

FIVE WEEKS OF PREPARING FOR GOD'S GREATER MOVE IN OUR CHURCH



## **TRANSFORMATION**



# CORNERSTONE CORNERSTONE LIVE • LOVE • LEAD

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# SERMON

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# SESSION 4

ransformation

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2

#### INTRODUCING THIS WEEK'S FOCUS: TRANSFORMATION

Let's think about transformation in a personal way. When we are transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, it is like seeing dramatic "before and after" pictures of weight loss. How many of us have tried to lose weight? We start a new diet or exercise routine, only to derail far too soon. We look at our "before" picture and see no difference in that lingering added weight we still carry.

So much of the time, even when we stick to those goals of transformation, we give ourselves too short a period of time to see results. We may not see the change we were looking for overnight, but when we stick to it, changes are taking place within.

In spiritual growth, just like personal health, we must establish new standards for our lives. Not just cutting out the unhealthy, but replacing it with the nutritious. It isn't just less fast food, but more vegetables. Yes, cutting things out is important, but to be "ALL IN," we must fill those spaces with good things! (Matthew 12:43-45).

#### **GETTING STARTED**

- What is one time you not only stopped a bad habit but actually replaced it with a good habit?
- Why is spiritual transformation foundational to being a disciple?



#### **SCRIPTURE**

**READ: ACTS 11:19-30** 

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord. 22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24 He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord. 25 Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26 and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. 27 During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28 One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29 The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. **30** This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

#### **ABOUT THIS SESSION**

In Acts 11:19-30, we see God's people transformed from Jews only into Gentiles and Jews together serving the Lord. They are centered in a new place, Antioch. Jerusalem is no longer the center of the early church and now is a recipient of the help of the new transformed church in Antioch! Here in Antioch, believers are called by a new name "Christians" for the first time (11:26), and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are now leading the New Testament church like never before. The people of God are thinking in a whole new way! This is what we need as well.

Like our example of weight loss above, so often we ask God to remove the old, sinful nature in us, but we don't take time to replace it with the renewing of our minds and attitudes in Christ Jesus (Romans 12:2). We ask God to leave His legacy through us, but we don't focus on the transformation that still needs to happen in us. Our minds and ways of thinking need to be renewed! That's why, as a church, we look to the Bible to give us standards of how we should live. Before we look at this, discuss the following question together.

#### **QUESTIONS**

How has this small group helped you renew your mind and attitudes to God's new way of thinking and living?

### LIVING THIS OUT TOGETHER

If we are going to be ALL IN on God's Kingdom mission for Cornerstone, we must renew our minds in how we serve one another and walk with each other. Based on Acts 6:3-5, we see the standards the early church used to serve one another. At Cornerstone, we want to renew our thinking about how we serve one another and the community for Christ. Here are the first three standards from Acts 6:3-5 we are adopting at Cornerstone:

#### STANDARD #1: PERSONAL INTEGRITY

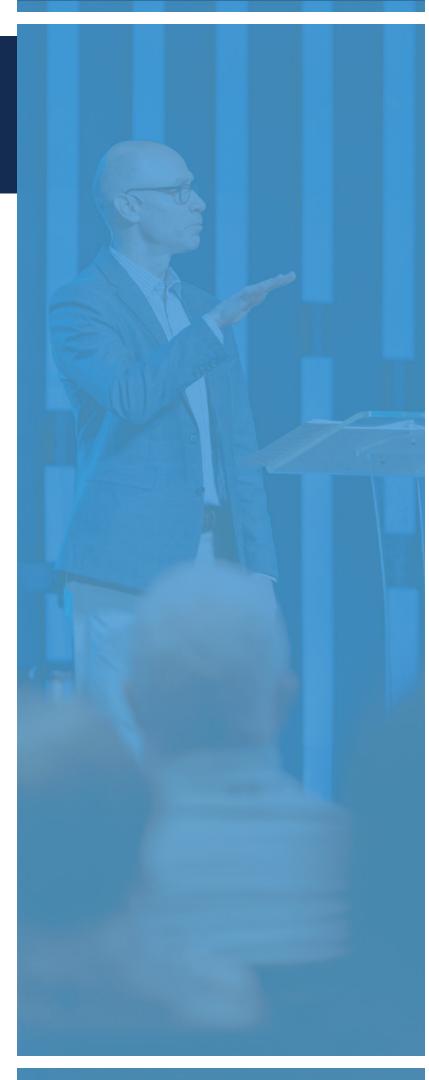
When the first church needed people to serve, they looked to "choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of The Spirit..." (Acts 6:3). These first people were known for their integrity. Transformation is never possible without integrity. Legacy is never possible without integrity. It is something we always have to grow in.

This is why personal integrity is the first of our Cornerstone standards. This is a massive undertaking when we recognize that the word 'integrity' comes from the Latin meaning "whole" or "complete." Yes, we will never be totally whole until Heaven, but for now, we can have integrity by being completely ourselves before God and one another. There God can begin to do miracles in our lives.

