



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



FORTY

DAYS OF

TRANSFORMATION

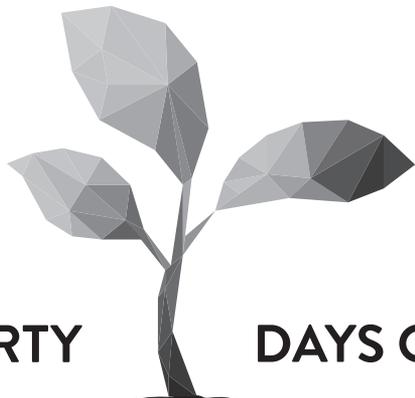


DAILY DEVOTIONS

SERMON NOTES

SMALL GROUP GUIDES

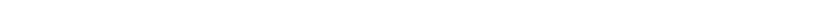
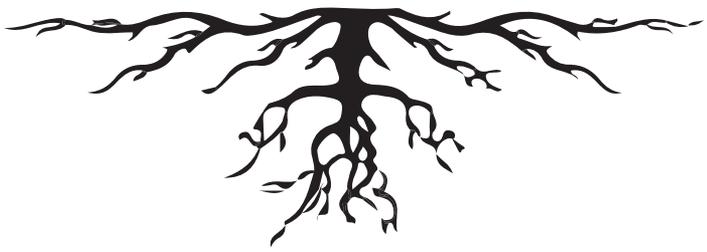
AND MORE!



FORTY

DAYS OF

TRANSFORMATION



>> HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

WELCOME TO 40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION!

This book is designed to supplement the 40 Days of Transformation worship series. It will guide your Lenten transformation through devotions, discussion and reflection questions, and additional resources.

For each week you will find:



SERMON NOTES

A space for you to note key points, questions and inspirations. There won't be a test. There are no wrong answers. Just write down whatever you want to remember. If you ever miss the sermon, you can find an audio version and a written transcript at popmn.org/downloads.



DAILY DEVOTION

A scripture reading, questions for personal reflection, and a short prayer for every day of the week. Take the weekly themes into your daily life.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

A place to note where you're at on this journey and where you'd like to see your relationship with God continue to grow in your life, your community, and the world. Use this as a place to put your joys and concerns into words, and as a reminder of the people and situations you want to hold in your prayers.



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Thought provoking questions and ideas to guide your small group's discussion. Not a member of a small group? You can use these pages for personal reflection or to begin a conversation with family and friends. If you'd like to start or join a small group, please contact Amy Oestreich, Community Life Director, at 952-898-9393 or aoestreich@popmn.org.



VIDEO

Dive deeper into the weekly theme with short videos from psychology professionals. Watch these videos individually or in a small group setting to spark meaningful discussion.



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Look back at what you have learned and how far you have come. Reflecting on what we've learned is key to retention. At the end of each week, these questions will help you reflect as you continue on this transformation journey.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books, websites, podcasts and more. Still have questions? Want to learn more? These resources have been picked by Prince of Peace pastors and staff to help you go deeper into each topic.



NOTES

Space for additional thoughts or reflection. Write. Draw. Doodle. Make it yours.





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
FEAR
TO
COURAGE**

SESSION 1



SERMON NOTES



DAY 1 | DEVOTION

THEN HE ASKED THEM, “WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?”

– LUKE 8:25



READ LUKE 8:22-25

We all struggle with fear, letting it take control of our minds and actions. Jesus uses this journey with the disciples to teach them about fear and faith. Even in the midst of the storm, we are to lean on our faith and not our fear.

QUESTIONS

What is the worst storm you remember? What did it take to survive?

What is Jesus teaching his disciples by ignoring and then rebuking the storm?

What tone did Jesus use in verse 25?

What does this story teach you about fear and courage?

PRAYER

God, help me today to choose faith over fear in the midst of any storm that might come my way. I know you are always with me, and for that I am truly grateful. Help me to trust more deeply in that today, Amen.



DAY 2 | DEVOTION

THE LORD IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION— SO WHY SHOULD I BE AFRAID? THE LORD IS MY FORTRESS, PROTECTING ME FROM DANGER, SO WHY SHOULD I TREMBLE?

– PSALM 27:1



READ PSALM 27:1

We have all experienced getting caught up in the “what-if” game. Fear and worry team up against us and consume our thoughts, actions, and emotions. Anticipating what might be can paralyze us with fear, but choosing courage and faith will lead us down a path of freedom and joy.

QUESTIONS

What three qualities of God does David recall in this verse?

How can this verse help to pull you out of the “what-if” game?

Is this verse easy for you to lean on? Why or why not?

PRAYER

Lord, you are my light and salvation, my fortress and protector. Though I know the fear will creep in, help me to lean into who you are and the ways that your character provides for me. I have nothing to fear, for I know you are with me, Amen.



DAY 3 | DEVOTION

AND AFTER THE FIRE THERE WAS THE SOUND
OF A GENTLE WHISPER.

– 1 KINGS 19:12



READ 1 KINGS 19:1-18

Many people in our world face persecution and are fearful for their lives. We see this reality in our news, via social media outlets, and all around us, if we open our eyes. But the Lord promises to provide for us and to be with us; we need to listen for his gentle whisper.

QUESTIONS

Have you had an experience where you felt like you were running for your life? What was that like? How did you feel God at work in the midst of it?

Elijah prays that he might die. Instead, the angel provides food and water and tells him to keep going. How do you think Elijah felt? Would you respond as he did? Why or why not?

How did this experience help Elijah move from fear to courage?

PRAYER

God, I pray for those that are running for their lives in our world, our country, and right here in our community. Give them courage, strength and peace in the knowledge that you are with them. Help me to listen for your gentle whisper today, Amen.



DAY 4 | DEVOTION

BUT WHEN I AM AFRAID,
I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN YOU.

– PSALM 56:3



READ PSALM 56:1-13

Fear is powerful. It can override our logical thinking and produce irrational behavior. Thankfully, Christians don't have to let fear of anything rule our actions. We can declare, "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in [God]" (Psalm 56:3).

QUESTIONS

What is the silliest thing you are afraid of?

What does it mean to trust God in fearful circumstances?

Does being afraid lead you to trust God more or less?

Which verse from this Psalm resonates with you most? Why?

PRAYER

God, thank you for being on my side! I know I can walk in your life-giving light, pushing aside my fears and trusting in your promises. Help me today to live into that and choose to trust in you more, Amen.



DAY 5 | DEVOTION

SO BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS, ALL YOU
WHO PUT YOUR HOPE IN THE LORD!

– PSALM 31:24



READ PSALM 31:14-24

In the midst of fear, we all have ways to cope. Some focus on deep breathing, others focus on calming and happy spaces, and others go to a friend or loved one for comfort. But don't forget about our best way to cope: turn to the Lord and trust in God's promises to you.

QUESTIONS

What is your "go-to" coping method when you're fearful or anxious?

What words and acts prove David's faith in the midst of challenging circumstances?

How is God's goodness evident in this Psalm?

In what situation now do you need to "be strong and courageous?"

PRAYER

Lord, help me to turn to you first instead of my usual coping methods. I know that true strength and courage come from you. Thank you for your unfailing love – my hope is in you! Amen.



DAY 6 | DEVOTION

FOR GOD HAS NOT GIVEN US A SPIRIT
OF FEAR AND TIMIDITY, BUT OF POWER,
LOVE, AND SELF-DISCIPLINE.

– 2 TIMOTHY 1:7



READ 2 TIMOTHY 1:6-12

The Lord has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of courage. And yet, leaning into that courage takes practice. We need to take the leap, try something new, leave our fears behind, and push ourselves into the unknown. Fear may try to stop us but we can be courageous in knowing God is with us.

QUESTIONS

When have you been courageous and stepped out of your comfort zone? How was that experience for you?

What does it mean to “suffer for the sake of the Good News?”

What is God’s promise for you in these verses?

PRAYER

God, give me the strength to step out of my comfort zone in order to serve you. Open my eyes to areas in my life that need a little more courage. Help me today to lean into your spirit of power and love, not fear and timidity. Amen.



