

GROWTH REQUIRES REPENTANCE

YEAR: TRANSFORM / FOCUS: I AM GROWING
SERIES: GOD IS THE TREASURE - I AM BANKRUPT

BIG TRUTH: GROWTH REQUIRES REPENTANCE

Jeremiah 17:9; Hebrews 2:1; 3:12; Luke 18:9-14

BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 5:48

"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

BIG IDEAS

- The way we think about life, morality, and goodness is defective.
- Jesus doesn't want our best effort; He wants our heart.
- Repentance is a continuous turning to God and a turning away from sin, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency.

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 5:21-48

TRANSFORM - I AM GROWING

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...

- Life, joy, wisdom, and purpose are only found in our treasure, Jesus
- Apart from Jesus we are personally, relationally, and spiritually bankrupt
- The Christian life is about growth not arrival.



Every student should feel...

- Encouraged that Jesus is the treasure our hearts desire
- The depth of their personal and spiritual bankruptcy
- Emboldened to live for God's kingdom alone



Every student should strive to...

- Read the Sermon on the Mount
- Memorize the Bible Verse each week
- Begin practicing some of the basic spiritual disciplines



Every student should want to...

- See the Beatitudes become their attitudes
- Put sin to death and live for God's kingdom
- Pursue Jesus by embracing and practicing spiritual disciplines

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.

GROWTH REQUIRES REPENTANCE

BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 5:48*"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."***God commands His children to be different than the world.***"You therefore must be perfect..."*

- When people place a saving faith in Jesus, they become new creations, which means their hearts are set free from their sin nature and they are no longer slaves to their sin. Being a new creation means becoming more like Christ every day. God commands His people to be different than the world. Throughout Scripture, God commands His children to put away the earthly, or sinful, things inside of them and to seek to be like Christ.
- Christ is perfect and lived the perfect life on earth. As a follower of Christ seeks to be like Christ, they must put away their sinful desires and seek to be like God. Jesus taught this truth during His Sermon on the Mount. Those who want to be like God must seek to be holy like He is holy.

Jesus does not ask anything of His people that He does not equip them to do.*"...as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

- During Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He taught a new way of thinking about life on earth. Repeatedly, He spoke of man's idea of what is right and then He taught God's way. Believers are called to live perfectly and God equips His people to live obediently for Him.
- Jesus lived an obedient life to God while He was on earth. He set the example for His followers. He went before them living according to God's commands and He did so with a human nature. He lived sinless and resisted temptation, setting the example for perfection that every follower of Christ is called to.

Jesus followers are called to set aside their sinful desires in order to be like God.*"You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*

- In order to seek the perfection of God, Jesus followers must put away their earthly desires. A Jesus follower must submit their lives to Christ fully and completely. This means setting aside our own ideas and thoughts about what it means to live a holy life on earth. We must submit to God's Word and His commands in order to become like Christ as we're commanded to do.

BIG IDEA #1: THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT LIFE, MORALITY, AND GOODNESS IS DEFECTIVE.¹

[THIS]

Beginning in Matthew 5:21, Jesus' teaching highlighted the defectiveness of man's heart. Jeremiah 17:9 says that man's heart is deceptive and wicked. The heart of man cannot be trusted to lead him to God. Instead, it leads man away from God and toward our own selfish and sinful desires. Jesus spends a lot of time teaching His followers how to live a holy life and He begins His statements pointing out how the world's idea of good is different than God's. The world teaches that we should only love those who love us or treat us well. God's command is to love even our enemies. The world teaches that we are to look out for ourselves and seek our own happiness. God's Word teaches that we are to die to ourselves and seek God's glory over our own happiness. God's Word has to be the lens through which we look at our lives on earth.

[THEREFORE]

What defective thoughts about life and goodness has your heart led you to think?

Mark 7:21 teaches us that our wickedness comes from our hearts. From our hearts come evil thoughts and then those thoughts lead us to actions. Galatians 5:17 reminds us that our flesh is set against the Spirit. This means our hearts are not naturally in line with the Spirit. Titus 1:15-16 warns us of following our hearts instead of being led by the Spirit.

[THIS]

The world has its version of morality, a set of rules governing how people should behave. This version of morality is defective because it is determined by human hearts that are born sinful. The world's idea of morality changes with the latest pressing issues. As followers of Christ, if we succumb to the world's idea of morality, we will move away from God and not toward Him. Truly, only God determines what is morally right and good because God is the only righteous judge of all things. Jesus shows the defectiveness of the world's idea of morality and goodness in His Sermon on the Mount. God's way of living is radically different than the world's, but it is the only way to true spiritual life.

[THEREFORE]

How does the world's idea of morality and goodness conflict with God's command for his people to be holy like He is?

1 John 2:15-17 illustrates the way the world focuses on self and not on God. 1 Peter 1:14 teaches us to give up our former, sinful passions and to follow God. Jude 1:19 shows us that worldly people do not seek harmony and peace as commanded by God. Lastly, Matthew 5:38-39 is an example of the difference between the world's idea of morality and true morality.

What practical habits or disciplines can you begin to cultivate in your daily life to help you see righteousness the way that God does?

James 3:17 shows us that God's wisdom is perfect and pure. Proverbs 1:7 and 2:6 teach us that it is this wisdom and knowledge that we should seek. As we discipline ourselves to seek God's wisdom through His Word, we will live lives that are moral and good in His sight.

