



LifeGroup Study
2024-01-28
OPEN
Open to Transformation
Leader Notes

OVERVIEW:

Welcome back to our study, Open to the Spirit. Over the six weeks of our series we are exploring who the Holy Spirit is, how He is at work in our lives and how we can follow his lead. For this week, our topic is “Open to Transformation”. Romans 8 gives us insight into how we are transformed by the power of the Spirit. For our LifeGroup study, let’s explore what that transformation looks like.

ICEBREAKER: [That Changed Me!](#)

When I was 21, I left my family home in London, Ontario, to attend Bible College in Toccoa Falls College (TFC) in Georgia. That experience changed my life. It was the first time I had been away from home and out on my own. The environment at TFC was transformative in my walk with God. How about you? What experience have you had that has changed who you are or the direction of your life? Share your story with the group!

STUDY:

For the first part of our study, we'll walk through the first 17 verses of Romans 8 to see how God's Spirit transforms us. As your group reads through these verses and talks about the questions, remember that God's Spirit is at work in you! He is transforming your heart and mind, even through this study.

Transformed by the Spirit

1. READ: Romans 8:1-2

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you^[a] free from the law of sin and death. NIV

- **According to these verses, how has God's Spirit transformed us?**

LEADER NOTE: The Holy Spirit is a life giving power that frees us (followers of Jesus) from the power of sin that leads to death. Therefore, we are no longer condemned. God's Spirit has transformed us by setting us free from the power that kept us slaves to sin (see 7:23) and by giving us power to live our new life in Christ. (see 2 Cor. 5:17)

2. READ: Romans 8:3-4

³For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh,^[a] God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.^[b] And so he condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. NIV

- **How does Paul contrast the law and the Spirit in these verses?**

LEADER NOTE: In these verses we see a powerful contrast between the law and the Spirit. The law was powerless to transform us. Why? Our flesh weakened the power of the law to save us. In our flesh we could not live up to the requirements of the laws God laid out in the Old Testament. So God sent His Son to pay the penalty we owed for failing to live up to the law. Through Christ's Spirit, we are no longer condemned by the law. Instead, we are found righteous in him.

3. READ: Romans 8:5-6

⁵Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. ⁶The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. NIV

- **What differences do you see in these verses between living according to the flesh and living according to the Spirit?**

LEADER NOTE: To live according to the flesh is to have our "minds set on what the flesh desires". In the flesh, our minds are set on/fixated on/valuing the priorities and values of the world. The mind set on what the flesh desires is not focused on God, but on the worries, concerns and desires of this

temporal life. In Matthew 16:23, we see an example of having a mind set on what the flesh desires. In this passage, Peter responded to Jesus' prophesy that he would be crucified, said, "This will never happen to you." To this, Jesus replies, "'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.'"

4. READ: Romans 8:6-7

⁶The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. ⁷The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. NIV

- In these verses Paul contrasts the mind governed by the flesh to the mind governed by the Spirit. **What does it mean to have our mind "governed by" the flesh or the Spirit?**

LEADER NOTE: To be "governed by" is to be controlled by or led by. To be governed by the flesh means our mind is controlled by the cares and desires of this world and we are not thinking about the kingdom of God. The mind controlled by the flesh lives for the here and now and the result is death – spiritual separation from God. The mind controlled by the Spirit is the polar opposite. This Spirit-filled mind focuses on and lives for the things of God. The result of having our mind controlled by the Spirit is life (forever with God) and peace (a restored relationship with God). This indeed is a transformation.

5. READ: Romans 8:9-11

⁹You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. ¹⁰But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life^[a] because of righteousness. ¹¹And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of^[b] his Spirit who lives in you. NIV

- What is at the heart of our transformation? It is Christ living *in* you through the presence and power of his Spirit! **How can you know that God's Spirit is living in you?**

LEADER NOTE: We know that God's Spirit is living in us because Jesus promised us we would receive his Spirit when we believe in Him. (see John 14:15). Having God's Spirit in us is not necessarily evidenced by an emotional experience or a feeling (although it can be). We receive Jesus, and therefore receive his Spirit, by believing in Jesus through faith. (see John 1:12-13). We can know God's Spirit is living in us because he empowers us to say no to the realm of the flesh and yes to the way of the Spirit.

6. READ: Romans 8:12-13

¹²Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. ¹³For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. NIV

- **What does it look like to " ... put to death the misdeeds of the body ..."?**

LEADER NOTE: According to Paul we put the misdeeds of the body to death “ ... by the Spirit ...”. We cannot win the battle of the temptations and desires of our flesh on our own. We need God’s strength and power to say “no” to these desires and temptations. Note the finality of Paul’s language here. We are not to flirt with sin, saying yes to it one day and no to it another. By the power of the Spirit, we can put the misdeeds of the body (sin) to death. This does not mean we will never sin again. But it does mean that by God’s power we can count ourselves dead to sin. (see Romans 6:11)

7. READ: Romans 8:14-15

¹⁴For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, “*Abba*,^[b] Father.” NIV

- Here is another incredible transformation God has done for us. We are no longer slaves of fear. Instead, we are children of God! **What does it mean to you to be adopted into God’s family?**

LEADER NOTE: To be adopted into God’s family means that God is now our loving heavenly Father. We are at peace with him and secure in him. To be adopted means we have been fully accepted by God. He has transformed us from living as slaves to fear to living in the freedom of being dearly loved children of God.

8. READ: Romans 8:16-17

¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory. NIV

- In these verses we read, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs – “ **What does it mean to be an heir of God?**

LEADER NOTE: As heirs of God we have “an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade ... kept in heaven” (1 Peter 1:4). We are co-heirs with Christ. This means we will inherit, along with Jesus, everything that the Father will give him. Hebrews 1:2 says that the Son has been appointed heir of all things. All that Jesus will receive from the Father we also will receive in him.

The Fruit of the Spirit

One of the key means by which we are transformed by God’s Spirit is His sanctifying work in us, making us more and more like Jesus. The evidence of this work is what the Bible calls The Fruit of the Spirit

9. READ: Galatians 5:22-23

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. NIV

- **How would you describe the Fruit of the Spirit?**

LEADER NOTE: There are a number of things we can say about the Fruit of the Spirit. First, it's a package deal. Rather than God working out just one or two of these things in our lives, God is after transforming our entire character through all of the descriptors we see here. Second, the Fruit of the Spirit is a progressive work the Spirit does in us. We don't nail the fruit of the Spirit right away! 😊 In fact, as long as we are in the flesh, we will struggle to fully live as God wants us to. But, we can be encouraged that God's Spirit is at work, transforming us into his image, for his glory!

- Read back through the Fruit of the Spirit list in Galatians 5:22-23. **Which of these do you have questions about? Which do you hope to grow in?**

For more info about the Fruit of the Spirit, check out this link - <https://www.gotquestions.org/fruit-of-the-Holy-Spirit.html>

PRAYER:

Spend some time today thanking God for his transforming work in your life. Ask him to help you grow more and more like his Son as you follow his lead.