DAY 7 | DEVOTION

I PRAYED TO THE LORD, AND HE ANSWERED ME.
HE FREED ME FROM ALL MY FEARS.

– PSALM 34:4



READ PSALM 34:1-10

Fear often shows up in our lives when we are at risk of losing something. It reveals our innate desire to protect the things in life that are important to us, rather than fully entrusting them to God's care and control. But when we trust the reality of God's presence, power, protection, and provision for our lives, we find that the true remedy for our fear is in God.

QUESTIONS

In your life, what are you fearful of losing?

What does this Psalm tell you about God's promises?

How can you entrust your fears into God's care and control?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for listening to my prayers. I know that you hear me and save me from my fears. Help me to trust you with the things I fear, especially the things I fear I will lose, for I know you are in control. Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is bringing you joy?

Where are you experiencing fear?

Where do you want to see God in action in your life this week?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Fear is a dominant emotion in our culture today. It shrinks our view of possibilities, crushes creativity, isolates us, quenches hope and feeds despair. But scripture is filled with the admonition, “Do not be afraid,” and it is almost always followed by the assurance of God’s presence and promise to come to our rescue. These assurances are the main ingredients of hope, and hope is the foundation of courage. Courage, like bravery, isn’t always the absence of fear; it is the strength to act despite our feelings.

SCRIPTURE TEXT | JOSHUA 1:1-9

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

In every age and context, leadership transitions are tenuous times. They create uncertainty and anxiety and are often times of revolt and civil war. That’s enough to make any new leader anxious. But Joshua had far more to be anxious about: he had big shoes to fill from his predecessor, Moses, the epic leader who defeated Pharaoh; the Israelites are about to enter a new land; and he’s preparing for the impending encounter with those who already live in the Promised Land. It’s no wonder, then, that this opening passage focuses on God’s assurance to Joshua as a leader. It also explains why God twice tells Joshua to be strong and courageous! No doubt Joshua was feeling weak and terrified. And on what basis could Joshua afford to be strong and courageous? God’s promises.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where does unhealthy fear show up in your life? What does it keep you from doing or experiencing?
- When and how have you overcome unhealthy fear?
- How can, or how does, faith address unhealthy fear in you? How do you keep the truth in front of you?
- What additional fears would you add to the list previously discussed that you think are common among other disciples...and what do those fears drive us to do or to avoid?



APPLICATION

This week, identify someone you can encourage. How are they gifted and what can you do to cheer them on?



BONUS

Identify someone that encouraged your gifts and reach out to thank them.



VIDEO

FROM FEAR TO COURAGE

Joshua 1:1-9

Presented by Paula Becker, MA Licensed Psychologist

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about fear and courage this week. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about fear and courage, and about God this week?

How am I different today than I was a week ago?

What is the main thing I want to remember about fear and courage going forward?

What is one thing I can do to live into my transformation this week?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Daring Greatly by Brene Brown



PODCAST

Leadership Vision Podcast: Episode #37 Understanding The Link Between Fear and Courage

<https://www.leadershipvisionconsulting.com/understanding-fear-courage-podcast/>



VIDEO

Living With Courage: Embracing Fear to Follow Your Heart: Kelley Kalafatich at TEDxBend

<https://youtu.be/jlIHxjj36vA>

Why You Should Define Your Fears Instead of Your Goals: Tim Ferriss | TED

<https://youtu.be/5J6jAC6XxAI>



BLOG

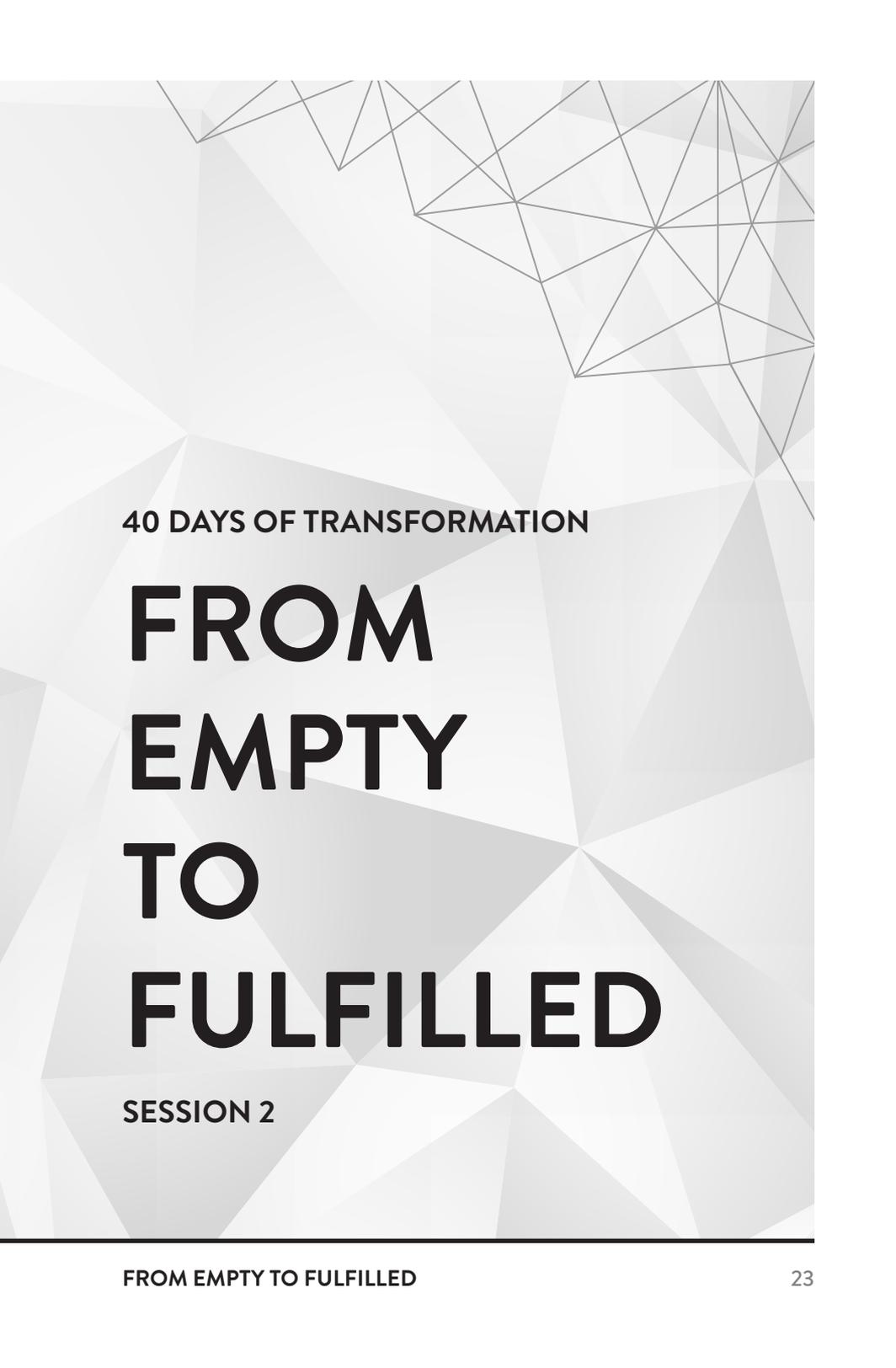
5 Bold Exercises to Build Your Courage Muscle

<https://www.success.com/5-bold-exercises-to-work-your-courage-muscle/>



NOTES





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
EMPTY
TO
FULFILLED**

SESSION 2



SERMON NOTES



DAY 8 | DEVOTION

BUT WHEN THEY MEASURED IT OUT, EVERYONE HAD JUST ENOUGH. THOSE WHO GATHERED A LOT HAD NOTHING LEFT OVER, AND THOSE WHO GATHERED ONLY A LITTLE HAD ENOUGH.

– EXODUS 16:18



READ EXODUS 16:1-31

When we feel empty, our mindset can quickly focus on the negative and what we lack. We can find a lot to complain about in many areas of our life. But we can always bring our concerns and complaints to God when we don't understand the "why." God promises to never leave us or forsake us, and God seeks to provide for us.

