

Leader's Guide, Intro Session: "Overview of Reflecting His Glory"

Before the Study Begins:

1. Promote the study- select a day, time, and place for the study.
2. Begin registration three weeks prior to start date.
3. Pray for each person who registers for the study
4. Order Reflecting His Glory workbooks and have the books available for purchase the night the study begins.
5. Set up a sign in table. Collect names, email addresses, and have name tags available.

Welcome:

Welcome the women in attendance. Share a few thoughts about the study and your desire for the women as they take part in this study. Pass out the Reflecting His Glory Week one handout. This will be the only week the women will receive a handout. From this point on, they will use their books.

Share the following information:

1. The key verse: Romans 12:2. Read the verse.

Explain to the women that this verse provides the road map for the study. Each week the study looks at one phrase from this verse. The outline, which is listed on page 2 of

RHG, will be:

- Week 1: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world..."
- Weeks 2, 3, 4: "...but be transformed..."
- Week 5: "... by the renewing of your mind..."
- Weeks 6, 7: "... Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--- his good, pleasing and perfect will."

2. The goal of the study. The goal of the study is stated on page vi in the "Before we begin..." section of the book. Paragraph four provides a clear picture of the goal of this study. Read paragraph 4 and offer a few thoughts.



3. The format for the study. This is a homework driven study meaning the homework time is the most crucial aspect of the study. If we truly want to reflect Him, then we must be willing to go one on one with the Lord. We cannot have any off limit areas in our lives! The homework will be hard work; but it will be worth it in the end. Challenge the participants to remain diligent to the study of God's Word even if they want to quit.

Group Activity

Familiarizing the Group with Romans 12:2

Depending on the size of your group, divide the women into four groups. **Important Note:** You can have as many or as few groups as necessary to make this exercise work for your size group. Basically, you want to get the women into groups of 6 to 8 women so they can share personal information about themselves as well as discuss one aspect of Romans 12:2. If you have a small group of women, do this activity as one group or two groups. Be creative as you divide your groups. You want to get a good mix of women in each group. **Very Important Note:** Each week the women will get back into these same groups for discussion time!! Therefore you want to make sure that each group has a good mix of ages and personalities.

The groups will gather for 30 minutes in order to share personal information about themselves and to discuss at least one portion of Romans 12:2. Encourage the women to think about the entire verse of Romans 12:2 as they discuss their portion of the verse.



Group 1:

Allow each woman to share her name, one interesting thing about herself, and one thing she hopes to gain from this study. Once each person has shared, ask for a volunteer to read Romans 12:2. Then discuss the following phrase--- “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world...”

1. What does this phrase mean?
2. Define conformity.
3. List areas where we tend to conform.
4. If you follow God’s command to forsake conformity, how will it impact your life?

Group 2:

Allow each woman to share her name, one interesting thing about herself, and one thing she hopes to gain from this study. Once each person has shared, ask for a volunteer to read Romans 12:2. Then discuss the following phrase--- “...but be transformed...”

1. In the context of this verse, what does this phrase mean?
2. What does a transformation involve?
3. Please describe a transformation you have seen in your life.
4. What area of your life needs a transformation?
5. If you experience a transformation in this area of life, how will your life be changed?

Group 3:

Allow each woman to share her name, one interesting thing about herself, and one thing she hopes to gain from this study. Once each person has shared, ask for a volunteer to read Romans 12:2. Then discuss the following phrase--- “...”by the renewing of your mind.”

1. In the context of this verse, what does this phrase mean?
2. In your own words, please describe “renewing.”
3. Where does the renewing take place?
4. Share an example of renewing from your life. How do you renew?
5. If you follow God’s command to renew, how will this impact your life?



Group 4:

Allow each woman to share her name, one interesting thing about herself, and one thing she hopes to gain from this study. Once each person has shared, ask for a volunteer to read Romans 12:2. Then discuss the following phrase--- "... Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--- his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

1. In your opinion, why do believers want to know God's will for their lives?
2. More often than not, do believers find it difficult to know God's will?
3. According to Romans 12:2, what must believers do before they can test and approve God's will for their life?
4. What three words did Paul use to describe God's will?
5. Talk about these words. In your opinion, what do the words mean?

A few key thoughts about each phrase:

Once the groups have finished discussing their portion of the scripture, bring the groups back together and go over the group activity. Go over each phrase and allow the women to share their thoughts. If you had multiple groups discussing the same portion of the verse, allow all the groups to respond. As the group's share, incorporate the following key points. (This is the point where participants may want to take notes on their handout.)

1. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world..."
 - Definition for Conformity: to be similar or identical to, to have the same shape, outline, or contour.
 - Pattern: The world has a pattern, a model or mold that is used for imitating. Recognize the pattern or fall prey to the pattern.
 - Any longer: Notice the element of time "any longer." Today is the day to turn from conformity and say enough is enough!
2. "but be transformed..."
 - Three words that pack a powerful punch. These three words are examined in weeks 2, 3, and 4.



- Greek word used for transformed is the word “metamorpho.” Can you hear the word metamorphosis?
- In order to experience a spiritual metamorphosis, four elements must take place: a significant change in form, spiritual growth, differentiation, and changes in habitat and habit. Each of these elements play a crucial role in the spiritual transformation process.

3. “By the renewing of your mind.”

- Renewing means to make like new. Other words that describe renewing include renewal, renovation, rejuvenation.
- Where does renewing takes place? The mind.--- Crucial because it helps us to know how to renew effectively.
- How does renewing relate to transformation? The renewing process provides the “how to” of transformation.
- Why should we renew? Renewing enables believers to test and approve God’s will for their lives.

