

GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

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

BIG TRUTH: GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

1 Peter 2:9-10; Hebrews 13:7, 16-17; Romans 12:3-10; 8:29; 12:9-21; Hebrews 12:1-2

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 4:15

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.”

BIG IDEAS

- The church is a people, not an organization.
- God gives the church leaders and spiritual gifts to help one another become mature in the faith.
- God’s goal for His people is that they would each labor to help others become like Jesus.

BIBLE PASSAGE: EPHESIANS 4:8-16

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.

GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 4:15

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.”

Believers are expected to grow in their Christlikeness.

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him...”

- God gathers believers together to form His church. Every person who has ever believed in Jesus as his or her Savior is a member of God’s church. Within the church, believers are called to grow to become more like Christ every day. God gives the church to help us work together to this end.
- The church is the vehicle through which God works in the hearts of His people to sanctify them and to carry His truth to the world. As the church collectively seeks to glorify God, believers will build one another up and will spur one another on to grow in their spiritual maturity.

Maturity involves growing in knowledge of Christ.

“We are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ.”

- In order for believers to mature spiritually, they must grow in their knowledge and understanding of Christ. Because God’s purpose for believers is for them to be like Christ, we must always seek to deepen our understanding of His character and attributes.
- We grow in our knowledge of Christ when we study God’s Word. God gave us His Word to guide us and to reveal Himself to us. It is the way that God speaks to believers. As we deepen our study of God’s Word, we will grow in our knowledge of Christ and we will mature spiritually.

Mature believers speak the truth in love.

“Rather, speaking the truth in love...”

- The way in which believers love others distinguishes them from the rest of the world. As the body of Christ, or His church, God calls us to work together to help each other grow in our spiritual maturity. When we can speak the truth to one another in love, we will grow in our spiritual maturity.
- Speaking the truth in love is necessary for spiritual growth within the church. God has ordained that believers are joined together by His Spirit and it is through this connection that believers can spur one another on to bring God glory with their lives. Pointing out wrong behaviors, choices, and attitudes in a loving way is one way that the body of Christ works together to grow in Christ-likeness. As the church follows the example of Jesus during His earthly ministry, she will speak truth to all and she will do so in a loving way.

GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

BIG IDEA #1: THE CHURCH IS A PEOPLE, NOT AN ORGANIZATION.¹

[THIS]

Ephesians 4:11-12 is a list of roles and positions created by God for His church. This list also tells us that God's church is not just an organization or building; it is made up of redeemed people joined to one another by God's Spirit. This church is made up of all people everywhere who are a part of God's family. 1 Peter 2:9-10 also shows us that God chose His church; He chose His people to be set apart for Him. God chose to gather all who repent and believe in Jesus into a group known as His church, or family, that they might glorify Him together.

[THEREFORE]

How do people think wrongly about God's church?

It is easy to confuse the church as just being a building, but the church is made up of God's people. In Mark 14:58, Jesus taught His listeners this very truth—the church is not a building or temple; it is the people of God. Sometimes the church can be seen as a place to receive rather than to give to. 1 Peter 4:10 reminds us that believers are called to serve one another just as Christ served while He ministered on earth.

[THIS]

God has united His people together and uniquely provided for His church. In Ephesians 4:11, Paul briefly lists some of the people who make up the church. We see a picture of the church as a group of people in Acts 16:11-34. In these verses, we see the way in which God redeems people and adds them to His church. Every local church is made up of redeemed men and women who are connected with other redeemed people all over the world.

[THEREFORE]

Why is it significant that the church is people and not an organization?

In John 1:12, we see that God adopts people into His family when He redeems them from their sin. This truth is further explained in 1 John 3:1-2, where we see that it is God's love that leads Him to gather His redeemed people together into His family. This family is His church. In Ephesians 1:5, we see that God chose to adopt sinners into His family through Jesus and then to make this redeemed people His church.

What role do you or can you play as part of the church?

Hebrews 10:25 teaches us that when the church gathers, it serves a greater purpose of encouraging one another. As a member of the church, every believer can encourage other believers. Acts 2:42 gives us a picture of the early church meeting together and providing for one another's needs. This provision of needs can be continued throughout the church today.

1. Ephesians 4:11-12: God gathers His believers together to create His church. The church is not a building or organization; it is God's people living and working together to bring God glory.

GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

BIG IDEA #2: GOD GIVES THE CHURCH LEADERS AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS TO HELP ONE ANOTHER BECOME MATURE IN THE FAITH.²

[THIS]

God not only gathers people to be His church, He equips the church with leaders to lead the people to spiritual maturity. Paul's list in Ephesians 4:11 gives us an idea of the types of leaders God uses in the church. God has specifically given the church shepherds, or overseers, and teachers to help the people grow in their spiritual maturity. We see this role in Ephesians 4:12 when Paul says the function of church leadership is to equip believers for ministry and the building up of the body. God works inside of His church through church leadership to impart knowledge of Himself to all believers. These leaders are given to the church to guide the church to bring God glory.

