



BREAKOUT LESSON 8
TRANSFER Your Experience

TRANSFER Your Experience. This is the serve step. It is the last step. It is a very active and important step. It is the step that involves me telling, teaching, sharing, informing others about what has happened to me and how God has changed me and how this change can happen in another person's life who is struggling like I am struggling. It is transferring what you have learned in your struggle with your hurts, your hang-ups and your habits in a gentle and open way to help others experience the freedom you have experienced. It is travelling with someone else who is walking a similar path.

CONVERSATION STARTER: When we serve someone else it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Serving can be as simple as holding open a door for the person behind you at the store or as significant as signing up to teach children every Sunday in kids ministry. Share with the group a recent experience you've had of serving another person or group. How were you impacted by the experience? How was your faith shaped by the experience?

MEMORY VERSE:

"God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."
Matthew 5:10

VIDEO NOTES:

God wants me to _____ my experience.

God never wastes at _____.

2 Corinthians 1:4

"He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us."

God wants to use my experience to _____ other people.

3 Ways to Transfer my Experience Others

- 1) Tell my _____.
- 2) _____ others.
- 3) _____ alongside someone else.

All of us can have a _____.

“The very thing we thought He could never use is often what He gives us the ministry in.”

STUDY:

When we go through struggles with hurts, hang-ups and habits, we can take comfort in the fact that God knows what we are going through and God cares. Not only that, according to the Apostle Paul, God can use our struggles for good. Although we can never know all the reasons why we suffer, we can know that God can redeem our suffering and use it for His glory. This is what the Apostle Paul shares with the Corinthians.

READ: 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

Context of 2 Corinthians 1:3-7

The Apostle Paul begins this letter to the Corinthians praising God for being our source of comfort. We are comforted in our troubles, Paul says, so that we can comfort others. In this letter, Paul is wanting to bring comfort to the Corinthians. He had written them a “severe letter” earlier. Now he was writing to remind them that whenever we suffer for Christ, God can use that suffering to bring glory to Him. Like the Corinthians, God can work through us to minister to others using the experiences that brought our suffering. He can use our suffering to bring others hope.

- In verse 4 Paul writes, “He comforts us in all our troubles so we can comfort others.” What are some ways that God might comfort us when we are struggling?
- Paul goes on to write, “When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.” How do you think this is possible? After all, we’re not God! How are we able to give others the same comfort that God has given us?
- What example can you think of about someone who has suffered but then gone on share their experience with others to help them?

Joni Eareckson Tada – Comforting others with the comfort God has given us

Joni Eareckson Tada had a diving accident as a teen that left her a quadriplegic. Over the decades, Joni has thought deeply into how God can use our struggles to serve and bless others. Read the following account from Joni.

Hi, I'm Joni Eareckson Tada with a poignant memory to share.

My mother and I and a friend were staying in a borrowed mountain cabin in North Carolina – this was years ago. Outside, the air was cold, gray and damp. The air around our fireplace, however, was bright and warm from the burning logs, as well as from the smiles of our friends visiting up from Asheville, North Carolina. Bruce, a spinal cord-injured quadriplegic, sat straight and handsome in his wheelchair. I would never have guessed that a few days before, his wife had moved out, or that he was facing tremendous legal and financial problems, as well as the normal baggage of adjustments for any new quadriplegic – before the accident in which he broke his neck, Bruce had been a successful dentist. With no use of his hands, he had lost his career.

"This stuff isn't easy," he sighed—and he was right. So we compared notes on how to adjust and how to move forward when your feet and hands don't work and you must sit in a wheelchair for the rest of your life. It was a heart-wrenching conversation, and while Bruce and I talked, I glanced over at my 84-year-old mother – she kept nodding in agreement with this "knowing" expression. I knew she was a battle-scarred veteran who had experienced much pain and loss in her day. At the end of the visit, after we had "talked shop" and taken photos, after we huddled closer to the fire to pray, finally my mother spoke up the first time. Actually, she didn't speak as much as offer the following song. Softly she began singing:

"I do not know, why oft' around me,
My hopes all shattered seem to be;
God's perfect plan I cannot see,
But someday, I'll understand.

Someday he'll make it plain to me,
Someday when I his face shall see.
Someday from tears I shall be free,
For someday I shall understand."*

Her voice may have sounded cracked and off-key, but as we listened, Bruce and I felt our hearts enlarge with the comfort she was offering. It was a 2 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 3, moment:

"Praise be to God who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." – 2 Corinthians 1:3

This moment I've described was many years ago; back in the 90's, but I remember it as though it was yesterday. My mother was not a seminary graduate or a Bible scholar, but she offered what comfort she could, in the form of a beautiful hymn that I remember her singing by my hospital bedside when I first broke my neck.

I often look back on that day and think of the unique way my mother gave glory to God through her song. God's glory is the radiance of His attributes that break forth in visible

ways around us. That day by the fire, my mother was God's mirror – glorifying Him and reflecting the light of His comfort deep into our hearts. Friend, think of ways that, today, you can radiate the attributes of our wonderful Savior; showing forbearance when you are misunderstood; reflecting kindness to someone in need; demonstrating long-suffering with a family member who irritates; exhibiting patience in a tough trial; and giving love in an unlovely situation with unlovely people. For when you do, these supernatural qualities will radiate the Lord and bring the Father glory.

- What does this story teach us about how God can use our struggles to bring comfort to others?
- If you could ask God a question about your own struggles, what would you ask Him?

