

# BRMC Small Group Study: Holy Spirit Session 4

## Leader's Guide

Please note that the suggestions below are not model answers but to help guide your study. Feel free to adapt the questions for your group.

### Scripture Passage:

Focus: 2 Corinthians 3:18

Supplementary: Galatians 2:19-20

### Open to the Spirit:

Focus chapter: 10

Supplementary chapters: 9 and 11

#### Context:

"The surefire test to know the Spirit is at work in your life is observable change as you grow toward Christlikeness. It doesn't have to be dramatic, and it doesn't have to be giant leaps from selfishness into selflessness. Rather, what we look for is visible change, shifts, movements, and growth." (p 80) The primary question for this session is whether we are being transformed into the likeness of Christ and how we can honestly assess that transformation.

In the focus passage, Paul speaks of being transformed into Christlikeness as we behold or reflect (mirror) the Lord's glory. This transformation should progressively increase from "glory to glory" as it comes from the Lord, the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 2:19-20, Paul shared a critical part of transformation: the essence of his very existence is the death of his self and the life of Christ to live in him.

The question is how, for each of us, does the new ego be the Ego of Christ? McKnight proposes a 3-point approach is having:

- a Vision of becoming a Spirit-prompted, Christlike person;
- an Openness to the work of God's grace; and
- a recognition that the means for transformation is the work of the Spirit of God in us.

#### Lesson Objectives:

- We need to have a vision of a Spirit-prompted, Christlike person.
- We can practice watching Christ, listening to Christ, and observing His character.
- It is the work of the Holy Spirit in us that can transform us into Christ's likeness.

## Introductory

1. How does Paul say he chooses to live his life in Galatians 2:19-20?

- Paul says that it is no longer he who lives, but Christ who lives in him.
- McKnight rephrases that passage replacing the word "I" with "My Ego":

"My Ego died to the Law through the Law so that my Ego could live for God. My Ego has been crucified with Christ, My Ego no longer has a life, but instead Christ is alive as my New Ego. The physical life my Ego now lives is a life of faith in the Son of God who loves this New Ego and gave himself for this New Ego." (p 81)

- McKnight explains that we all have our old Ego, but our transformation needs to start with a determination that the old Ego should die and be replaced by the new ego, which is Christ's Ego.

2. In 2 Corinthians 3:18, what is the goal for transformation? Who brings this transformation?

- The goal or result is the transformation into the Lord's likeness. When we who reflect or mirror the Lord's glory, are then being transformed into His likeness.

## Reflection

3. Are you open to being transformed into Christlikeness? What do you think that would look like?

- Many people are resistant to change, or they want change only in a way and manner that is to their requirements. The hope of this sermon series is to encourage us as a community to be more open to being transformed by the love of Christ, and that transformation should be towards Christlikeness.
- McKnight suggests that we need to have a vision of becoming a Spirit-prompted, Christlike person.
- Perhaps you might encourage members in the group to share why they might be resistant to being transformed. Could it be because they do not understand what being Christlike may entail? Could it be because they do not wish to lose their ego or personality?
- Some suggestions for why we should have a vision of being Christlike: Being transformed into Christlikeness opens us to the opportunity to be one with the Father and the Son, to experience the intimate relationship with the Father and Son, to be all that God has purposed for us to become.
- In more practical aspects: It means trusting your heavenly Father for all things; being gracious and merciful to others; forgiving, loving and praying for those who mock or mistreat you; welcoming the outcast; striving for justice; helping the sick, needy or underprivileged - like Jesus – these are all things that Jesus did.

4. Alternatively, do you feel that, over the years, you have seen changes in your life and seen evidence of transformation? Perhaps you could review Galatians 3:22-24 and identify the fruit of the Spirit.

Would you say: "Over the years as a Christians, I think I have grown to bear the fruit of \_\_\_\_ that may be evidenced by \_\_\_\_ ." (Gal. 5:22-24)

- This is an opportunity for people in your group to share their testimony of how their lives might have been transformed by the Holy Spirit to bear fruit of the Spirit.