QUESTIONS

Even though God delivered the Israelites from Egypt, they find lots to complain about. Do you feel like complaining at times?

What are some ways that God has provided for you?

Do you practice being honest before God when things don't work out the way you prefer? Take some time to allow God's loving presence to surround you in your honesty.

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for loving me amidst all my feelings and for listening when I complain. Help me to trust you to meet my needs out of your perfect love for me. Amen.



DAY 9 | DEVOTION

THEN THE WOMAN TOLD ELIJAH, “NOW I KNOW FOR SURE THAT YOU ARE A MAN OF GOD, AND THAT THE LORD TRULY SPEAKS THROUGH YOU.”

– 1 KINGS 17:24



READ 1 KINGS 17:8-24

When we experience emptiness, a drought, it can be easy to doubt God. Like the widow, sometimes we are doing all we can to simply survive. It can seem like God is nowhere to be found and yet, we know God is there. As hard as it may be, we can allow doubt to move us toward a deeper faith and trust in God as we dialogue with trusted others, and God, through these times.

QUESTIONS

What is the closest you've come to experiencing a drought? How has God shown you love in those hard times?

How would you respond to Elijah's arrival if you were the widow?

How could you use a time of drought to seek answers through scripture, prayer, and watching for the way God provides?

PRAYER

God, when times get hard, it can be easy to doubt that you are with me. Help me to remain confident that you are with me and providing all I need. Thank you for always listening to my doubts and loving me, Amen.



DAY 10 | DEVOTION

THIS MIRACULOUS SIGN AT CANA IN GALILEE
WAS THE FIRST TIME JESUS REVEALED HIS GLORY.
AND HIS DISCIPLES BELIEVED IN HIM.

– JOHN 2:11



READ JOHN 2:1-11

We've all experienced times when things didn't go as planned, as they did at this wedding. Where do you turn for help? When we choose to turn to God, we tend to be more aware of how God is at work and are able to experience God's provision in unexpected ways.

QUESTIONS

How have you been surprised by God's unexpected provisions in your life?

How might this miraculous sign transform your attitudes about, and understanding of, God's healing and provision?

Jesus' mother teaches us compassion for those who lack what they need and then to seek Jesus for provision. Do you know anyone in need for whom you could pray for on a regular basis?

PRAYER

Lord, things in life don't always go according to my plans. Help me turn to you and trust in your plans. Teach me to come before you and to be with me in my emptiness, trusting in your answers. Help me to bring before you the people for whom I am aware are in need. Amen.



DAY 11 | DEVOTION

“MY GRACE IS ALL YOU NEED. MY POWER WORKS BEST IN WEAKNESS. SO NOW I AM GLAD TO BOAST ABOUT MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST CAN WORK THROUGH ME.”

– 2 CORINTHIANS 12:9



READ 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-10

Though we all experience it, we generally don't enjoy feeling empty or weak. However, God chooses to use those times to reveal God's power and love to us and through us. We can embrace the discomfort and fully lean on God and trust God on a deeper level.

QUESTIONS

How has Paul's thorn affected his life?

How do you feel about God's promise in verse 9?

How has God worked in and through you during a time of weakness?

What will you do to develop trust in God during times of weakness?

PRAYER

God, I admit it is really hard to embrace the discomfort in my weaknesses and difficult feelings. Help me to trust you in difficulty. Thanks for revealing your love and power when I need it most, Amen.



DAY 12 | DEVOTION

“I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE. WHOEVER COMES TO ME WILL NEVER BE HUNGRY AGAIN. WHOEVER BELIEVES IN ME WILL NEVER BE THIRSTY.”

– JOHN 6:35



READ JOHN 6:22-35

Even those who were face-to-face with Jesus had a hard time understanding his miracles and ministry. Jesus emphasizes that it's not the tangible things of this world that will fill us, but a belief in him and trust in the fact that he is all we need. Jesus is our true source of life, promising that if we turn to him, we will never hunger or thirst again.

QUESTIONS

How does Jesus use the crowd's interest in food to illustrate what he wants to teach them?

What comparisons can you find between the manna story we read in Exodus 16 and this story? What are the differences?

How has Jesus, the “bread of life,” given life to you?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for sending Jesus and promising that with him, we will no longer hunger or thirst. Teach me to rely fully on that promise and to trust that you will fulfill me. Amen.



DAY 13 | DEVOTION

“COME TO ME WITH YOUR EARS WIDE OPEN.
LISTEN, AND YOU WILL FIND LIFE. I WILL MAKE AN
EVERLASTING COVENANT WITH YOU.”

– ISAIAH 55:3



READ ISAIAH 55:1-7

Over and over in this passage, we are invited to come to God. God is ready and willing to provide for us, but first it takes action on our part. We can come to God, listening and seeking, allowing God to lead us to fullness. Now is the time for action.

QUESTIONS

What does it mean to “seek the Lord?”

What things have you spent your money or labor on that were ultimately unfulfilling?

What does it look like for you to seek the Lord today? How can you take a step into that call?

PRAYER

God, I know that you are always ready for me to call upon you. Thank you for your patience and steadfast love. Help me to seek you first to fulfill me, for I know you will meet me there. Amen.



DAY 14 | DEVOTION

I PRAY THAT GOD, THE SOURCE OF HOPE, WILL FILL YOU COMPLETELY WITH JOY AND PEACE BECAUSE YOU TRUST IN HIM. THEN YOU WILL OVERFLOW WITH CONFIDENT HOPE THROUGH THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

– ROMANS 15:13



READ ROMANS 15:13

Trust in God is the first step to us being fulfilled by him and his promises. We've seen it over and over this week in the scriptures: God promises to provide for us; to fulfill us.

QUESTIONS

How can you continue to trust God more and more each day?

Have you ever felt completely filled with joy and peace from the Lord? What was that like for you?

How do you know when we are completely filled? When you feel confident in God's fulfillment, what is your next step? How does it change your actions and outlook?

PRAYER

God, you are my true source of hope. Thank you for your joy and peace that can overflow from me and affect the world around me. Help me to continue to live into your promises to fill me completely, Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is bringing you joy?

Where are you experiencing emptiness?

How do you need to be filled by God this week?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

When we find ourselves at a place of emptiness it can lead us to growth or despair. Oftentimes people seek to experience fulfillment in a variety of ways apart from scriptural teaching. As long as we believe fulfillment comes from acquiring possessions, positions, relationships, or checking things off a list of what we believe we 'should' do in life, we will struggle with emptiness. Jesus calls us to a higher purpose and fullness of life.

SCRIPTURE TEXT | JOHN 4:1-34

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

Jesus left Judea to go back to Galilee where he had spent most of his life prior to ministry. Samaria was between these two places and although most Jews went out of their way to avoid Samaria, Jesus and his disciples went through this town. Jesus was tired from the day and a half walk and sat down at the well. A woman from Samaria came to the well during this time, which was around noon. This woman was alone because of her bad reputation or because she knew she would be able to come in contact with travelers there at noon. Jesus affirmed the woman's dignity and elevated her self-worth by asking out of his need from her available resources. Jesus' self-emptying allowed another to experience purpose and fulfillment.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Where do you see yourself in this text?
- What does emptiness feel like and how have you tended to the emptiness within you?
- When are times you have felt fulfillment? What was the source, or reason, for feeling fulfilled?
- Was there a time you experienced God's unconditional love when you weren't looking? What happened?



APPLICATION

This week, notice the sources you turn to in order to feel fulfilled. Try leaning into the scriptures and feel the goodness of Jesus' fulfillment.



VIDEO

FROM EMPTY TO FULFILLED

John 4:1-34

Presented by Paula Becker, MA Licensed Psychologist

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about emptiness and fulfillment this week. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about emptiness and fulfillment, and about God this week?

How am I different today than I was a week ago?

What is the main thing I want to remember about emptiness and fulfillment going forward?