[THEREFORE]

How has your own spiritual walk been influenced by your church leaders?

Proverbs 27:17 offers us a picture of the ways our church leadership can influence our spiritual maturity. When we experience life together with other believers it is like iron sharpening iron. This sharpening helps us grow in our understanding and knowledge of Jesus. Hebrews 13:17 further explains the role church leaders should have in our lives and the type of influence they can have if we are submissive to their leadership.

[THIS]

The church exists to build one another up. God's people are gathered to help each person grow spiritually mature. Paul explains this in Ephesians 4:11-13 and then in verse 14, he describes the things that prevent maturity. When we aren't grounded in God's truth, we are easily deceived by false doctrine and deceitful schemes. We are gathered as a church to encourage one another to live fully for Christ. God also gives believers spiritual gifts to equip them for the edification of the body. These gifts are used to help the church grow into spiritual maturity. God chose to join His people to one another in order to create a purposeful dependency upon one another and upon Him.

[THEREFORE]

How are you using your spiritual gifts to build up God's family?

1 Timothy 4:10-11 and 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 teach us that our spiritual gifts are for God's church and can be used to build it up in love.

How have you seen spiritual immaturity affect the local church?

James 4:1 teaches us that our sinful passions at war within us lead to jealousy and strife. Being controlled by these passions is the mark of spiritual immaturity. 2 Corinthians 12:20 also reminds us of the effects of spiritual immaturity. Proverbs 28:25, 16:28, and 15:18 all teach us the cause of strife in the church: spiritual immaturity among believers.

What are you doing to ensure you are not remaining spiritually immature?

Colossians 2:6-7 shows us the importance of being rooted in our faith in Jesus in order to grow up in our faith. Hebrews 12:2 also serves as a reminder of the importance of being grounded in the truth of Jesus through His Word to grow into spiritual maturity.

2. Ephesians 4:11-14: God provides leaders and spiritual gifts to His people to help them grow in spiritual maturity.

GOD IS MAKING US LIKE JESUS THROUGH HIS CHURCH

BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S GOAL FOR HIS PEOPLE IS THAT THEY WOULD EACH LABOR TO HELP THE OTHERS BECOME LIKE JESUS.³

[THIS]

The goal of the church is to live together in such a way that God's people grow to be like Christ more and more each day. Paul brings the church's purpose to light in Ephesians 4:12-14. In these verses, we see that the end result to be desired is Christ-likeness. This Christ-likeness is obtained through a spiritual maturing. Spiritual maturity happens as God's people live together grounded in God's Word, seeking to glorify God as His body. The church grows together into Christ-likeness as believers live life with one another. When believers enter into each other's lives with the intent to encourage each other to live holy and set apart lives, they are achieving the goal of the church.

[THEREFORE]

How are you seeking to labor alongside of other believers in your local church?

1 Peter 3:8 gives us a list of ways that we can live with other believers in a way that encourages spiritual growth. Romans 12:16 also teaches us that living in harmony with others and humbling ourselves facilitates spiritual growth in the church. Acts 4:32 and 1:14 show us ways to labor with other believers to fulfill the goal of the church and to encourage spiritual growth.

[THIS]

Ephesians 4:15-16 give us a method in which we can grow more spiritually mature. Part of spiritual maturity is speaking truth to one another in love. When we live life with one another and seek to build each other up, we will be in a position to speak truth that may be hard to hear at times. When we function as God intends for His church to function, the body will grow in knowledge and wisdom. The church will become more like Christ and will be a sweet fragrance to the world. When we love as we are called to love, we will be a witness to the world of God's great love for all mankind.

[THEREFORE]

What are some reasons believers fail to speak truth in love?

Sometimes believers find it difficult to speak the truth in love because they fear being judgmental. Paul speaks to this in 1 Corinthians 5:12 where he says that we are to judge those inside of the church. We are intended to build one another up in spiritual maturity and this is only possible when we speak truth to one another. Galatians 6:1 serves as a reminder of the importance of speaking truth to other believers because of the temptation that could happen to us if we allow sin to continue.

How have you seen others grow when truth was spoken in love to them?

After Jesus' resurrection, He appeared to His disciples when they were fishing. As He spoke to them, He instructed Peter personally to shepherd His flock of followers. Jesus spoke truth in love to Peter and Peter became an integral part of the building of the church.⁴

3. Ephesians 4:11-16: The purpose of the church is to bring God glory by building one another up and helping one another grow into spiritual maturity.

4. John 21:1-19: Jesus appears to the disciples and instructs Peter to shepherd His flock of followers.