4. “Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

- All believers want to know God’s will for their lives. It is not uncommon for believers to find the subject of God’s will difficult to know and understand.
- In our study we will ask the question, “Why do I seek God’s will? And, “How do I go about my seeking process?” As we ask these questions, we will see the difference between a God-centered approach and a man-centered approach to seeking.
- According to Romans 12:2, we must forsake conformity, embrace spiritual transformation, and be committed to renewing our minds in order to test and approve God’s will for our lives.
- Paul used three words to describe God’s will in our lives--- good, pleasing, and perfect. We must fight the tendency to view these words from a world's perspective. When we do, we put circumstances in charge of our life. Hence, God’s good, pleasing, and perfect will is only in effect when things are good, pleasing, and perfect based on the world's standards. Scripture will challenge us to redefine our definition of good, pleasing, and perfect, and in the process show us how to live our lives or Him--- reflecting Him so that when the world see us, they really see Him!



Closing Challenge:

Challenge each group to share their email address/phone number/physical address with the members of their group. Encourage the ladies to cheer one another along through emails, phone calls, and note cards. This type of encouragement and accountability will help everyone to persevere during the study. As the leader, share your contact information with the group. Also, let the group know that they will receive weekly emails from Andrea. (These emails are available for your use at the RHG resource center)

Answer any questions.

Close with prayer.



Leader's Guide, Session One:

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world”

Pages: 1-44

Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer.

Recap the purpose of the study as stated on page VI.

Discussion Time:

If you placed the members of your study into groups, please ask your groups to sit together.

Day 1

The Relevance of the Word of God in our lives.

Quickly Recap Romans 12:2: You do not need to spend much time on this step because the introduction session covered an in-depth look at the verse.

Discuss Important facts about the Roman culture found on the top of page 4. Discuss the question in the center of the page. It is indicated with a flower.

Discuss the relevance of the Word of God in our lives. Ask the ladies to think back on Psalm 119. Which verse meant the most to them and why? Ask the question on the top of page 6. “What role does the Word of God play in your daily walk with God?” Communicate the point that we will never be able to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ if we do not cling to His word. This makes the Bible a crucial part of our day as we desire to reflect Jesus Christ..

Day 2

Living “in” the world not “of” the world.

Ask the questions on page 10 that are indicated with a flower. Point the ladies to the paragraph in the middle of page 10. “According to Webster’s dictionary...”



Make the statement--- “If we are going to forsake conformity we must live “in” this world not “of” this world. Pick one or two passages to examine for “in the world” and “of the world.” Look at the root meaning for the word “in” on page 13 and “of” on page 14. Ask for feedback on this concept. You can use questions like--- “what is the difference and why is it important for us to understand?”

Move to the application on page 15. Ask the question indicated by the flower in the middle of the page.

Communicate this key thought: In order to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ, we must understand and know deep in our hearts that this world is not our home! Once we have this truth settled in our heart, we will be ready to forsake conformity to this world and embrace spiritual transformation.

Day 3

Step 1 to Combating Conformity: Recognizing the pattern of this World.

On the top of page 20, you were asked to look at Romans 12:2 and circle the word “pattern.” Discuss the word “pattern.” Discuss the example that was given of Andrea and her struggle with the pattern of this world. Can you relate? Do you have an example to share?

Look at page 22. Ask the question, “What is the greatest pressure you face when it comes to feeling like you need to be something or possess something in order to fit in?”

Invite everyone to open their Bibles to Mark 10:17-22. Read the passage. Use the questions on page 22-23 to discuss the passage. At this point, you can communicate three key points:

- The Rich Young Ruler asked the right question. However, he walked away when the answer was too difficult.
- Jesus asked the Rich Young Ruler to give up the thing that meant the most to him.
- Jesus did not want the Rich Young Ruler’s money, He wanted his heart.

Ask the question on Page 25--- “So the question is, “What is holding you back from knowing Jesus more?” As the leader, be willing to share your answer.



Day 4

Step 2 to Combating Conformity: Recognizing the Sinfulness of our Hearts.

Introduce the concept of the Scattered Place. Read the definition for the scattered place from page 27. If necessary, discuss the example of my phone conversation on page 28.

Invite everyone to open their Bibles to Deuteronomy 4:25-28. Provide a little background information. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses was speaking to the Children of Israel who would go in and possess the Promised Land. Moses was not going into the Land. If you will remember, Moses sinned before God and the people and as a result lost the right to go into the Land. So, in the book of Deuteronomy, Moses gathers the Nation of Israel to give them some last minute warnings and instructions before he passes the leadership reigns to Joshua.

Read the passage. Use the questions on page 29 to discuss the passage.

Communicate--- 4 key points are necessary to understand in order to grasp the depth of the meaning found in this passage.

1. Promised Land
2. Moses's Warning
3. Idol Worship
4. Scattered Place

Discuss what each of these key points meant THEN, to the Israelites, and what it means NOW, to us today.

Close with the application on page 35-36. You can read the application from the book. Then ask the two questions on page 36 that are indicated with the flower.

Day 5

Step 3 to Combating Conformity: Choosing to Live for Christ.



Look at the top of page 38. Note the time element used in Romans 12:2--- “any longer.” Pick up your discussion of Deuteronomy 4:25-28. Read verses 29-31. Highlight the fact that the scripture states in verse 29, “but if from there...” Where is there? Answer: The scattered place. Help is available for those living in the scattered place!

According to Deuteronomy 4:29-31, two steps are necessary.

1. Seek God: Verse 29, “But if from there you SEEK the Lord your God...” Discuss the fact that the word “seek” used in this passage means “to seek to find, to seek to secure, or to seek the face.” Thus, if we want to return from the scattered place, we must surrender to a specific type of seeking--- seeking the face of God. Discuss the difference between seeking the face of God and seeking the hand of God. Communicate the truth: both seeking process are good and called for in the Bible. However, to return from the scattered place, you must move past God’s hand, what He can do, and embrace His face, who He is. This will break the sin cycle in your life and position you to reflect His Glory. Discuss Luke 15:11-31. Use the three lists--- actions and attitudes of the prodigal, actions and attitudes of the older brother, and the loving intent of the father, to guide your discussion. Close with asking the flower question on the bottom of page 41.