What is one thing I can do to live into my transformation this week?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Chasing Francis: A Pilgrim's Tale

by Ian Morgan Cron



PODCAST

Oprah's Super Soul Conversations: Father Richard Rohr –
Finding Your True Self

<https://podtail.com/en/podcast/oprah-s-supersoul-conversations/father-richard-rohr-finding-your-true-self/>



VIDEO

There's More To Life Than Being Happy: Emily Esfahani
Smith | TED

<https://youtu.be/y9Trdafp83U>



BLOG

The Lack of Meaning In Life: Where Does The Feeling of
Emptiness Come From and How to Handle It

<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/the-lack-of-meaning-in-life/>



NOTES





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
BOUND
TO
FREE**

SESSION 3



SERMON NOTES



DAY 15 | DEVOTION

IN MY DISTRESS I PRAYED TO THE LORD, AND
THE LORD ANSWERED ME AND SET ME FREE.

– PSALM 118:5



READ PSALM 118:1-9

We all deal with struggles and hard times. There are many things that can bind us...emotional baggage, a particular situation, toxic relationships. But God promises to set us free if we take refuge in the Lord. And God's faithful love will endure forever!

QUESTIONS

What has the Lord done for the psalmist? From what do you think the psalmist is free?

What does it look like to take refuge in the Lord?

Have you felt freedom from distress after praying to God? How was that experience for you?

PRAYER

Lord, I am so grateful for your enduring love. Help me to embrace the freedom that only you can provide. Though I have struggles and hard times, I know you are with me, surrounding me with your love. Amen.



DAY 16 | DEVOTION

AND JUST AS CHRIST WAS RAISED FROM THE DEAD BY THE GLORIOUS POWER OF THE FATHER, NOW WE ALSO MAY LIVE NEW LIVES.

– ROMANS 6:4



READ ROMANS 6:1-6

Perhaps our greatest blessing is the fact that God sent his son, Jesus, to free us all from sin. By faith we then live a new life in Christ, embracing it fully and living it joyfully.

QUESTIONS

What does it mean to have new life in Christ?

Do you find it easy or hard to accept the gift of new life in Christ? Why?

How does the knowledge of your death to sin affect your struggle with sin?

Think of an experience that left you feeling bound to your mistake. What did it take to accept God's grace and move on from your sin?

PRAYER

God, what a gift you have given me. Thank you for sending your son, Jesus, to die for my sins, providing me new life in him. Help me to embrace this freedom and treasure this gift of your love, Amen.



DAY 17 | DEVOTION

WHO WILL FREE ME FROM THIS LIFE THAT IS DOMINATED BY SIN AND DEATH? THANK GOD! THE ANSWER IS IN JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

– ROMANS 7:24-25



READ ROMANS 7:14-25

It can be such a challenge to both embrace that all our sins have been forgiven while also acknowledging that we are sinful by nature and will continue to sin. It can be a frustrating cycle for us all. But thankfully God already knows this to be true and forgives us of our sins anyway.

QUESTIONS

What is something you have wanted to do, and knew it was right, but still made the wrong choice?

Do you think it is okay to still wrestle with the idea of sin even after we've accepted our new life in Christ? Why or why not?

How are these verses a model for a healthy, realistic self-image?

PRAYER

Lord, I struggle daily with choosing the right thing and letting my sinful nature take over. Even though I know the right thing, I still make mistakes. Forgive me of my sins, Lord, and thank you for loving me anyways. Amen.



DAY 18 | DEVOTION

“HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM THAT CAPTIVES WILL BE RELEASED, THAT THE BLIND WILL SEE, THAT THE OPPRESSED WILL BE SET FREE, AND THAT THE TIME OF THE LORD’S FAVOR HAS COME.”

– LUKE 4:17-21



READ LUKE 4:17-21

Imagine sitting in the synagogue, listening to Jesus reading the words from the prophet Isaiah. For years, people had been anticipating the fulfillment of these promises. Now Jesus is proclaiming them for all!

QUESTIONS

How do you think it felt to hear these words directly from Jesus?

What is Jesus’ five-fold mission, according to these verses?

What might be your role in helping to carry out this mission?

How does this story reveal more about our freedom in Christ?

PRAYER

God, thank you for fulfilling your promises. True freedom comes from you and I am grateful for that. Help me identify ways that I can lean into that freedom, in order to spread your Good News to those around me, Amen.



DAY 19 | DEVOTION

FOR YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED TO LIVE IN FREEDOM, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS. BUT DON'T USE YOUR FREEDOM TO SATISFY YOUR SINFUL NATURE. INSTEAD, USE YOUR FREEDOM TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER IN LOVE.

– GALATIANS 5:13



READ GALATIANS 5:13-26

In response to freedom that is ours in Christ, we are invited to serve one another in love. Jesus calls us to live into our freedom and embrace the fruit of the Holy Spirit in our daily lives, loving our neighbor as ourselves.

QUESTIONS

How are you “led by” the Spirit?

If you are led by the Spirit, why do you still struggle with sin?

Which spiritual fruit is blossoming in your life? How can you nurture the growth of the fruits of the Spirit in your life?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to continue to understand and live according to the freedom I can experience through Christ to love you, my neighbor and myself. Your Holy Spirit equips me with great fruit to share your goodness in the world. Thank you for sending me your Spirit and help me to follow your leading each day, Amen.



DAY 20 | DEVOTION

LET THE SPIRIT RENEW YOUR THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES. PUT ON YOUR NEW NATURE, CREATED TO BE LIKE GOD—TRULY RIGHTEOUS AND HOLY.

– EPHESIANS 4:23-24



READ EPHESIANS 4:17-32

Through our baptism into Christ, we have been raised to new life. The life we now live is the life of Christ. But our outer lives don't instantly change. God calls us daily to entrust ourselves to the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to renew our minds and guide us in our daily interactions with others.

QUESTIONS

How does Paul describe the behavior of the “old self” verses the “new self?”

How would you compare moral standards today with the moral standards in Paul's day?

What are the positive and/or negative motivations that prompt you to live a Christian life?

PRAYER

God, I know you call us to a righteous and holy life. Help me to resist my sinful nature and lean into the new life provided through Christ. Thank you for freeing us from our sins and empowering us to forgive ourselves and those around us, Amen.



DAY 21 | DEVOTION

NOW YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE BUT GOD'S OWN CHILD. AND SINCE YOU ARE HIS CHILD, GOD HAS MADE YOU HIS HEIR.

– GALATIANS 4:7



READ GALATIANS 4:4-7

God has saved us from our sins and called us his own. As children of God, we not only receive God's love, care, and provision, but we have also been made God's heirs. What an honor for us to be chosen!

QUESTIONS

How does it make you feel to know that God chooses you?

What do you think it means to be an heir of God?

What can we do in response to this gift of freedom in Christ?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for choosing me to be yours. What an honor to be called your child. Help me to daily accept your embrace so that I can better share your love and compassion with everyone I encounter, Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is bringing you joy?

What do you feel bound by?

What do you need God to free you from?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

We struggle to believe that we are bound or enslaved and yet as Lutherans, we freely admit that we are “in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves.” We are bound by the lies we believe about ourselves and the world around us, told to us by our culture. We are bound by the lies our inner critic tells us about ourselves. We are bound by destructive and sometimes addictive patterns of behavior that do not bless us. But Jesus says, “I have come to set captives free.”

SCRIPTURE TEXT | JOHN 8:31-36

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

This passage is set within a series of encounters in which Jesus focuses on his identity as Messiah and Son of God – the main focus in John’s Gospel. In verses 21-30 Jesus gives a warning to those who do not believe in him – those who do not recognize him as the Son of God and therefore do not entrust themselves to Jesus. It’s interesting to note that in the passage we’re looking at today, Jesus is speaking to those who DO believe in him. But it’s obvious that even within their belief they don’t quite understand who Jesus is, why he’s come, and how he teaches about spiritual realities. It is a common theme in John’s Gospel that people understand Jesus’ words and actions at a literal, surface level, while Jesus is almost always pointing to deeper realities.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What bondage/slavery are you currently experiencing?
- When and how has Jesus set you free?
- How do you experience a “living relationship” with Jesus? How do you nurture that relationship?
- Reflecting on the quote below...when have you responded in simple or radical obedience? How did you know you were being called to obedience? What happened when you obeyed?

