His Spirit does the work of helping us put away our flesh nature and put on the nature of Jesus. 1 John 1:9 reminds us that God is faithful to forgive our sins and asking for forgiveness of our sins is one way we are sanctified. Philippians 2:13 teaches us that it is God who works inside of us according to His will and for His purposes. Lastly, the truths presented in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 remind us that we can rely upon and trust the sanctifying work of God in our lives.

[THIS]

Paul's prayer gives us insight into the richness of knowing God. God is never understood completely this side of heaven, but His Spirit gives us power to know Him intimately. God's transformation of us strengthens us to be holy like Jesus is holy and to become like Christ in nature. None of this is possible in our own power. The Holy Spirit is the person that God uses to daily and continually grow us and mold us to be like His Son.

[THEREFORE]

What are some ways that you struggle to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit?

In Proverbs 3:5, we see the truth that trusting in God is the only way to make our path straight. Trusting in ourselves leads to anxiety and worry. Philippians 4:19 gives us the promise that God will supply our every need. This includes working in us to make us more like Christ.

How have you seen God transform someone to be more like Jesus?

2 Corinthians 5:17 talks about the new creation that a person becomes when he or she has saving faith in Christ. This means that the works of the flesh, or sin nature, no longer hold them captive and they are set free to live for Christ. Galatians 5:22-26 tells us what the fruit of the Spirit is. These characteristics are the things that are made possible in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is through this sanctification that we begin to look more like Jesus.

1. Ephesians 3:14-17a: God's Spirit transforms us daily to become more like Jesus.

GOD'S LOVE TRANSFORMS US

BIG IDEA #2: GOD'S LOVE FOR US IS SUPERNATURAL AND TRANSFORMATIVE.²**[THIS]**

Paul continues his prayer in Ephesians 3:17-20 by addressing God's love. He speaks of the power of God's love and the way it roots believers and grounds them in His truth. God's love is so powerful it overcomes our rebellious, sinful hearts and draws us to Him. His love is supernatural because He loves us when we are far from Him and are rebelling against Him. His love is unlike any other that we experience. It is what causes Him to sanctify us with His Spirit. Out of love for us, He chooses to work in our hearts every day to reveal our weaknesses and to make us like Him.

[THEREFORE]**How have you seen God's supernatural love overcome your own rebellious heart?**

In Psalm 86:15, the psalmist praises God for His long-suffering and mercy. God's love makes Him slow to anger towards sinners like us. Romans 6:6 tells us that God's love provides a way for us to no longer be enslaved to our sin. It is through Jesus that we are set free. The only way for a sinner to be made a saint is through Jesus. John 6:44 teaches us that it is God who draws people to Him and He is the one who gives faith. He overcomes our rebellious hearts to make us His children.

[THIS]

In Ephesians 3:18-19, Paul prays for the Ephesian believers to comprehend what is impossible to fully understand this side of heaven. His prayer is not in vain. Even though we will not fully comprehend the greatness of God's love in this life, we still experience His supernatural and transformative love everyday. His love is so unlike any other type of love. His love is unconditional, selfless, and eternal. Paul speaks of the transformative power of God's love and the way in which it fills believers with the fullness of God. As we are transformed by His love, we look more and more like Jesus.

[THEREFORE]**How have you seen the transformative power of God's love in others?**

In Ephesians 3:18-19, Paul talks about God's love and it leading to the fullness of God. When we are filled with God, we look, act, and talk differently than before we knew Christ. Acts 22:1-4 tells the story of Paul's life before he knew Jesus. His conversion and encounter with Jesus is a great illustration of the transformative power of God's love.

What does Paul's prayer teach you about God?

Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19 reveals that God wants to know His children. Though we will never fully comprehend God in this life, God does desire to give us a knowledge of Himself that can grow deeper and deeper as we walk in submission to Him. Paul's prayer is that the Ephesians would grow in their understanding of God. Jeremiah 33:3 speaks to God allowing us to understand great things about Him when He tells Jeremiah to call to Him and He will answer him, telling him things that had previously been hidden.

2. Ephesians 3:17b-19: Believers are rooted in God's love which surpasses our understanding.

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S PURPOSES FOR HIS CHILDREN ARE BEYOND THEIR IMAGINATION AND FOR HIS GLORY.³**[THIS]**

Paul ends his prayer for the Ephesians with a great declaration of the mightiness of God. In Ephesians 3:20-21, Paul describes God as one who is able to do more than humans can even think to ask Him to do. Paul brings out a truth about God as a reminder to the Ephesians. It would have seemed incredible to the Gentiles that God had always planned to include them in the promise of salvation. For generations they had been outcasts and counted as unworthy, yet all along, God's plan had included them. Just as Paul revealed in his prayer that the love of Christ surpasses knowledge, fully understanding God is beyond our ability. God's plans for us are beyond anything we can imagine or think. This is the God that Paul prayed the Ephesians would continually seek to know.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen God do things that you previously thought were impossible?

God's work in our lives and in the world is beyond what we can do ourselves. During Jesus' life on earth, He did many mighty things as recorded in Matthew 8 and 9. Paul writes to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 9:8 that God is able to make all grace abound to them and He makes them abound in every good work. Matthew 19:26 serves as a reminder of God's great power and that nothing is impossible with Him.

[THIS]

Ephesians 3:20-21 is about more than the power and greatness of God. Paul teaches the Ephesians that God does more than we can imagine through us. Because we have the power of His Spirit inside of us, God's plan for our lives is more than we can imagine. We may make plans for ourselves. We may even think we understand God's plan for our lives, but God's plans are far more than we think and they are for His glory. God's plan is to glorify Himself through the church. God uses people like you and me to fulfill His great purposes. The power that God uses to bring glory to Himself through us is His Spirit inside of us.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen God using your local church to do things that you couldn't have imagined?

In John 14:12, Jesus promises His followers that they will do even greater works than He did on earth. God works through His people, who are the church, to do marvelous and great things.

What causes you to doubt that God will use you to do great things?

Often it is easier to believe that God is not working, when in truth, He is always working. In Job 23:8-10, Job expresses his inability to discern God near him when he has lost everything, however, at the end of the story Job realizes that God's purposes are at work even when we do not understand them (Job 42:1-6).

3. Ephesians 3:20-21: God can do more for us and through us than we could even imagine through the power of Jesus inside of us.