- You could ask the group to consider areas in their lives where they might seek transformation to bear fruit of the Spirit and turn that into a prayer. You could add the words below to form a prayer for the group, to sincerely seek the work of the Holy Spirit to transform and to bear fruit of the Spirit.
  - o "Dear Lord, as part of the evidence of being transformed, touch my life and help me to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit marked by evidence of \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ (e.g. kindness to those at my workplace or patience with my children, etc) "

5. What role do you think the Holy Spirit plays in our transformation to Christlikeness?

- From the focus verse, it seems clear that this transformation is given (or facilitated) by the Lord who is the Spirit.
- This question is more about how the people in your group might perceive the work of the Holy Spirit to be. It is an opportunity to share their view of the work of the Holy Spirit in transforming our lives. For example, when we first prayed to invite Jesus into our lives, there might have been some noticeable transformation in our lives. For some, it might be dramatic, like giving up an addiction, while for others, more subtle, like being more aware of a propensity to commit sin.
- In any event, it is an opportunity to share about the awesome work that is happening inside us when we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit within us. And how we can have a tangible testimony of what is being done, or has been done.

## Application

6. How can we have a vision for a Spirit-prompted Christlikeness? (Reference could be made to p 83-87 of Open to the Spirit.)

- In 2 Corinthians 3:18 the emphasis appears to be on reflecting or mirroring the Lord. This means, in practical terms, we need to follow Jesus and to imitate Him.
- McKnight writes:
 

"As we gaze into the face of Jesus, the Spirit hovers over us the way the Spirit hovered over primeval matter to turn it all into God's ordered creation. The hovering Spirit transforms us into Spirit-prompted mini-Christ. That's what the Bible says. The New Ego is Christ himself made real in us by the power of the Spirit. So how do we gaze into the face of Jesus? I suggest three actions: watch his actions, listen to his words, and observe his character." (p 83)
- Perhaps try to unpack this into practical terms:
  - o Watch what Jesus does/has done. Jesus also said He sees what the Father does (John 5:19).
    - McKnight writes: "To gaze into the face of Jesus is to be open to the Spirit's transforming work as we gaze. It means we see that Jesus is the center of the gospel, we see that Jesus is empowered by God's Spirit to bring redemption to every dimension of our lives, and we see that lives are transformed from the inside out." (p 84-85)

- Observing transformational work in ourselves and in others should be encouraging and edifying.
  - Listen to Jesus' words.
    - Scripture is often the key sources of a movement in our heart, a conviction, a source of consolation, a catalyst for change.
    - McKnight suggests reading 3 verses: Matthew 11:28-30; Matthew 9:16-17; and Matthew 16:24-27; and asking: "What do we learn from these pure words of God?" (p 85-86) Listening to God speak through scripture gives us a vision for Christlikeness.
  - Observe Jesus' character.
    - McKnight writes: "Christians have only one thing to offer to the world, and that is Jesus himself." Christianity is about a person – Jesus. "When Jesus is central, Christianity shifts from ideas into the Living Word of God roaming about, working, alive and active in our world." (p 86)
    - The Jesus that we observe is the person who died on the cross for the sake of others. He gave Himself up for us. He obeyed His Father. He loved His disciples, those who were marginalised, those who obeyed His Father.
- McKnight writes: "That Vision is of a Christ who gave himself for us. The longer we watch him, listen to him, and observe his character, the more enthralled we become with him and the less enthralled we become with ourselves." (p 87)

7. How can you develop an Openness to the work of God's grace and the Holy Spirit in transforming you into Christlikeness?

- This question seeks a self-assessment on the way forward for each person. If people in your group has already been open to the work of the Holy Spirit, then allow them opportunity to share what their being open looks like and to share the process of transformation as well as what part of their life has been transformed into Christlikeness.
- For those that have previously not been open, perhaps some suggestions could be to follow the items listed out in the question/answer above. To spend more time in prayer listening, to spend more time reading the scripture in the method suggested in Session 2. And to seek that paradigm shift suggested in Session 1.

8. What is one area in your life that you might surrender to the Holy Spirit to transform into Christlikeness?

- This may lead to many possibilities such as giving up a particular vice or habit. Help your group to also focus on the emphasis of their "Ego" and the transformation to Christ's New Ego. You can use this as a form of summary of what the group might learn from the lesson objectives above.

## **Prayer**

9. Write out a prayer for yourself based on what you have heard and learned from this session.

- It may be useful to break into smaller groups and allow some time for people to process what they have heard and learned from the Holy Spirit. Then encourage them to share with one another what their prayer is for this session, and for themselves for the week.
- It is always useful to collate these prayers and to refer to them for thanksgiving and sharing next week.
  
- If it is appropriate, suggest to members to write down specific instances when they feel the Spirit at work in them and through them, and transforming them. This aims to help them become more aware of the Spirit's presence in their lives and particularly the transforming work in them.