2. Wholeheartedly Obey God: Verse 30, “When you are in distress and all these things have happened to you, then in later days you will return to the LORD your God and obey him” Remind the ladies that the word obey means to yield--- “to surrender or relinquish to the physical control of another; to hand over possession of; or to surrender or submit oneself to another.” Answer the flower question at the bottom of page 42.

Conclusion:

Verse 31, “For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he will not abandon or destroy you or forget the covenant with your forefathers.” Communicate the truth: We serve a loving God. He loves you! He wants the best for you! He knows what is best and asks us each day to trust Him. What will your response be? Will you seek His face and obey, no matter the cost? If so, you will reflect Him! Close with prayer.



Leader's Guide, Session Two:

“...but be transformed...”

Pages: 45-86

Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Introduction:

Weeks two, three, and four, are all about transformation. The phrase “but be transformed...” provides our key phrase from our focal verse. Invite the ladies to spend a few minutes discussing the concept of transformation. Use the key questions on page 46 to guide the discussion.

Day 1

Introduce the concept that that transformation has a clear-cut beginning, clear-cut ending, and step-by-step changes in the middle. In the New Testament, we see Paul’s life go through a transformation. Using the scriptures provided in the study, examine Paul’s beginning as a Christian (Acts 9:1-18) Paul’s middle life of step-by-step change (Acts 13:1-12, Philippians 4:10-13, Philippians 3:3-11) and Paul’s final condition before he went home to heaven. (2 Timothy 4:6-8)

Ask the question: Do you think Paul’s life provides a picture of transformation? State: Nowhere in Paul’s writing is the call to transformation more evident than in Romans 12:2. “Do not conform to the pattern of the world, **but be transformed...**”

In Romans 12:2, the word transformed means to be changed in form and is the greek word metamorphoo. Can you hear the word metamorphosis? Share the definition of metamorphosis. Go over the four key aspects of a physical metamorphosis:



1. Change in Form
2. Growth
3. Differentiation
4. Changes in Habitat or of Habit.

Summarize the paragraph on the bottom of page 51. Emphasize the sentence--- Over the next three weeks we will examine what it means to have a spiritual metamorphosis by exploring the Scriptures' teaching on significant changes in form, spiritual growth, differentiation and changes in habitats and habits.

If time allows, allow the ladies to answer the question on the top of page 52--- Please take a moment and describe your current place in the process. (Metamorphosis process)

Day 2

Significant Change in Form: Salvation

Invite the ladies to open their Bibles to Acts 8:26-39. Read the passage. Use the questions on pages 54-55 to discuss the passage.

Salvation--- Moving From Death to Life. As the leader, it would be great if you could summarize the teachings found on pages 56 and 57. In your own words, present the gospel and then share your testimony. Allow others to share their testimony and ask the women who prayed to receive Christ during their time of study to meet with you after class. (Make sure that you connect the women who prayed to receive Christ with a minister or leader who will help them understand the next step of baptism, local church membership, and the need for community with a consistent small group or Sunday School class.)

Day 3

Significant Change in Form: Sanctification



Once you are saved you have an on-going call for change in form as you make it your goal to move from conformity to spiritual transformation. (Refer back to the transformation picture in Paul's life--- Paul's beginning, middle, and final condition)

Share 1 Thessalonians 4:1, "We instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more."

Ask the question--- What relevance does 1 Thessalonians 4:1 have in regards to the topic of Significant Change in form through the process of sanctification? What is sanctification?
(Answer--- Becoming more like Jesus and less like the world)

We discover how to experience the process of becoming more and more like Christ in Ephesians 4:22-24

1. To put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.
2. To be made new in the attitude of your mind.
3. To put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Use the flower questions on pages 67 and 68 to discuss these three points.

Read the paragraph under the application section on page 69. Then ask the question, "What must happen in order for change to take place in your heart?"

Day 4

Spiritual Growth--- What it is NOT!

Ask the question on the bottom of page 71 and the top of page 72.

Invite the ladies to open their Bible to Matthew 23:1-36. You can read the passage all at once or you can walk through the passage one point at a time. This passage of scripture records two things--- warnings and rebukes.



1. Spiritual Growth is NOT about power or position. (vs. 2-3)
2. Spiritual Growth is NOT done for me to see. (vs. 5-7)
3. Spiritual Growth is NOT reached through divided alliances. (vs. 8-10)
4. Spiritual Growth is NOT for self-glory. (vs. 11-12)

Ask the question--- “Which of the four principles listed in today’s homework spoke to you and why?”

Day 5

Spiritual Growth--- What it is NOT!

Picking up in Matthew 23. Discuss the final four points of Jesus’ warnings and rebukes.

5. Spiritual Growth is NOT based on tradition. (vs. 13-22)
6. Spiritual Growth is NOT a contained exercise. (vs. 23-24)
7. Spiritual Growth is NOT determined by what is on the outside. (vs. 25-28)
8. Spiritual Growth is NOT a solo journey. (vs. 29-36)

Ask the question--- “Which of the four principles listed in today’s homework spoke to you and why?”

Discuss the “Are you a Pharisee?” section on page 83-85. Did Andrea’s testimony regarding her struggle with Pharisaical tendencies help you better see areas in your life where you have fallen into the trap of measuring spiritual growth based on human standards?

Close with the verse Psalm 142:7, “Set me free from my prison, that I may praise your name. Then the righteous will gather about me because of your goodness to me.” Ask for a volunteer to close in a word of prayer.

Leader's Guide, Session Three:

“...but be transformed...”