Obedience is indispensable. Not to a static code, however helpful it may be at times. But obedience to God, who is present with us in every situation and is speaking to us all the time. Every obedience, however small (if any obedience is ever small), quickens our sensitivity to God and our capacity to understand God, and so makes more real our sense of God's presence.
– Albert Edward Day



APPLICATION

This week, take note of your inner critic. Can you catch yourself in a lie? Tune your awareness to identify when your mind tells you a lie about yourself and then remember God's truth for you.



VIDEO

FROM BOUND TO FREE

John 8:31-36

Presented by John Reardon, Psychology Consultant & Educator

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about bondage and freedom this week. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about being bound and being free, and about God this week?

How am I different today than I was a week ago?

What is the main thing I want to remember about being bound and being free going forward?

What is one thing I can do to live into my transformation this week?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Rising Strong

by Brene Brown



PODCAST

The Chase Jarvis Live Show – Brene Brown: Rising Strong In A Digital World

<https://www.chasejarvis.com/blog/brene-brown-rising-strong-in-a-digital-age/>



VIDEO

Lauren Daigel – You Say (Official Music Video)

<https://youtu.be/slaT8Jl2zpl>



BLOG

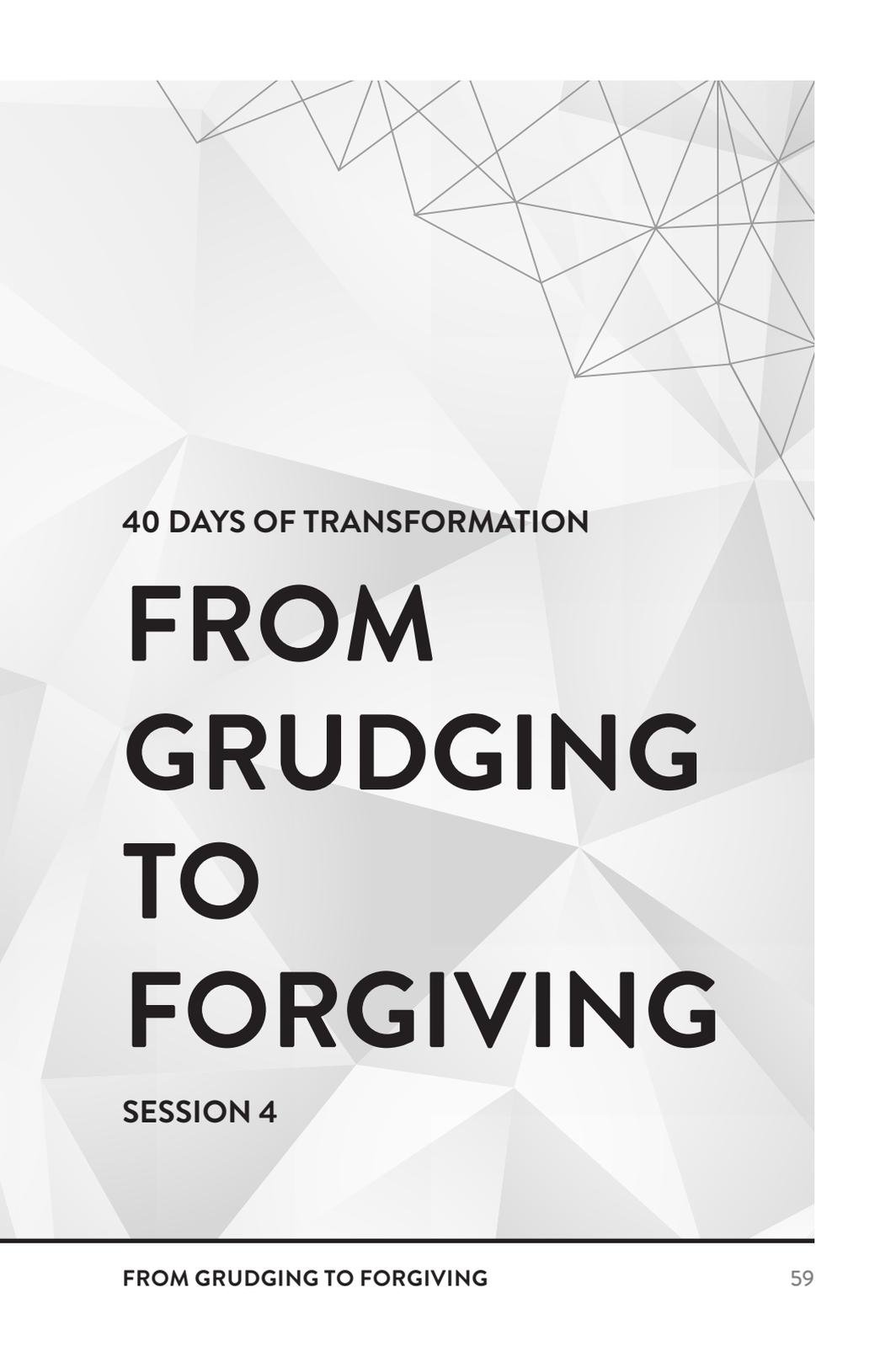
Freedom by Fr. Richard Rohr

<https://cac.org/freedom-2017-06-20/>



NOTES





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
GRUDGING
TO
FORGIVING**

SESSION 4



SERMON NOTES



DAY 22 | DEVOTION

MAKE ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER'S FAULTS,
AND FORGIVE ANYONE WHO OFFENDS YOU.
REMEMBER, THE LORD FORGAVE YOU, SO YOU
MUST FORGIVE OTHERS.

– COLOSSIANS 3:13



READ COLOSSIANS 3:12-15

In response to the fact that God first forgave us, we are also called to forgive one another. If we are honest, this is easier to do in some situations than in others. But if we clothe ourselves in Christ's love, we can overcome our tendency to hold a grudge and forgive one another freely.

QUESTIONS

How do you feel knowing you are one of God's chosen holy people?

Is your tendency to forgive quickly or hold a grudge? Why do you think that is?

When have you been forgiven by someone else? How did that make you feel?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for choosing me as one of your holy people. Help me to clothe myself in love and in your goodness, and to be forgiving to the people in my life, Amen.



DAY 23 | DEVOTION

**BUT YOU ARE A FORGIVING GOD, GRACIOUS
AND COMPASSIONATE, SLOW TO ANGER AND
ABOUNDING IN LOVE.**

– NEHEMIAH 9:16-20



READ NEHEMIAH 9:16-20

We are imperfect humans and we make mistakes. But forgiveness – both forgiving others or admitting when we’re wrong, and asking for forgiveness – is a key ingredient in having healthy relationships with one another, and leading others to God’s loving forgiveness. God leads and empowers us toward forgiveness.

QUESTIONS

Do you find yourself focusing more on the wrong done to you, or the opportunity to love with forgiveness?

What is one wrong you need to admit to? Who do you need to ask forgiveness from this week?

What is one thing you need to forgive yourself for this week? What do you need to forgive someone else for this week?

PRAYER

God, forgive me for my mistakes and for the mistakes I’ve led others to make. Help me to forgive quickly and often in my relationships with others. I want to continue to increase my faith in you, Amen.



DAY 24 | DEVOTION

INSTEAD, BE KIND TO EACH OTHER,
TENDERHEARTED, FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER, JUST
AS GOD THROUGH CHRIST HAS FORGIVEN YOU.

– EPHESIANS 4:32



READ EPHESIANS 4:31-32

Our emotions affect us as well as the people around us. It can be easy to fall into some of the challenging behaviors mentioned in these verses. But God has already forgiven us through Christ and equips us to treat each other with kindness.

QUESTIONS

Which emotion from these verses do you struggle with the most?
How do you lessen these challenging behaviors in your life?

How does God's forgiveness towards you influence your desire to forgive others?

Do you find it easier to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving towards yourself or others? Why?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to get rid of the bitterness, anger, and harsh words in me. I want to show more kindness and forgiveness to those in my life. Thank you for sending Jesus as the example and for forgiving me of my sins, Amen.



DAY 25 | DEVOTION

NEVER PAY BACK EVIL WITH MORE EVIL.
DO THINGS IN SUCH A WAY THAT EVERYONE
CAN SEE YOU ARE HONORABLE.