1. Matthew 5:21: As Jesus teaches what it means to live for God, He reveals that man's ideas are defective and skewed by their sinful hearts.

BIG IDEA #2: JESUS DOESN'T WANT OUR BEST EFFORT; HE WANTS OUR HEART.²**[THIS]**

There is a desire inside of us to save ourselves, to rule over ourselves, to seek our glory rather than God's. In the very beginning, the first man and woman traded their perfect relationship with God for the desire of their own deceptive hearts. Since the beginning, we have tried to be good enough to merit eternal life with God. Yet, God's Word teaches that no one is free from sin.³ Even the good works and deeds we do are like filthy rags compared to God's holiness and perfection.⁴ Even if we spend our entire lives working as hard as we can to be good and we give our very best effort, we will arrive at the end of our life short of the righteousness required to spend eternity with God.

[THEREFORE]**How have you mistaken your effort for salvation?**

Ephesians 2:8-10 speaks to the futility of our works to save us. Only faith granted to us by God can save us from our sin. Hebrews 11:6 reminds us that it is faith that brings us to God and Galatians 2:16 shows us that all of our good deeds and best efforts do not save us.

[THIS]

Following Jesus is no easy task. Jesus even warns people to count the cost of following Him before they set out to do so.⁵ Following Jesus costs more than just doing good works or giving a good effort. To follow Jesus, a person must give up himself completely. Jesus teaches that being His disciple means denying yourself and taking up your cross every day. In order to truly do this, our hearts must be made new. Through salvation, Jesus does indeed make our hearts new and it is through this work that we surrender ourselves completely to Him and the Holy Spirit's work inside of us.

[THEREFORE]**How do your works reveal that your heart belongs to Jesus?**

James 1:22 teaches us that we should be doers of God's Word and not just hearers. This means that when we submit our hearts to Him, we will do His works and obey His commands. James 2:17 teaches that if our lives do not reveal an obedience to God's Word, our faith is most likely not genuine. Matthew 5:16 shows us the importance of our lives revealing the true nature of our heart.

What challenges do you face in living truly for God and not just focusing on outward appearances of a righteous life?

In Matthew 5:21-48, Jesus teaches that it is in the heart that man reveals his true obedience to God. Our sin originates in our hearts. We can often focus on appearing Godly and obedient even when our hearts are caught up in sin.

2. Matthew 5:28: Jesus teaches that it is in our hearts that we sin first.

3. Romans 3:23: All have sinned and fall short of God's glory.

4. Isaiah 64:6: Our good deeds are like filthy rags.

5. Luke 14:28: Jesus teaches that His followers should count the cost of following Him.

BIG IDEA #3: REPENTANCE IS A CONTINUOUS TURNING TO GOD AND A TURNING AWAY FROM SIN, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY.⁶

[THIS]

Repentance is a part of the life of a Jesus follower. Throughout Scripture, the Word of God teaches that God's people should confess and repent of their sin. When we have saving faith in Jesus, our hearts are changed from sinful and blind to our sin and we are enlightened to the grace we've received. When we live aware of this grace, we will live repenting of our sins and asking for and giving forgiveness. Our repentance is a daily thing. It is a continuous act of seeking to grow spiritually by ridding ourselves of our sinful behaviors and attitudes that are characteristic of our flesh nature. We do not have to ask for saving forgiveness every day, because once we have turned from our sin we can trust that we are forgiven forever. However, we do still battle against our flesh nature while we are alive on this earth. The sanctification process is the process of continuous repentance that results in growth.

[THEREFORE]

What are attitudes, behaviors, or actions that keep you from repenting daily?

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus presents the story of two men entering the temple. They both had different responses to their heart condition. One had so much pride that he could not see his own sin. James 5:16 reminds us that when we confess our sins and repent of them, we are healed as God sanctifies us.

[THIS]

Jesus calls His people to die to themselves every day that they might fully follow Him. This call is not an easy one because our flesh leads us to rely upon ourselves, our own ideas and wisdom, and our own power rather than relying upon God. We often don't repent of our self-reliance and self-sufficiency because we are blind to it. As we grow spiritually, we also lean toward a self-righteousness. We become proud of the spiritual maturity we've acquired, not realizing that anything we have is because of God's Spirit at work inside of us. Repentance requires us to acknowledge the areas where we are relying upon ourselves and the times we are acting self-righteous. When we live aware of the grace that God has shown us, we will repent of these heart attitudes and then we will experience real spiritual growth.

[THEREFORE]

In what ways have you struggled with self-righteousness and self-reliance?

In Mark 12:31, Jesus teaches that we should love our neighbors as we love ourselves. We cannot fully do this if we are living self-righteous lives. We can love others when we understand our own sinfulness. Romans 12:19 warns us to never avenge ourselves. When we are trusting God with every part of our lives, we will not seek our own revenge, but rely upon God.

What habits and attitudes can you establish to help your repentance become a continuous action resulting in your spiritual growth?

1 John 1:9 tells us if we confess our sins, God is faithful to forgive us. Colossians 3:13 teaches us to bear with others and to forgive just as God has forgiven us. Ephesians 4:31-32 commands us to put away our malice and to be kind to others. When we establish a habit of remembering the grace that God showed us in sending His Son, we will establish the behavior of repenting of our sin and growing spiritually.

6. Matthew 5:23-24: Jesus taught that our lives should be marked by repentance and forgiveness.