Pages: 87-136



Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Introduction:

This week we continue our look at the spiritual metamorphosis process. Remember that a metamorphosis involves four steps:

1. Significant Change in form through the process of salvation and sanctification
2. Spiritual Growth
3. Differentiation
4. Changes in Habitat and Habits

This week we looked at two aspects of spiritual metamorphosis: Spiritual Growth and Differentiation. Let's review our lessons and see what truths God taught us through His Word.

Day 1

Defining Spiritual Growth: Spiritual growth IS the development of a thriving, love relationship with Jesus Christ.

Evidence of Spiritual Growth: Spiritual Growth lessons from Mary' life.

- Event 1: Luke 10:38-42. Read the passage and discuss the fact that spiritual growth is evident when we sit and listen. Be sure and discuss Psalm 46:10. Then have the women discuss the question on the top of page 91. "In what areas do you need to be reminded that God is God and that He is in control of every aspect of life?"
- Event 2: John 11:17-45. Read the passage and discuss the following truths: Spiritual growth is evident when we honor Christ foremost in our homes, spiritual growth is evident when we respond to Jesus, spiritual growth is evident when we recognize Jesus' authority, and spiritual growth is evident when we participate in setting other captives free. Recap each spiritual growth principal. Then allow the women to share in their discussion groups, "Which principal was most challenging to you and why."



Day 2

- Event 3: Matthew 26:6-13. Read the passage and discuss the following truths: Spiritual growth is evident when we each live a life of relinquishment and complete dependency, spiritual growth is evident when we minister to Jesus, and spiritual growth is evident when we are known for our relationship with Jesus. Recap each spiritual growth principal. Then allow the women to share in their discussion groups, “Which principal was most challenging to you and why.”

If time allows, ask the ladies to compare and contrast their ideas of spiritual growth from Days 4 and 5 of week 2 with the Days 1 and 2 of week 3. Any changes??

Day 3

Defining Differentiation: the process of becoming distinct or different in character.

Go over the list of words that can be used for “distinct” or “different” listed on page 108.

Introduce the attribute of God’s Holiness and how God’s holiness calls us to embrace a life of differentiation. Read the first full paragraph on page 109. The paragraph begins, “The call to holiness resounds in the Word of God.”

Transition: We see evidence of distinct or different living in the life of the Good Samaritan. Read the passage if time allows. Discuss the application of this lesson on pages 112-116. Examine the three points: The Samaritan displayed a willingness to do the right thing, the Samaritan displayed an attitude of compassion and humility, and the Samaritan let his actions speak louder than his words.

Conclusion: How do we live a distinct or different life? “Go and live your life by displaying a willingness to do the right thing, with an attitude of humility and compassion, always allowing your actions to speak louder than your words.” (top of page 117) Discuss the two group discussion question on page 117 with flower.



Day 4

At the very heart of differentiation is the character quality of love.

The Call to Love: Read John 13:34-35. State, “As we love, an amazing thing takes place--- we are known as His disciples. As we love like Christ, we look like Christ, act like Christ, and reflect Christ. Christ-like love differentiates or sets us apart by making us known as His disciples.”

Read John 13:1-17. Discuss the following “how to’s” of love:

1. Know your time is at hand. Utilize the discussion question on page 123: “In your own words, please describe what it means to live your life knowing your time is at hand”
2. Daily experience the full extent of His love. Utilize the discussion question on page 126: “What are some ways you can ensure that you experience the full extent of His love daily? Share about the importance of being present and vulnerable.

Day 5

3. Follow the pattern of Christ

- Live from a position of submission.
- Accept the circumstances of your past.
- Set your sights on your future home.

4. Love like Jesus loved. One additional important note about loving like Jesus: Jesus washed Judas’ feet. Even though Jesus knew Judas would betray Him, Jesus made the choice to love. When Jesus calls you to love a difficult person you may want to express, “She has hurt me so much. She has betrayed me. She is not worthy of my love. Lord, You do not know what You are asking me to do.” In response to these thoughts and questions, see your Lord take the towel wrapped around His waist and gently wipe the dirty feet of a man named Judas. Jesus



knows what it is like to be betrayed and still make the choice to love. We must love like Jesus and do the same.

Recap Conclusion and close in prayer.



Leader's Guide, Session four:

“...but be transformed...”

Pages: 137-176

Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Introduction:

This week we will discuss the final aspect of spiritual metamorphosis--- Changes in Habitat and Habits. Open your book to page 137 and read the second paragraph.

Day 1

Habitat Defined: The places where something is commonly found. At the heart of our individual habitats resides an inherent preference for a particular setting. As a result of these preferences, natural migrations occur that draw us to common or comfortable environments.

Habits Defined: A settled tendency of attitude or acquired manner of behavior that has become almost involuntary. Habits occur with little or no resistance, regularly and without any thought, and always result in inward attitudes or outward actions.

Allow the women to discuss the following question. “Why is it important to examine our habitats and habits as we long to Reflect His Glory?” Answer found in the transforming truth on page 137--- “The places you go and the things you do reveal who you are as a person as well as what you believe about God.” Bottom line--- The places we feel most comfortable and the things we do with little thought display who we are at the very core of our heart. Hence, we must look at our habitats and habits.



Clear Warning from Scripture:

Habitats: Acts 17:26-28 God established proper habitats for His children so that as we move and breathe on His earth within the habitats that He has ordained, we are positioned to seek and find Him!

Habits: 1 Peter 4:1-3. Scripture teaches that the benefit of suffering is that we are done with sin. As we examine our habits that inhibit us from reflecting His glory, we can know that we need to engage in spiritual battle in those areas of our life. Read paragraph three on page 143. “From experience, I can share that any time I want to rid my life of a sinful habit...” Why should we want to wage war on these habits? According to Peter, we have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do! It is time to get serious in our life.