None of us is perfect, but so often we feel the need to hide and pretend when it comes to our faults. Integrity starts with receiving the grace and forgiveness of Jesus and then being who we are and growing from there.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- When was a time you shared your faults with other believers and that sharing sparked a deep work of God's transformation in your life?
- How can we as a small group help foster that opportunity for integrity and healing?



#### STANDARD #2: MINISTRY COMPETENCY

In Acts 6:3-5, the apostles are looking for people who they can "turn this responsibility over to". In other words, they expected people who served to be competent and committed to the responsibilities given to them.

One of the biggest reasons people are nervous to serve in a church is they don't feel competent to "do the job." At Cornerstone, we are committed to training each person in simple and encouraging ways so that they can experience the transformation that comes from serving Jesus.

#### **QUESTIONS**

- How has serving in the church helped you grow as Christian and know Jesus more?
- 2 What area of ministry have you always wanted to develop the skills and competency for?

(Feel free to reach out to our Discipleship Pastor, Pastor Brett, or Gina Campangini-Ruiz, who coordinates many of our ministry teams)

#### STANDARD #3: A TEAM BUILDING MINDSET

Acts 6:3 also shows us that the Apostles assigned a team, and not just one person, to be responsible to meet a great need in the church. Yet so often in the American Church and culture, we try to do things by ourselves . . . only to burn out or buckle under all of the demands.

The New Testament is filled with example after example of Jesus' disciples in Jerusalem, Judea and to the ends of the Earth going out in ministry together. Yes, there will challenging moments learning to love and work with each other, but in the end, we will grow to be more like Jesus and leave His legacy in this world. It's the only way to be ALL IN!

#### **QUESTIONS**

- How has serving on a ministry team helped you to see God and your life differently and help you grow?
- In what ways are you trying to serve God on your own instead of with a team?
- How can we better share the responsibilities of our small group so even more people can be discipled and cared for?

#### PRAYER POINTS

Close your time together in prayer. Take down prayer requests at some point. Take your time to live in His presence together. Here are some ways you can choose to pray as a group based on this session:

- Based on what you have heard from each other as you answered the discussion questions, spend some time praying for each other.
  - Pray that each one in the group will have a new experience of renewing their minds and being transformed in their attitudes. You can pray Romans 12:1-2 over them.
  - Pray for Cornerstone to be a church family that grows in these Biblical standards and is used by the Lord to create disciples who make disciples in our neighborhoods, workplaces and communities.

#### PRAYER REQUESTS

Below is a space for you to write down the prayer requests of others from your small group to pray for all week long.







#### DAY 1

Another look at Acts 11:19-21

In Acts 11:19, God once again used Stephen's life to bring the good news of Jesus as His people scattered due to His persecution. They traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, only sharing the Good News to the Jews. However, in verse 20 we learn that some were raised up to go beyond, to overcome fear and let the "new" that God wanted to do. They were led by the hand of God and they preached to the Greek. Many believed and turned to the Lord, as verse 21 describes.

We, as the church of Christ, need to be careful not to limit who we welcome, preach to and aid. In Romans
1:14-16, Paul says that he had an obligation to share the gospel with everybody, Jews and Greeks. We,
as the body of Christ, have this obligation as well. Despite cultural differences, God is molding churches
to become one and to reflect the heavens. He is breaking barriers so churches learn to spread the good
news of Jesus, not only to those like us, but to those different, those who need it (everyone). We pray
today, in Jesus' name, that we, the body of Christ, follow the example established here to achieve that
transformation. As hard as this re-shaping process may be, the hand of the Lord is with us. AMEN!

#### DAY 2

Another look at Acts 11:22-30

We find many instances in the Bible where we see God's extended grace, such as the moment when Jesus extended His grace to the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43). We also see God extending His grace to the Church in Antioch (Acts 11:23).

We are to be encouraged to see God's grace, and we all play a part in it. Extended grace is what God provides to everyone - new believers, firm believers, and even the unbelievers.

New believers, rejoice, you have received God's grace and are part of His family through Jesus. Barnabas' words to the people of Antioch are the same words for you today, "... remain true to the Lord." (Acts 11:23). If you believe in Christ, you are God's child and will always be such.

For the firm believers, let us take action (Acts 11:22), rejoice and encourage (Acts 11:23), and teach the word of God. (Acts 11:26) We will see God transforming lives through His grace in our church and community.

Prayer: I Praise Your name, oh Lord, for Your mercy toward us is great, and Your extended grace is everlasting. Guide us in Your path, and help us to do Your will. In Jesus' name. Amen.



#### DAY 3

#### **Our Standards:**

We grow disciples who have: Personal Integrity

God doesn't transform who we pretend to be. He can only transform who we really are. I (Pastor Shawn)often say, "God can heal a broken heart, but you have to give Him all the pieces." Instead of being afraid of being condemned or rejected by God or other believers, we need to follow 1 John 1:8-10. People who served were "known to be full of The Spirit..." (Acts 6:3) These people were known for their integrity and God can grow us in this area. So, while you may feel like you don't have strong personal integrity, and believe the first step (ironically) is just confessing that you don't have it. Then jump ALL IN and believe Jesus' promise to transform your life through His Word, His Spirit and His people.