– ROMANS 12:17



READ ROMANS 12:17-21

We may not think our natural tendency is to want payback or revenge when someone wrongs us. But sometimes we allow strong emotions to override our thinking and so we react rather than respond. Choosing the honorable and peaceful options are pleasing to God and help us to bring more good into our world.

QUESTIONS

What do you think it means to do things in an honorable way?

Why do you think an instruction about our enemies was included in this passage?

Do you think it is possible to truly live in peace with everyone? Why or why not?

PRAYER

God, I admit, sometimes I want payback when I have been wronged. Help me to choose the honorable path, creating peace with everyone I encounter, Amen.



DAY 26 | DEVOTION

YOU INTENDED TO HARM ME, BUT GOD INTENDED IT ALL FOR GOOD. HE BROUGHT ME TO THIS POSITION SO I COULD SAVE THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE.

– GENESIS 50:20



READ GENESIS 50:14-21

When we wrong someone else, we can often be fearful of how they will respond. We hope that others will show us forgiveness, but it is not always guaranteed. But God encourages us to repent, ask for forgiveness, and then accept that forgiveness.

QUESTIONS

Which is harder for you to accept: mercy or judgment? Why?

Do you think the brothers' fear was justified? Why or why not?

How did Joseph respond? Do you think it was easy for him or not?

When have you been tempted to replace God in judging others or yourself?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to respond to others like Joseph did. Though it may not be easy to forgive, guide me to respond as Christ would. Thank you for the freedom we experience in forgiveness, Amen.



DAY 27 | DEVOTION

FOR YOU WILL BE TREATED AS YOU TREAT OTHERS.
THE STANDARD YOU USE IN JUDGING IS THE
STANDARD BY WHICH YOU WILL BE JUDGED.

– MATTHEW 7:2



READ MATTHEW 7:1-5

It is so much easier to point out the faults in others, isn't it? Though we don't always realize we're doing it, we can be quick to judge those around us. But we are called to focus on self-reflection, acknowledging our own faults.

QUESTIONS

What connection is Jesus making between the faults we notice in others and our own problems?

Why do you think it is so easy for us to worry about the speck in our friend's eye? What steps do we need to take to deal with the log in our own eye first?

Do you find the process of self-reflection easy or challenging? Why do you think that is?

PRAYER

God, I admit that I often judge the faults of others without acknowledging my own shortcomings. Help me reflect on my own faults and work through resolving those instead of judging others, Amen.



DAY 28 | DEVOTION

IF YOUR ENEMIES ARE HUNGRY,
GIVE THEM FOOD TO EAT. IF THEY ARE THIRSTY,
GIVE THEM WATER TO DRINK.

– PROVERBS 25:21

READ PROVERBS 25:21-22

Not only are we called to forgive our friends and loved ones, but we are also called to care for our enemies. God encourages us to treat our enemies with kindness, tending to their basic needs.

QUESTIONS

How do you feel about caring for your enemies needs?

Who are your “enemies?”

What does it mean to “heap burning coals on their heads?”

What do these verses tell us about forgiveness and holding grudges?

PRAYER

Lord, help me to care for my enemies, providing for their basic needs. I know this step forward in my faith will draw me closer to you and the way you want me to treat those around me. Help me to let go of grudges and lean into forgiveness, Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is bringing you joy?

What grudges do you carry?

Who do you need to forgive? What do you need forgiveness for?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Jesus calls us from holding a grudge to extending forgiveness, but most of us struggle with that journey. Holding a grudge gives us the illusion of power, as if we're somehow punishing the one who has wounded us. But ultimately, we are the ones who suffer. The parable of the unforgiving servant confronts us with our struggle to forgive but also points us to the power that can truly transform our hearts: the love and forgiveness of God extended to us through Jesus.

SCRIPTURE TEXT | MATTHEW 18:21-35

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

Chances are that Jesus' original audience, as well as Matthew's audience, heard Jesus' words through the legalism of Rabbinic teaching. The Rabbis taught that a person could be forgiven once, but no more. To forgive more than once was to tolerate sin and showed that the sinner's initial repentance was not sincere. So, Jesus' suggestion in the previous verses (15-17) that disciples be forgiven three times seems pretty generous. At least it would have seemed generous to a Jewish audience. But Peter seems to want greater clarity. And maybe Peter speaks for all of us here. We'd all like to know just what the rules of the forgiveness game really are, wouldn't we? Just what's expected of us?



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What parts of the parable stand out to you?
- When have you experienced outrageous, undeserved forgiveness in a human relationship?
- When have you found it challenging to forgive? What made it difficult? What helped you to let go of your grudge?
- Do you find it more difficult to forgive others or to forgive yourself? Why?



APPLICATION

This week, be honest with yourself. Is there a grudge you've been holding onto? Is there a step you can take towards forgiveness? Ask the Lord to guide you.



VIDEO

FROM GRUDGING TO FORGIVING

Matthew 18:21-35

Presented by John Reardon, Psychology Consultant & Educator

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about holding grudges and forgiveness this week. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about holding grudges, about forgiving myself and others, and about God this week?

How am I different today than I was a week ago?

What is the main thing I want to remember about holding grudges and forgiving myself and others going forward?

What is one thing I can do to live into my transformation this week?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Let It Go: Forgive So That You Can Be Forgiven

by T.D. Jakes



PODCAST

The Art of Relationship Podcast: Episode #6 Why Forgiveness is Essential to Every Relationship

<http://cmr.biola.edu/podcast/2016/jul/06/why-forgiveness-essential-every-relationship/>



VIDEO

The Real Risk of Forgiveness—And Why It’s Worth It: Sarah Montana | TEDxLincolnSquare

<https://youtu.be/mEK2pliZ2I0>



BLOG

The Power of Forgiveness by Fr. Richard Rohr

<https://cac.org/the-power-of-forgiveness-2017-08-27/>



NOTES





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
STRESS
TO
PEACE**

SESSION 5



SERMON NOTES



DAY 29 | DEVOTION

I WILL STRENGTHEN YOU AND HELP YOU.
I WILL HOLD YOU UP WITH MY
VICTORIOUS RIGHT HAND.

– ISAIAH 41:10



READ ISAIAH 41:8-10

We all experience stress, worry, fear, and discouragement in our lives. God promises to meet us in those times, to take away our fears and stress, and to strengthen us with power and love.

QUESTIONS

What do the terms in these verses reveal about God's relationship to those who are afraid?

How do these terms calm your fears?

Do these verses bring comfort to you? Why or why not?

How do these verses affect your attitude towards your problems?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for choosing me and for promising to always be with me. Help me to turn to you in times of stress or worry, for I know you will provide me with comfort and strength, Amen.



DAY 30 | DEVOTION

THEN JESUS SAID, “COME TO ME, ALL OF YOU WHO ARE WEARY AND CARRY HEAVY BURDENS, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST.”

– MATTHEW 11:28



READ MATTHEW 11:28-30

Jesus is waiting for us to turn to him in our times of need and he will make our burdens light. In Jesus, we can find rest in a way we will not find anywhere else. Though this world will continue to burden us, we have a place to go to find rest and peace.

QUESTIONS

What is a primary source of stress in your life right now?

What does Jesus mean by taking up his “yoke?”

Since a yoke unites two animals in common work, what does that say about discipleship?

How have you experienced true rest in Jesus before?

PRAYER

God, my days are full of things that bring me stress. Help me to turn to you and accept the rest only you can provide. Thank you that your burden is light, Amen.



DAY 31 | DEVOTION

THEN YOU WILL EXPERIENCE GOD'S PEACE,
WHICH EXCEEDS ANYTHING WE CAN
UNDERSTAND. HIS PEACE WILL GUARD YOUR
HEARTS AND MINDS AS YOU LIVE IN CHRIST JESUS.

– PHILIPPIANS 4:7



READ PHILIPPIANS 4:4-7

It isn't easy to always be full of joy, right? Life's struggles and stresses often get in our way and worry can take over. But God promises to bring us peace that surpasses all understanding and tells us we don't need to worry.

QUESTIONS

What is the best thing that has happened to you this week?

What is Paul's prescription for stress?