Day 2

When thinking about our habitats and habits, clear-cut issues of sin are not the only areas that keep believers from reflecting His glory. Sometimes the places we go and the things we do may not seem wrong by the world’s standards. When we compare them, however, to God’s standards, those places and things can be recognized as completely offensive to God.

“You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean.”
Leviticus 10:10

Each word/phrase in this verse is important.

- **You:** The word “you” conveys the necessity for each individual to personally take up this call and respond in obedience.
- **Must:** The word “must” conveys the imperative from this call. I must do it! Either I will obey and please God, or I will ignore the call and allow sin into my life.
- **Distinguish:** The word “distinguish” teaches that we must make a judgement call.
- **Between:** The judgement call is between two things--- living for the things of this world or living for the things of God.
- **Holy/Clean:** The holy/clean life involves two important aspects. First, it involves living set apart from the world. Second, holy/clean living does not necessarily mean living on



a grand or magnificent scale. The bottom line--- Holy/Clean living becomes a reality when you live a spiritually consistent life before God.

- **Common/Unclean:** The Common/Unclean life involves two aspects. First, it involves living for people, places, or things instead of God. Second, it involves allowing people, places, or things, to take the place of God's supreme role in our lives.

Discuss the group question on page 151. "In your daily life, do you distinguish between these two categories?"

Day 3

Days 3 and 4 are devoted to examining the number one influencer in our habitats and habits--- our friends.

Two Warnings from scripture:

1. "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong." (Exodus 23:2) Discuss this warning by answering the following group discussion question listed on page 155. "Why do you think God provided this warning?" Follow up with "What struggles do you have in your life as a result of following the crowd?" (page 156)

2. "A righteous man is cautious in friendship but the way of the wicked leads them astray." (Proverbs 12:26) Key Point: God has set forth clear parameters in His Word for our friendships. As we follow these guidelines, the tendency to follow the crowd in doing wrong decreases, and our ability to reflect the glory of Christ increases. In light of this, we must ask the question "How do the individuals in my life influence me in a godly direction?"

Application: The Open Palm

We should not hold onto friendships at any cost. Rather, we should allow God to bring people in and out of our lives for His glory. Discuss the open palm concept. Use the group discussion questions on pages 159. "Please share your thoughts about having open hands regarding the friendships in your life." "Are you open to redefining the friendships in your life?"



Day 4

Key Thought: “God allows different people to be our friends and to play different roles in our lives. While each person is a gift from God and should be treated with love and grace, not all people should have the same level of influence in our lives.”

Three Types of Friendships: Talk through each characteristic list presented in the lesson.

1. Close: List on Page 163
2. Caring: List on Page 164
3. Casual: List on Page 166

Because the application of today’s lesson is very personal, no group discussion questions are listed. Therefore, allow the following question to serve as a conversation starter for today’s material.

- “Do you find that friendships are hard no matter your age or stage of life?”
- “If so, why do you think that is true?”
- “What is the hardest aspect of adult friendships?”
- “How has your life been blessed by close, caring, or casual friends?”

Day 5

Lesson five serves as a recap for the entire spiritual metamorphosis process. If you have time, discuss the four aspects of spiritual metamorphosis and use the group discussion question under each aspect.

- Significant Change in Form: Group Discussion question listed on the bottom of page 171.
- Spiritual Growth: Group Discussion question listed in the middle of page 172.
- Differentiation: Group Discussion question listed in the middle of page 173.
- Changes in Habitats and Habits: Group Discussion question listed in the middle of page 176.

Close with prayer.



Leader's Guide, Session five: “...by the renewing of your mind..” Pages: 177-226

Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Day 1:

Read Romans 12:2. Ask the question on the top of page 178. “As you read and study Romans 12:2, what can you conclude about the renewing process?”

Go over the three answers listed under this question.

Renewing Defined: means to make like new--- renewal, renovation, rejuvenation.

Ask the question on the bottom of page 178. “Which term communicated most clearly to you and why?” (Talk about each term ending with renovation.) Go over the four renovating principles listed on page 179. Read Colossians 3:15-17

1. In renovating, the tearing down process can take just as much time and energy as the rebuilding process. (Colossians 3:15) (Visual picture of wallpaper)
2. When renovating, it is essential to have a plan, know the plan, and consult the plan every single day. (Colossians 3:16) (Visual picture of my dad in his recliner consulting the blueprint)
3. Successful renovation requires you to be on the lookout for new materials and useful tools to aid in the process. (Colossians 3:16b) (Visual picture of my dad shopping every hardware store for useful tools to help in his renovating projects)



4. Renovating is hard work and the work is never done. “Whatever you do” concept! (Colossians 3:17) (Visual picture of my dad always picking up another project.)

End with two discussion questions listed on top of page 183. “Have you accepted mediocre Christianity as the norm for your life? In other words, have you stopped the renovating process in your life?” “Of the four renovating principles listed above, which challenges you the most and why?”

Conclusion: Important point to make. Renewing--- focus on the mind. “Renewing occurs as we take on the challenge to change or renovate the way we think by cleaning out the ways of this world and making room for God’s Word in each and every area of life The mind plays a crucial role in the renewing process. We must not miss this, Paul calls us to renew the mind. The mind and the things that take place in the mind affect the way we think, the way we act, and even the way we feel. Therefore, renewing the mind is a crucial step if we desire to reflect the glory of Jesus Christ.

Day 2:

Days 2, 3, and 4 provide an up close look at the Christian Disciplines. This look involves study in God’s Word as well as practical application.

Christian Discipline Defined: A tool utilized to place ourselves before God so that He can transform us.

Day 2 Focus: The Word of God.

Time of Study in God’s Word:

Ephesians 6:10-17 Read the passage and discuss the importance of God’s Word as stated on the bottom of page 188. (four things the Word of God enables us to do.)

Time of Practical Application:

1. Bible Study: Consistent examination of the Word of God. Can revolve around a topic, a passage of Scripture, or a book of the Bible.