#### **REFLECT**

Most of us say, "I've tried everything to change" when the truth is we've only tried the things that we are in control of or we want to do. Maybe its time to really "try everything" by letting Jesus lead you to others to help you grow.

Lord Jesus, give me the courage and faith to reach out to a small group, Pastor or Christian friend			
in the place I am struggling.			

#### DAY 4

#### **Our Standards:**

We grow disciples who have: Ministry Competency

Most of us only do things inour comfort zone. Meanwhile, God has created us to do so much more if we are willing to learn new things and be trained in areas we can make a difference in. In Acts 6:3 the Apostles "turn over the responsibilities" to people they know are competent to do the job. Obviously, all of us need Jesus to competently serve Him, and we must do our part by learning new skills and getting experience.

#### REFLECT

What passion or dream has God given you to serve Him? Where would you "love" to serve and see God change lives? Don't forget the "Principle of The First"! We do things a first time so we can learn how to do it better the second time! Don't be afraid to try, fail, grow and learn!

Lord Jesus, please help me to have courage and ask for the training I need to serve you more. Open a door for me to start to serve and grow in the ministry You have given me a passion for.

#### DAY 5

#### **Our Standards:**

We grow disciples who have: A Team Building Mindset

As we have already mentioned in group, the standard for ministry in the New Testament is "together". We are supposed to serve God with others. In fact, Jesus said that the way the world will know that we are His disciples is by the way we love one another. His glory is always served and made more visible, when we serve together. In Acts 6, the first servants of the church are a team of people called to meet a need. We need to have the same mindset.

#### **REFLECT**

How can you encourage someone to serve in your ministry with you? The best thing to help those you serve is to build a team of people who can serve more than you can alone. Who is someone who wants to serve but doesn't believe they can do it? Call them forth and invite them to be a difference maker with you.

Lord Jesus, show me the person I should reach out to and invite to serve with me.



In John 17:11 Jesus prayed that all of His disciples would be one. As a church, understanding our mission, priorities and standards helps us to have unity within our great diversity.

Knowing these gives us the ability to be ALL IN for His glory 365 days a year!

#### **3 || OUR MISSION**

#### **WE** grow disciples who:

- 1. Live in His presence
- 2. Love one another
- 3. Lead others to Jesus

In Matthew 28:19, Jesus has given us one mission: go and make disciples. True disciples make disciples. Our church is a place where we strengthen you and provide space to do that. Our mission statement identifies three of the greatest characteristics of a true and growing disciple.

In Mark 12:30, Jesus said the greatest commandment was to love God with everything you have and everything you are. We know this is only possible through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our mission is to help disciples grow in living in the Spirit (Live in His Presence) every day.

In John 13:34, Jesus gives one new command, to love one another the way He loves us. Cornerstone's mission is to provide the teaching, opportunities and encouragement for each disciple to receive the love of God and grow in living it out. (Love One Another)

In Luke 19:10, Jesus said that He came to seek and save what was lost. True disciples of Jesus want to do the same thing. True disciples make other disciples and fulfill the heart of God to have the lost found and come back to His family. (Lead Others to Jesus)

We sum all of this up with a simple saying: "Live. Love. Lead."

#### **6 || OUR PRIORITIES**

Acts 2:42-47 describes the pattern and priorities of the first church that Jesus created through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We commit to these same priorities through specific programs that give you the chance to be discipled and disciple others.

#### **WE** grow disciples through our:

1. Discipleship Pathway	(v42) "devoted to the apostles teaching"
2. Small Groups	(v42) "devoted themselves to the fellowship"
3. Spirit-led Services & Prayer	(v43) "many signs and wonders were done"
4. Bilingual Ministry	(v44) "All had everything in common"
5. Ministry Teams	(v45) "They gave to anyone as they had need"
6. Next Gen Programs	(v47) "The Lord added those who were saved"

You can find out more about each of these priorities on our website and in our Week 2 & Week 3 ALL IN study.

#### **5 || OUR STANDARDS**

Acts 6:3-5 gives us a description of those who were first called to serve the church. We believe that all those who serve should grow into this as a standard. We want every member to become a disciple that has these qualities and commitments in their relationships and in their ministry. These standards grow great disciples who make a very fruitful church! Notice the New Testament church pattern for those who serve & lead.

#### **WE** grow disciples with:

(v3) "known to be full of the Holy Spirit"
(v3) "we will turn this responsibility over to them"
(v3) "choose seven men from among you"
(v3) "full of wisdom"
(v5) "they chosePhilip, Procorus, Nicanor"

You can find out more about each of these standards through our Week 4 & Week 5 ALL IN study and in both our Keep Growing and ministry team trainings.

