

# LEADER GUIDE — FORMED BY THE GOSPEL

## SESSION 1:1 | GOSPEL TRANSFORMATION

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### Overview for Leaders

This session aims to introduce the biblical understanding of Gospel Transformation — from new birth (regeneration) through repentance and faith, justification: declared righteous by the works of Christ, union with Christ, sanctification, and ongoing renewal through the Spirit.

### Big Idea

The Gospel changes everything. God transforms us from the inside out through new birth (regeneration), repentance, faith, justification, union with Christ, and ongoing renewal (or sanctification) by the Spirit.

### Your Role as Leader

Warm the room and build trust, guide the group through Scripture, ask questions that stir reflection, keep discussion on track but not rigid, create space for the Spirit to convict, comfort, and transform — you are facilitating, not lecturing.

### Session Flow — *Adjust as needed*

- Icebreaker
- Scripture Engagement (readings + context)
- Discussion (10 questions) — 40–45 min
- Application Challenge — 5 min
- Prayer & Reflection — 10 min
- Announcements — 2 min

### Key Scriptures

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|----------------------|------------------|
| • John 3:3–8         | • Romans 6:3–4   |
| • 2 Corinthians 5:17 | • Galatians 2:20 |
| • Acts 2:37–39       | • Romans 12:2    |
| • Romans 5:1         | • Matthew 17:1–2 |

## **LEADER NOTES, GROUP QUESTIONS, & COMMENTARY**

*(Use these notes to frame the discussion and help connect passages.)*

### **Ice Breaker (Choose One)**

Purpose – Build relational warmth and get everyone speaking early. Keep it moving, don't let one person talk too long. Affirm vulnerability. Model the tone as honest, warm, not overly serious.

Suggested options:

- What's something in your life that has changed in the last 5 years?
- If you could change one habit in your life, what would it be?

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **1. John 3:3–8 — Regeneration / New Birth**

Question: *“Jesus says we must be “born again.” The Spirit moves like the wind. How does this passage reshape your understanding of transformation compared to cultural ideas of self-improvement?”*

Leader Insight: Jesus is clear, transformation is not self-improvement, but new creation initiated by the Spirit. Wind imagery emphasizes mystery + evidence. To be “regenerated” means the Spirit of God has made us new AKA “reborn”.

Cue: If the group defaults to behavior change, gently redirect to *Spirit-initiated new birth*. Celebrate subtle signs, small obedience is big evidence.

#### **2. 2 Corinthians 5:17 — New Creation Identity**

Question: *“The old has gone, the new is here.” What is the “old”, and what is the “new”? What things change in us and our life when we receive this new creation identity from Jesus?*

Leader Insight: This verse grounds the believer in a new spiritual reality. Identity precedes behavior but does reveal itself in new action.

Cue: Avoid letting this become a confession booth. Keep it hopeful: “What new realities are emerging?”

### **3. Acts 2:37–39 — Repentance, Faith, and Baptism**

Question: *Conviction, repentance, and baptism. How does this passage challenge or affirm your understanding of repentance and the Spirit’s role in awakening the heart? Have you been baptized? If so, what did that moment mean for you? If not, what questions or hesitations do you have?*

Leader Insight: Conviction is a work of the Spirit. Human guilt can be the result of that conviction, but guilt is not the motivator – the Spirit “cuts” our heart with the truth of the Gospel. Baptism becomes the outward sign of inward transformation.

Cue: Differentiate Spirit conviction (life-giving) from shame (death-giving). Do not pressure baptism. Simply clarify meaning + invite conversation.

### **4. Romans 5:1 — Justification**

Question: *“We have peace with God.” How does knowing you are “declared righteous” because you are justified by faith change how you relate to God on a daily basis?*

Leader Insight: Emphasize the *assurance* of Christ’s work on the cross. Many Christians do not live as though they have peace with God, which undermines how Jesus “satisfied” the righteous requirements we could never meet. We are “justified by faith in Jesus” before God.

Cue: Emphasize peace as a lived reality, not a theory.

### **5. Romans 6:3–4 — Union With Christ**

Question: *Buried and raised with Christ. What stands out to you about the imagery of being united with Jesus in His death and resurrection?*

Leader Insight: Paul uses burial/resurrection imagery to describe spiritual inclusion into Christ’s life. We have to be “in Christ” in order to receive and possess the righteousness that Christ gives to us.

Cue: If needed, restate: “Union with Christ means His story becomes ours.”

## **6. Galatians 2:20 — The Indwelling Christ**

Question: *“Christ lives in me.” How does this verse reshape your sense of identity, purpose, or how you approach daily struggles?*

Leader Insight: Identity shifts from “me driven” to “Christ in me.” It is Jesus *in me* that makes us holy and empowers us for Christian living by the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Cue: Encourage participants to be specific about identity shifts.

## **7. Romans 12:2 — Transformed by the Renewing of Mind**

Question: *Renewing your mind. Where do you feel the strongest pull to conform to the world, and how does Scripture help re-form your thinking in those areas?*

Leader Insight: This verse frames the major application for the week. A great cross reference would be 2 Peter 1:3-11.

Cue: Tease out influences – media, habits, relationships, fears, cultural scripts.

## **8. Matthew 17:1–2 — Transfiguration**

Question: *Jesus is transfigured. If the Spirit is forming Christ’s life visibly in you, where do you see glimpses of that transformation right now — big or small?*

Leader Insight: This text models outward manifestation of divine inward glory. Sanctification mirrors this process slowly over time, which eventually will lead to our “glorification” when our bodies are transformed like Jesus at the end.

Cue: Help people name the work of God, many overlook it.

## **APPLICATION (Leader Version)**

### **Application Focus:**

Romans 12:2 — Mind Renewal

Encourage each person to choose one manageable practice this week that opens space for the Spirit to renew their mind.

### **Leader Tip:**

Ask: “What’s one practice you feel drawn toward?” Then allow silence. People will think deeply.

### **Examples:**

- Read a short passage of Scripture each morning or night
- Replace one daily input (news/social media) with 5 minutes of prayer
- Memorize one line of Scripture from this session (like Romans 12:2 or Galatians 2:20)
- Pause once a day to prayerfully ask: “*Lord, how are You shaping me right now?*”

### **Group Prayer Time at End**

Pray over themes:

- New birth
- Repentance and renewal
- Peace with God
- Identity in Christ
- Mind transformation
- Visible Christlikeness

Close with something like: “Lord, make us people formed by Your Spirit and transformed by Your Gospel.”

### **Leader Follow-Up Afterwards**

Consider reaching out mid-week to:

- Encourage people in their chosen practice
- Check on anyone who mentioned baptism
- Affirm any visible spiritual hunger
- A quick text goes a long way