2. Memorization: Placing God's Word inside our minds so that we can draw upon its truth at any moment during our day.
3. Journaling: Recording the work of God in and around our lives. Christian journaling can take on many different forms including rewriting Scripture in our own words, expressing prayer and praise to God, noting various significant events taking place, and recording God's renewing work in our lives.
4. Reading Varied Translations: Using different translations of the Bible helps you to see new things in familiar passages of scripture.

If time allows, ask the women to share their experience with renewing via the Word of God. The activities the women may have selected include: developing a quiet time habit by creating a prayer closet, determining when to go to the prayer closet, and developing a plan for your time in the prayer closet, memorizing Scripture using note cards, journaling a Psalm, recording the events in your day, or pouring out your heart to God, or reading a familiar passage of scripture in different translations.

Day 3:

Day 3 Focus: Expressing Praise to God

Key Concept: God is God and We are not!

Time of Study in God's Word:

Discuss the Word pictures presented in this lesson that teach the important concept that "God is God and We are Not." Use the material provided on page 201 under column four to guide this discussion.

Ask the group discussion question listed on page 202, "Please take a moment and describe how these truths stir your heart to worship God."

Time of Practical Application:

1. Inward Meditation: Sitting before the Lord in order to hear from Him.



2. Outward Expression of Praise: singing, declaring, making known, worshiping, ascribing, rejoicing, giving thanks, praising, and exalting the Lord.

If time allows, ask the women to share their experience with renewing via expressing praise to God. Activities include meditation activity of sitting before the Lord, goodnight walk with God, praise and worship during morning routine, singing to your King, and worship through hymns.

Day 4:

Day 4 Focus: Give, Pray, and Fast

Key Concept: One of the great benefits of practicing the spiritual disciplines is that they often provide an avenue for our will to surrender to God's will.

Time of Study in God's Word:

Read Matthew 6:1-18

Important thoughts to share:

- Giving: Introduce the "Do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing" concept. Talk about how this is a call to surrender our resources to the point where we stop over tracking, over monitoring, and over delegating and begin to know that anything we have has been given to us by God and should be used for His purposes not our own. If time allows, you can use the discussion question in the middle of page 209. "What difference would it make in your giving if you embraced the concept that the resources in your possession are not really yours but rather placed in your control for God's purposes?"
- Praying: State that we are to foster a personal prayer life that finds its focus in a one on-one time with the Lord. We are to avoid a prayer life that tries to force God to work in our life. Instead we should have a balanced prayer life as seen in verses 9-13.
- Fasting: When fasting we are to avoid hypocritical behavior including looking somber and disfiguring our faces to show others we are fasting. Instead, we are to look normal on the outside. The reason we fast is to place our focus and attention on the Lord, not



on ourselves. Therefore, it is only natural that we minimize ourselves in order to maximize our God.

Time of Practical Application:

Take a few minutes and discuss the first application section on pages 211-213. Bottom line--- when we renew for the reward of man, we earn a reward that is much like a wage. We do our service and we receive our payment of man's approval. This type of reward does not bring true renewing to our minds. Rather we show God and others how spiritual we think we have become as the focus of practicing the discipline remains on us. The reward for the one who practices the disciplines in the right way is much different. This reward is a reward of deliverance--- deliverance from our sinful ways to God's holy ways. Thus, we are delivered from sinful self and find the greatest reward in life--- a changed heart that reflects the glory of Christ.

If time allows, ask the women to share their experience with renewing via giving, praying, and fasting. Activities include giving sacrificially, praying thoroughly using the ACTS model, and fasting diligently from any creature comfort.

Day 5:

Day 5 Focus: Renewing Applied to Life

Key Thought: The primary goal of the renewing process is to move beyond a life based on emotions and feelings to a life based on the Word of God.

On pages 218-223, Andrea shared a glimpse into her life and how the renewing process has helped her learn to forsake living based on emotion and embrace living a life based on truth. Ask the women to share aspects of this lesson that helped them understand the importance of renewing in their lives.

On pages 224-225, you were asked to examine your renewing process. Ask the women, "How did this section help you to see your need for renewing?"



Conclusion:

Read Galatians 5:1. Then allow the women to discuss the importance of spiritual freedom in their lives.

Close with prayer.



Leader's Guide, Session six:

“...Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is--- his good, pleasing, and perfect will.”

Pages: 227-256

Before We Begin...

Because there is so much material to cover in weeks 6 and 7, the leader’s guide will encourage you to focus on some lessons more than others. In week 6, you will discuss days 1 and 2 in-depth. These two days focus on seeking God’s will for the right reasons and in the right way. Therefore, the material in these lessons are crucial for understanding how to reflect the glory of Christ. Days 3 and 4 will be discussed at a more high level approach. Due to the flow of the material, day 5 of week 6, will be discussed in week 7’s lessons.

Welcome:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Day 1:

Introduce the definition of God’s Will listed on the top of page 228. Then ask the discussion question that follows. “Do you struggle with knowing and fulfilling the will of God? If so, please explain.”

Following discussion read or summarize the paragraph directly under the question. Conclude by sharing the importance of viewing God’s will from His holy perspective, not our own.

The Trap Exposed:

Share the two misconceptions regarding God’s Will and the verses that expose each trap.



1. God the Creator was dependent upon me the creation to accomplish His work on this earth. Discussion Question: Do you struggle with the concept of viewing your relationship with God as a 50/50 partnership?" Scripture: Philippians 2:12-14

2. If obedience equals blessing, I choose obedience. Discussion Question: Do you struggle with choosing obedience in hopes that your choice will secure a blessing from God?" Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:25

Important statement to share: "Performance-based religion perpetuates a human-based focus on an infinite God. This focus is devoid of genuine love, devotion, and surrender to Jesus, who has given everything."