Have you turned to God in times of stress? Describe that experience.

How can we remind ourselves to be full of joy, always?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for always giving me reasons to rejoice. Help me to see these more clearly, especially in times of stress. Thank you for giving me peace beyond my understanding, Amen.



DAY 32 | DEVOTION

“I AM LEAVING YOU WITH A GIFT—PEACE OF MIND AND HEART. AND THE PEACE I GIVE IS A GIFT THE WORLD CANNOT GIVE. SO DON’T BE TROUBLED OR AFRAID.”

– JOHN 14:27



READ JOHN 14:26-27

What a gift the Holy Spirit is to us! God sent the Spirit to us as a guide and teacher in our daily lives. Even in the midst of stress, we know the Spirit is there with us, bringing us comfort and peace.

QUESTIONS

What is the difference between how Jesus gives peace and how the world gives peace?

How have you experienced the difference between Jesus’ peace and the world’s peace?

Where do you need Jesus’ peace in your life today?

PRAYER

God, thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to dwell within us and remind us of your teachings. Help me to seek your peace instead of the world’s, for I know you are the only source of true peace, Amen.



DAY 33 | DEVOTION

THEREFORE, SINCE WE HAVE BEEN MADE
RIGHT IN GOD'S SIGHT BY FAITH, WE HAVE
PEACE WITH GOD BECAUSE OF WHAT
JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD HAS DONE FOR US.

– ROMANS 5:1



READ ROMANS 5:1-5

Jesus invites us to turn to him in our times of need and he will make our burdens light. In Jesus, we can find rest in a way we will not find anywhere else. Though this world will continue to burden us, we have a place to go to find rest and peace.

QUESTIONS

Have you experienced a time where you were not at peace with God? What was that like?

How do these verses guide your view of suffering and stress?

What incident in your life can you look back on and see the truth of these verses?

PRAYER

Lord, I want to be at peace with you. Thank you for sending Jesus to bring me to this place of peace. Help me to embrace my trials and struggles, confident that you are at work in my circumstances, and in me, Amen.



DAY 34 | DEVOTION

AND THOSE WHO ARE PEACEMAKERS
WILL PLANT SEEDS OF PEACE AND
REAP A HARVEST OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

– JAMES 3:18



READ JAMES 3:13-18

It is so much easier to point out the faults in others, isn't it? Though embracing God's wisdom and humility helps us to be peacemakers in our world. Once we have experienced God's peace, we can help to share it with those around us. We can choose to let our interactions represent God in an honorable, peaceful way.

QUESTIONS

What does this passage teach you about God's peace?

Do you think you are a peacemaker? Why or why not?

How does understanding God's ways help you share peace?

What area in your life needs the influence of God's peace today?

PRAYER

God, help me to grow in my wisdom and understanding of your ways, so that I may spread your peace and love to those around me, Amen.



DAY 35 | DEVOTION

SINCE WE ARE LIVING BY THE SPIRIT,
LET US FOLLOW THE SPIRIT'S LEADING
IN EVERY PART OF OUR LIVES.

– GALATIANS 5:25



READ GALATIANS 5:22-25

For many of us, we have heard the fruits of the Spirit countless times. But do we truly live into them? The Holy Spirit is at work in each one of us to equip us and lead us in our daily lives.

QUESTIONS

How does the Spirit lead us?

Have you experienced a time when the Spirit was at work in your life recently? What was that like?

Why do you think peace is included in the fruits of the Spirit?

PRAYER

Lord, I want to have love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in my life. Help me to follow where the Spirit is leading and embrace the gifts you have given me, Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is causing you stress this week?

How can God bring you peace this week?

What do you need God to free you from this week?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

So many “enemies” disturb our peace and bring us stress – deadlines, illness, broken relationships, anxieties about the future, and so much more. And so often when we’re stressed our vision narrows and all we see are our problems. But the Psalmist enlarges our vision by reminding us that we are not alone, that God is with us and for us. When we cry out to God and entrust ourselves and our “enemies” to God, we often experience the “peace that passes all understanding.”

SCRIPTURE TEXT | PSALM 3

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

Few of us have gone through anything close to the trauma that David was experiencing. But we’ve probably had times when we could identify with David and felt stress. Things like deadlines, illness, broken relationships, anxieties about the future, and anxiety in general, are all stressors in this life. Where is peace among the stress? Is it obtainable? How do we get there? David proclaims many are against him and we’ve indeed felt that at times. What does David do? David begins reminding himself about who God really is and what God is capable of. That even if thousands come against him, God will defend him. He describes that his feet are grounded in God and his head is lifted up to God. In God we have a strong foundation under us and mighty God above us.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What part of this Psalm can you relate to the most? Why?
- What are some of your stressors?
- What do you do to bring peace when stressed?
- Are you able to find a sense of peace when stressed?
- How does God's promise that God is with you in your circumstance affect you?



APPLICATION

This week, when you find yourself in a moment of stress, try to pause and acknowledge that God is with you. Pray for peace and breathe in God's goodness.



VIDEO

FROM STRESS TO PEACE

Psalm 3

Presented by John Reardon, Psychology Consultant & Educator

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



WEEKLY REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about stress and peace this week. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about stress and peace, and about God this week?

How am I different today than I was a week ago?

What is the main thing I want to remember about stress and peace going forward?

What is one thing I can do to live into my transformation this week?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Don't Sweat The Small Stuff And It's All Small Stuff

by Richard Carlson



PODCAST

Meditations With Brandon Epstein: 10 Minute Meditation For Stress Relief

<https://www.listennotes.com/podcasts/meditations-with/10-minute-meditation-for-8BZfS5Epchi/>



VIDEO

How To Make Stress Your Friend: Kelly McGonigal | TED

<https://youtu.be/RcGyVTAoXEU>



BLOG

Centering Prayer

<https://www.contemplativeoutreach.org/category/category/centering-prayer>



NOTES





40 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

**FROM
POWERFUL
TO
POWERLESS**

SESSION 6



SERMON NOTES



DAY 36 | DEVOTION

THOSE WHO LOVE THEIR LIFE IN THIS WORLD WILL LOSE IT. THOSE WHO CARE NOTHING FOR THEIR LIFE IN THIS WORLD WILL KEEP IT FOR ETERNITY.

– JOHN 12:25



READ JOHN 12:23-36

As we enter Holy Week, we'll walk with Jesus throughout his final days on earth. Jesus gives us instruction on how to live our life, by serving, and he begins to talk about his death. In order to reveal God's love and fulfill God's promises, Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

QUESTIONS

In Jesus' parable, who is the kernel of wheat?

Why did the crowd deny the reality of Jesus' future death? Where is Jesus calling you to die so that you might live?

What do you tend to hold onto rather than follow Jesus?

PRAYER

God, thank you for sending Jesus to teach us how to live and to make the ultimate sacrifice for us. Help me to let go of the things that hold me back from following you. Teach me what it means to die, that I might live, Amen.



DAY 37 | DEVOTION

“SO YOU, TOO, MUST KEEP WATCH! FOR YOU DO NOT KNOW THE DAY OR HOUR OF MY RETURN.”

– MATTHEW 25:13



READ MATTHEW 25:1-13

Jesus uses parables to illustrate lessons for us throughout the Gospels. This story gives us examples of what to do and what not to do as we await Christ coming again. As we approach Jesus' sacrifice this week, consider where you fit in this story.

QUESTIONS

In what way were the 10 girls alike? Different?

What is the point of this parable?

Who are you most like in this story?

What can you do to be ready?

PRAYER

Lord, I want to be ready for when you arrive. Help me to be prepared and alert, like the wise bridesmaids in this story. Thank you for the ways that Jesus taught us lessons through parables, Amen.



DAY 38 | DEVOTION

“THE MASTER WAS FULL OF PRAISE. ‘WELL DONE, MY GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. YOU HAVE BEEN FAITHFUL IN HANDLING THIS SMALL AMOUNT, SO NOW I WILL GIVE YOU MANY MORE RESPONSIBILITIES. LET’S CELEBRATE TOGETHER!’”