READ: 1 Peter 4:1-11 – As you read through this passage, consider how God can use the suffering we experience with our hurts, hang-ups and habits to bring glory to Him and to help others.

Christian Suffering: First Peter is focused almost exclusively on Christian suffering, especially unjust persecution at the hands of people hostile to the faith. The several themes about suffering that are woven throughout the letter find their climactic expression in 4:12-19. We should not be surprised when suffering comes (4:12). God has a purpose for us in suffering: It brings us into fellowship with Christ, who suffered before He was glorified (4:13). We need to commit ourselves to doing what is right when we face suffering (4:19). When difficulties come our way, we must live lives characterized by love for Jesus and for others. We need to remember in our trials that God is both sovereign and faithful (4:19). He controls all the circumstances of life, and we don't need to fear that a trial will come our way apart from God's oversight or will. Source: NLT Study Bible – Christian Suffering

- In 1 Peter 4:1, Peter says that we should be ready to suffer for Christ. The main context of this is suffering that comes from being persecuted by others from our faith, but it can also include the suffering we go through from our hurts, hang-ups and habits. What does it look like to “be ready to suffer for Christ”?
- In verses 2-4, Peter outlines how our suffering will help us to be through with dabbling in sin. How might suffering from our hurts, hang-ups and habits help us say “no” to the sin that got us there?
- In verses 4-5 we read about the influence of people who are not followers of Jesus. These “former friends” can drag us down. Peter reminds us to remember that all of us will have to stand before God to give an account of the way we have lived. How does God's judgment impact the way you relate to former friends who are not followers of Jesus?
- In verses 7-11, Peter shares how we should live in light of the fact that our world will soon end and Jesus will return. We are to use the gifts God has given us to serve

others. What gifts or abilities has God given you to serve? As LifeGroup members, what gifts and abilities do you see in each other?

PRAY: For your prayer time for this final session, ask God to powerfully work in your lives to BREAKOUT. Take this time to bless each other. Pray that God will help your fellow LifeGroup members to TRANSFER their experiences of suffering to bless the lives of others. Ask God to give you confidence to minister for Him!

Further study options for you to do on your own or as a group.

God gives us spiritual gifts for two purposes – to serve others and to bring glory to Him.

READ: 1 Peter 4:10-11

“God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another. Do you have the gift of speaking? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. Do you have the gift of helping others? Do it with all the strength and energy that God supplies. Then everything you do will bring glory to God through Jesus Christ. All glory and power to Him forever and ever! Amen!”

How does God receive glory when we serve others? The transforming work that He has done in our lives is on display. God has transformed us from being selfish to being selfless. When we serve others the world gets to see the impact of a life transformed by Jesus. Serving others is one of the key ways we can point others to the life changing power of Christ. What can you do to serve someone in Jesus’ Name this week?

God gives us examples of several of the gifts He gives and their purpose.

READ: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 – One body, many gifts.

While we are all one as the body of Christ, we have uniqueness in gifts God has given us to serve. The purpose of these gifts, Paul says, is so that we can help each other. Each one of us has a ministry, a God-given responsibility to serve and love others in the body of Christ and in our communities. A common question many of us ask is, “How can I know what gift God has given me?” One of the best ways to figure that out is to serve! As you serve others, God will begin to show you how He has wired you to serve. So give it a try. Sign up to serve at church. Serve someone in your neighbourhood. Watch what God does to show you the gift (or gifts) He has given you.

When we serve others we are becoming more like Jesus.

READ: John 13:12-17 – Jesus washes the disciples’ feet.

There’s something about serving others that makes us more like Jesus. Jesus lived His life as a servant. Although He is Lord and our Teacher, He humbled himself and became the greatest servant of all (see Philippians 2:1-11). Imagine what it must have been like to be in the room that night that Jesus washed His disciples’ feet? What would you be thinking, what emotions would you be experiencing, as you feel the towel rubbing the dirt and grime off? What thoughts would cross your mind as you watch your Master bend down to wash the feet of your friends? Although we no longer need to literally wash one another’s feet, the principle remains. Jesus served us as an example for us to follow. He said, “Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.”

God never wastes a hurt.

READ: John 10:10

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

God never wastes a hurt. When we suffer, it is tempting to think, “How can God ever use this in my life?” On this side of heaven we will never know all the reasons why we suffer, but we can know this. God can take the hurt and suffering we go through and use it for His glory. The “thief” that Jesus refers to in John 10 is Satan. Satan wants to use our suffering to destroy us. Jesus’ purpose is to use all of our experiences to bring us life. Through God’s sovereignty and power, He is able to take even the darkest moments of our lives and use them for His glory and for the good of others. This week, ask God, “Lord, how do you want to take what I’m going through and use it for your glory?” Remember this – Jesus came to bring you life. God never wastes a hurt.

Telling My Story

READ: Matthew 5:14-16

“You are the light of the world – like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

The light shines most brightly in the darkest places. One of the most powerful ways that God touches our hearts is through our common experience with suffering. When we share our story of our hurts, hang-ups and habits and how God has helped us break free, we become light for

Jesus. Telling your story takes practice. A great place to begin is simply to write it down. In your story, be real about your suffering, don't downplay it. Then, shine a spotlight on Jesus. Focus on telling others about how God has helped you. God doesn't wait until our stories are fully resolved. Many times they will never be. When we tell our story, we open a window to our soul and let His light shine out. This week, take some time to write your story, then share your story with a friend. Watch how God can use your story to shine his light to the world.