Share that if this lesson created a sense of tension in the participant's heart, that is not a bad thing. Tension helps us clarify our heart's desires. Embrace the tension and ask God to help you see the real reason that you have sought His will in the past and the right way to seek His will in the future.

Day 2:

In day 2, we took a deep breath and refocused on God alone. Psalm 25:15 provided the call from scripture. Read Psalm 25:15 and discuss the verse phrase by phrase.

- **My:** This word shows us the important role our personal desires play in the refocusing process. The words glance and gaze provided a picture of different levels of focus. Define each word and ask the women to share how the concept of glancing or gazing helped them evaluate their focus in life. Use the question on the top of page 235, "Why do you think it is important to take on the personal responsibility to gaze?"
- **Eyes:** This word challenges us to examine what our eyes are looking to and looking for. Bottom line: The purest form of fellowship occurs as we gaze at God by intentionally looking to Him for everything." Ask the discussion question at the top of page 236, "Please describe the role continual fellowship plays in knowing and fulfilling the will of God in your life."



- **Are Ever On:** Share the fact that the word ever means “continually, perpetually, daily, morning and evening, without interruption, and regularly.” This resolve by David communicates that in easy times and hard times, his eyes were on the Lord.
- **The Lord:** This phrase teaches the focus of our love, devotion, and affection. It is the most important phrase in this verse and communicates the recipient of David’s continual love and attention. Ask the question: How does the concept of everything in your life pointing to the Lord challenge you?”
- **For Only He:** God is unique and the only One who can truly provide deliverance in our lives. This truth resounds in the Old and New Testaments. For Only He!
- **Will Release My Feet:** Two words are crucial to understand.
 - 1. release: to come forth, go out, to proceed, or go forth. The word release carries the idea of movement.
 - 2. Feet: which means foot which are used for walking. Bottom Line? When we think about the words release (to come forth, go out, to proceed, or go forth) and feet (signifying walk), we discover that the Lord desire to move or release us forward in our walks with Him.
- **From The Snare:** The word snare means net and describes an object used for catching.

Talk through the recap on pages 239-240. Remind the group that Psalm 25:15 provides clear instruction on how to refocus on God alone as we move away from seeking God’s will from a self-centered perspective. Review Romans 12:2 and note the important fact that God’s will is His, not ours.

Day 3:

(Reminder: You can cover days 3 and 4 as a high level overview.)

Review definition of God’s will listed on top of page 242. Expand on the definition by stating that “for the purpose of this study, we are going to also look at God’s will from the vantage point of God’s work in our lives. This is necessary because before we have the ability to carry out God’s good pleasure on this earth, we first must understand the nature of His work in our lives.”



Define the word “good” as used in Romans 12:2. “Good” represents something as being advantageous to another, promoting welfare. It often signifies inherent goodness, and describes something as virtuous. Point out the fact that the word good used in Romans 12:2 is different than the world's definition of good as seen in an easy trouble free life. Ask the question listed on the bottom of page 242, “What difference does it make to know that God uses both difficult and easy things in your life to produce His good will?” Follow this question with, “Do others try to tell you God’s good will only comes in the form of easy times as demonstrated in the world’s definition of good? If yes, please describe the difficulty this presents.”

Introduce the three principles listed in today’s lesson: Deuteronomy 13:5

- Principle 1: Seeking to obey God’s good will always reveals the individual’s heart.
 - Key Point: We must come to the place in our lives where we long to hear what our heart needs to know more than what our ears long to hear!

- Principle 2: Seeking to obey God’s good will requires that we keep His commands and follow His ways.
 - Key point: The Bible provides the starting point in the process of seeking God’s good will and becomes the plumb-line by which everything in our life is measured. Once we have God’s thoughts firm in our hearts, we can know that God will enable us to discern His good will for our lives.

- Principle 3: Seeking to obey God’s will separates us from the outside influencers of this world. Key Point: We must spiritually silence the people in our lives who turn us away from seeking God’s good will as revealed in His Word.

Discussion question from middle of page 248, “From the three principles listed in today’s study, please describe the most challenging principle for you and tell why.”



Day 4

Three More Principles for Seeking God's Good Will.

- Principle 4: God's good will is worked out in both difficult and easy life situations.
 - Key Point: Paul experienced struggles in his life. Yet God's good will was still at work.

- Principle 5: God's good will often produces reassurances in the form of a specific word or promise.
 - Key Point: As we seek the good will of God, God's Word often gives us reassurances in the form of a specific word or promise. These specific words or promises bring peace into our hearts as we face unknown situations and circumstances in our lives. We must understand that the good will of God does not always come in the form of a tidy solution to every problem we face. Sometimes the good will of God comes as He walks us through the messy situations of life by graciously providing help, comfort, and direction.

- Principle 6: God's good will always brings us into a closer, deeper relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord.
 - Key Point: No matter our situation in life, can we say, "I have faith in God that it will happen just as He told me?" We will only make this type of statement when we embrace the notion that the focus of God's good will must be on bringing us into a closer, deeper relationship with Christ Jesus our Lord.

Close with this discussion question, "From the three principles listed in today's study, please describe the most challenging principle for you and tell why."



Leader's Guide, Session seven:

"...Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--- his good, pleasing, and perfect will."

Pages: 257-310

Before We Begin...

Just a reminder that due to the bulk of the material in this week's lesson, some of the days will be discussed at a high level overview while other lessons will be discussed in-depth. This week we will pick up week 6 day 5 lesson and discuss this lesson in conjunction with week 7 day 1.

Week 6, Day 5 and Week 7, Day 1:

Welcome everyone and open with prayer. If you are using discussion groups, ask everyone to sit in their groups.

