

Transformed by the Spirit Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What is one significant way you changed growing up?
2. What's your favorite type of candy?

Read the following passage: Romans 7:14 - 8:4.

In Romans 7, Paul highlights the inadequacy of the Law of Moses for freeing us from our bondage to sin. It's not entirely clear how aware Paul was of his own slavery to sin before his encounter with the risen Christ. But now that he has experienced the freedom that comes from the liberating power of the Holy Spirit, he can see his past life (and the lives of all Jews living under the Law) in a new light. The Jewish people considered the Law to be a great gift from God (see, for example, Romans 2:17-20), but it could not bring about the righteous life that God intends for us to live. In the same way, the things we rely on for personal transformation — clear goals, self-help books, healthy habits, and the like — are insufficient in themselves. Only the Holy Spirit can transform us at the deepest level.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Describe Paul's perspective (now that he is following Jesus) on the Law of Moses. Is the Law bad? Why is the Law insufficient to bring about righteous living? How should we view the various things we might look to to help us grow (e.g. books, mentors, coaches, therapists, pastors, podcasts, etc.)?
2. Read Ezekiel 36:24-28. What does God promise to do for the people in exile? Describe how this passage might inform the conversation Jesus has with Nicodemus (see John 3:1-15).
3. Read John 1:9-13. What does it mean to receive Jesus and to believe in his name?
4. Read Romans 8:5-27. Identify all the ways Paul describes the work of the Holy Spirit in this passage. How can we cooperate with the transforming work of the Holy Spirit?
5. Although congregations like the church in Corinth experienced the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, it is clear they also struggled with various sins. What should we do when we sin? How do we move forward after a setback?
6. Paul argues in Romans 7 that our own efforts to bring about deep transformation are insufficient without the work of the Holy Spirit. Does this mean our own effort is

irrelevant? Explain.

7. Read Galatians 5:16-18. How do we recognize which of our desires are from the “flesh” and which are from the Holy Spirit?
8. What is one way in which you would like to experience deeper transformation?

Pray