– MATTHEW 25:21



READ MATTHEW 25:14-30

Jesus illustrates the Kingdom of Heaven for us on many occasions. This story gives us an example of how God wants us to invest what God has given us and how obedience is pleasing to the master.

QUESTIONS

If you were the third servant, would you have invested your money or hidden it? Why?

What kind of responsibility do you feel toward God regarding your talents?

What will you do this week with the talents God has given you?

PRAYER

God, thank you for the talents you have given me. Help me to see the ways I can continue to develop and live into my talents, honoring you in the process, Amen.



DAY 39 | DEVOTION

THEN HE BEGAN TO WASH THE
DISCIPLES' FEET, DRYING THEM WITH
THE TOWEL HE HAD AROUND HIM.

– JOHN 13:5



READ JOHN 13:1-20

Try to imagine yourself as one of the disciples that evening, watching Jesus clean the feet of you and your friends. Jesus sets the example of how we are called to serve one another, even those who might betray us.

QUESTIONS

What impresses you about Jesus washing the disciple's feet, especially knowing what he knows?

Who is one person that has demonstrated what it means to “wash feet” in your life? What did they do?

How can you put Jesus' teaching in practice in at least one relationship this week?

PRAYER

Lord, teach me to serve the way that Jesus served. Help me to identify a person in my life that I can serve on a deeper level. What a beautiful example for Jesus to set while spending his final night with the disciples, Amen.



DAY 40 | DEVOTION

THEN JESUS SHOUTED, “FATHER, I ENTRUST MY SPIRIT INTO YOUR HANDS!” AND WITH THOSE WORDS HE BREATHED HIS LAST.

– LUKE 23:46



READ LUKE 23:26-49

This is such a defining moment in Jesus’ mission and in our faith. Jesus sacrifices himself to reveal the depth of God’s love and forgiveness for all people, even those who nailed him to the cross. Even with his dying breath Jesus is faithful to the mission God gave him.

QUESTIONS

What aspect of this story stands out to you most? Why?

When did the meaning of Christ’s death begin to make sense to you?

Jesus died on the cross for each one of us. How does this change you? How will you respond to this incredible gift?

PRAYER

God, thank you for sending Jesus to sacrifice his life for me. Sometimes, I am completely overwhelmed by this display of love for me and I am compelled to respond. Help me to breath deeply into the truth of your love for me today, Amen.



DAY 41 | DEVOTION

“THEN THE KING WILL SAY TO THOSE ON HIS RIGHT, ‘COME, YOU WHO ARE BLESSED BY MY FATHER, INHERIT THE KINGDOM PREPARED FOR YOU FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.’”

– MATTHEW 25:34



READ MATTHEW 25:31-46

In response to the grace that God has shown us, we are called to care for those around us, especially the “least of these.” Jesus set the example, spending his time with those that society considered outcasts, criminals, and more.

QUESTIONS

Does this story seem more like a parable or a prophecy? Why?

When have you received care from someone when you were in need? How did that feel?

In what ways do you find yourself most naturally serving others?

PRAYER

Lord, thank you for all the ways you have provided for me. Open my eyes to those around me that are in need and help me to respond in love, caring for their needs over my own, Amen.



DAY 42 | DEVOTION

BUT THE ANGEL SAID, “DON’T BE ALARMED.
YOU ARE LOOKING FOR JESUS OF NAZARETH,
WHO WAS CRUCIFIED. HE ISN’T HERE!
HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!”

– MARK 16:6



READ MARK 16:1-8

Praise the Lord! What an amazing miracle, raising Jesus from the dead. Imagine how these women felt when they arrived at the tomb, and how drastically their emotions changed upon hearing the news that Christ was risen.

QUESTIONS

Seeing the empty tomb and the man sitting beside it, what thoughts do you think ran through the women’s minds?

Would you have had trouble believing the angel’s words? Why or why not?

How would your life be different if Jesus was not risen from the dead?

PRAYER

God, I am in awe of your love for me and the ultimate gift of grace that you have given me. Help me to share this story of your love with others. I believe that Jesus was risen from the dead, praise be to God! Amen.



PRAYER REQUESTS & CHECK-IN

How are you feeling this week?

What is weighing on your heart or your mind?

What is bringing you joy?

How can you serve someone else this week?

Where do you need God's unconditional love in your life?

List the people/situations you want to lift up in prayer this week:



SMALL GROUP GUIDE

God's idea of power and the world's idea of power are radically different. The world perceives power as having control over others, being in charge. Throughout Holy Week Jesus reveals that true power in the Kingdom is the power of submission, of letting go. One of the great paradoxes of the Kingdom is that our greatest power is found in our powerlessness, because it is in our powerlessness that the power and glory of God shine. That's what St. Paul meant when he said, "When I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:9)

SCRIPTURE TEXT | LUKE 19:28-44

Read the scripture text together as a group.



BACKGROUND INFO

"But as for these enemies of mine who did not want me to be king over them—bring them here and slaughter them in my presence."

These words precede Luke's version of Jesus' triumphal entry, and they create a chilling prelude to the story, especially when you consider that Luke describes Jesus' entry as that of a king. This event is reported in each of the gospels and is read in churches every year on Palm Sunday. In other words most of us are very familiar with the story...and that poses a couple of dangers. One danger is certainly that we assume we know what the story says and means and therefore close ourselves off from what God might say anew to us through this story. The second danger is that we may unknowingly read details into Luke's account that are actually from one of the other gospels, details that Luke doesn't include. So we would do well to read carefully.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What task does Jesus give to the disciples? What problems might they have encountered in such a job?
- What were the people expecting Jesus to do upon arrival in Jerusalem?
- How do you think Jesus would be received if he rode into our town today?
- What person or group of people do you weep for?



APPLICATION

This week, ask God to allow you to see the events of Holy Week through new eyes. Spend intentional time in the daily devotions and discover what God wants to teach you.



VIDEO

FROM POWERFUL TO POWERLESS

Luke 19:28-44

Presented by Jeff Marian, Lead Pastor

Watch video: popmn.org/transformation

What did you hear?

What do you think?

What are you inspired to do?

What one small step will you take this week based on what you just saw?



SERIES REFLECTION

Take some time to reflect on what you read, learned and thought about your transformation journey over the past 40 days. Share these questions and your answers in your small group or with family and friends. You may also use this page for private journaling.

What did I learn about myself, about transformation, and about God over these 40 days?

How have I changed over these 40 days?

What are the three main things I want to remember about these 40 days?

What is one thing I can do to keep living into my transformation going forward?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



BOOK

Surprised By Hope by N.T. Wright

The Last Week: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days in Jerusalem by Marcus Borg & John Crossan



PODCAST

The Liturgists: Palm Sunday

<http://www.theliturgists.com/podcast/2017/4/9/palm-sunday>



FILM

The Passion of The Christ (2004)



BLOG

Scriptural Way of The Cross by Prince of Peace Visual Arts Ministry

<https://www.popmn.org/blog/scriptural-way-of-the-cross/>



NOTES



SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks to everyone who made this workbook and worship series possible, including our guest video presenters: Paula Becker and John Reardon.

PAULA BECKER

Paula Becker is a Licensed Psychologist who is currently practicing at Lakeville Behavioral Health in Lakeville MN. She began her career in church ministry working in California for 9 years where she was responsible for education, youth, counseling and music. Paula returned to Minnesota and completed her Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology and worked in a variety of settings until she opened her own clinic, InnerLight Healing Center which she owned until recently. Paula's work is focused on helping people release fears and negative patterns, freeing them to more authentically connect to heart, mind and spirit resulting in a greater sense of wellbeing within themselves and in their relationships.

JOHN REARDON

Since founding Phoenix Process Consultants in 1984, John has worked with individuals, couples, families and organizations that are experiencing conflict, anxiety, chaos, and unfulfilling lives. He helps clients use their "spirit to overcome" problems, issues, and barriers, and to create new and realistic visions, goals, and action plans. He also helps clients to establish relationships that work through realistic negotiation and resolution. John's method is interactive, direct, energetic, and results oriented. John has been a pastoral minister, religious education director, retreat director, and youth minister. He teaches at the Adler Graduate School in Minneapolis and St. Catherine's College.



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