Day 1:

Read Romans 12:2 and point out the fact that we will discuss the pleasing will of God. The word "pleasing" used in Romans 12:2 means, "well-pleasing, acceptable, that which God recognizes." This definition helps us to see the focus of pleasing God not ourselves. This focus is important because our actions and attitudes play a role in our ability to fulfill God's will for our lives. Without a doubt, this does not make God dependent on us, rather it increases our dependency on Him.

In week 6 day 5 and week 7 day 1, the life of Ruth provided our biblical example of a woman who pleased God in the way she lived her life. Thus, her actions and attitudes honored God and positioned her to fulfill His will in her life. From the study of God's Word, we saw Ruth display the following actions and attitudes:

- Ruth clung to the right things in life.
- Ruth lived a determined life.
- Ruth displayed initiative.



- Ruth worked hard.
- Ruth practiced humility
- Ruth sought proper refuge.
- Ruth was a life giver.
- Ruth listened and obeyed.
- Ruth knew the value of waiting.
- Ruth recognized and met the needs of others.

Discussion question, which of the action or attitudes displayed in Ruth's life, challenged you and why? If time allows, you can discuss each action/attitude in depth and utilize the discussion questions throughout this portion of the study.

Day 2

Open with the discussion question on the bottom of page 277, "According to your thoughts, please define the word perfect." Share Webster's definition. "Being entirely without fault or defect; corresponding to an ideal standard or abstract concept." Bottom line--- free from problems or errors. The word "perfect" that is used in Romans 12:2 is much different. This word "perfect" means "that which has achieved or reached its goal, objective, or purpose, complete, perfected, or proficient, referring to the final stage of glory."

Discuss the difference in the two definitions. (Hint: Webster's definition focuses on being entirely without fault--- no problems, no errors! God's definition focuses on completion!) Bottom line--- God is always working, always moving, in order to bring us to a place of perfection, which from God's perspective means completion.

The life of Peter provided a perfect example of the perfect will of God being worked out in a believers life. Through God's Word, we saw how God worked in Peter's life in Acts 10 and use that work to impact the course of the early church in Acts 15 as God challenged Peter's idea of clean and unclean. As God revealed Himself to Peter, Peter was perfected; he became more and more like Jesus as he understood God's plan to redeem both Jews and Gentiles. In the end, God's perfect will was accomplished in Peter's life as he reflected God's glory and moved one step closer to completion in God's eyes.



Did today's lesson challenge the way you view God's perfect will in your life? If so, how? Did this lesson bring a sense of peace into your heart knowing that God is at work in you to bring you to a place of perfection which in His mind is completion?

Day 3

Read Philippians 1:3-8 and James 1:2-4 and highlight the following two truths:

1. The value of being complete or whole in Christ.
2. The use of hardships in order to reach completion in Christ.

Discuss the story of God's perfect will in my life and then allow the ladies to share a story from their life.

Day 4

Now that we have covered God's good, pleasing, and perfect will, we are going to put the information together and discover a testing and approving process. First, we must note that the Greek word for testing and approving means "approved, tested, to try, prove, scrutinize, discern, distinguish approve, the process of testing a thing to ascertain whether it be worthy to be receive or not." From God's Word we can know that God provides tools for us to know whether something is from Him or the world.

Three Step Process:

1. Recognize the Authority of the Word of God. Key Point: Anything God calls you to do will line up with the precepts of His holy Scriptures. Therefore, knowing, understanding, and applying the Word of God is crucial in determining His good, pleasing, and perfect will. Scripture: Psalm 19:7-11
2. Allow the Holy Spirit to Examine our Attitudes and Actions. Key Point: As we come to situations that call us to make important decisions, we must stop and take inventory of our hearts as well as our previous actions to determine if sin is present in our lives. Because sin lessens the sense of God's presence in a believer's life, sin must be dealt with before life decisions are made. Scripture: Psalm 139:23-24 Good prayer: "Lord



shine your bright light into every dark corner of my soul and uncover the sin hidden in my heart.”

3. Recognize God’s Work in the Circumstances of Life. Key Point: This step represents remaining teachable over the course of our lives as we view our time on this earth as a journey towards our heavenly home. As this attitude defines our lives, we stop compartmentalizing our lives and allow God to use anything and everything from the past for His glory. Scripture: Philippians 2:13 Practical application: When faced with several options, I begin to go through the recesses of my mind and ask, “Lord, what have you taught me in the past? What situation, circumstances, or lesson has prepared me for this time?”

Conclude with the discussion question on middle of page 300. “Do you feel better equipped to make important life decisions?”

Day 5

In order to obey Romans 12:2, we must back up and surrender to the truths taught in Romans 12:1. Read Romans 12:1. Explore the following three elements.

1. A Bold Reminder: View your life through the lens of God’s mercy.
2. A Clear Instruction: Offer your body as a living sacrifice.
3. A Powerful Reason: This is your spiritual act of worship--- it is not what we do, it is who we are!

One Final Question to Consider--- What would my life be like if.... Allow the women to share how this question challenged them in their walk with the Lord. Invite the women to share their list if they desire. Then direct the ladies attention to the top of page 308. The paragraph listed at the top of page 308 is one of the most important paragraphs in the study. It states, “Dear friend, do you want to know what keeps you from reflecting His glory? You just wrote the answers! Each “what would my life be like if...?” area becomes an area of control that causes you to reflect yourself rather than your Lord.”

Challenge the ladies to take on the task of fighting for spiritual freedom in these areas of their lives. In a sense, this list can become their spiritual goal list for the next three months, one year,



or several years. This list should help them see that there is continued work to be done--- long after your group stops meeting. The work must go on!

Conclusion: Recap Romans 12:2 and all the things we learned during our seven week journey. Thank the women for their diligence in the Word and encourage them to stay connected with you and one another. Ask the final discussion question on page 309, "Please express your desire for Romans 12:2 to continually challenge the way you live your life on this earth."

Close with prayer.

