



## Week Two

### Opening Praying

God, thanks for being active in each of our lives. Help us to see and respond with what you have for us. Amen.

### Talk It Over

This week we talked a good deal about habits. Our Stop/Start series is all about us being open to stopping old behavior and starting new behavior. We want to be a church body that says “yes” to becoming like God.

- What are some habits you have added to your life and within your family routine that you found helpful?
- Stopping habits can be easier for some of us than starting habits, and vice versa. But we know we need to be able to both stop and start habits in order to accelerate the transformation process in our lives. Which element of this process — stopping or starting — is easier for you?
- Share something fun you have started doing recently.

### Read Ephesians 4:21-24 (NLT) And Dallas Willard Quote Below

*“The revolution of Jesus is in the first place and continuously a revolution of the human heart or spirit. It did not and does not proceed by means of the formation of social institutions and laws, the outer forms of our existence, intending that these would then impose a good order of life upon people who come under their power. Rather, his is a revolution of character, which proceeds by changing people from the inside through ongoing personal relationship to God in Christ and to one another. It is one that changes their ideas, beliefs, feelings, and habits of choice, as well as their bodily tendencies and social relations. It penetrates to the deepest layers of their soul.” – Dallas Willard*

The transformation that Jesus talks about is not comparable to the goals that we might set in order to improve a particular area of our life, a strength, or a weakness. The transformation Jesus talks about happens deep inside and involves many aspects of what makes us ‘us’. It involves our souls.

- Have you ever experienced what Dallas Willard describes as a soul transformation? If you are willing to share, tell us how did that unfolded for you?
- Soul transformation can be difficult yet rewarding work. If you have ever spent time in counseling or a twelve step program you have experienced what it is like to explore the deepest layers of your soul. Thankfully God promises to be close to us when we choose to participate in the work of transformation. How have you felt God work in the midst of your pain or wrestle?

**This week we specifically looked at three things we can start to help us partner with God through our change process:**

**1. Stop believing lies and start trusting who God says I am. / Read Ephesians 1:4-5 (NLT)**

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Our minds often create lies about ourselves. In the transformation process we need to discover these lies and begin to replace them with the truth of God's love.

- Is the loudest voice in your life affirming or condescending? Share why you think that is the case.
- What are some ways you generally discover the lies that hold you back?
- What are some ways you generally discover the truth of God's love for you?

## **2. Stop forcing change and start allowing others to help me. / Read Galatians 6:1-2 (NLT)**

"Just me and Jesus" does not work when it comes to transformational work. Wrestling through the lies we believe and receiving feedback from those who know us, along with their support and love, gives us the courage to explore places we may have skipped if we were alone in the process.

- In what ways have others played a part in bringing truth into your life?
- Sometimes help from others in the form of truth can sting verse comfort. Truth can sting, but it should always be spoken in love.
  - Who in your life has done this well?
  - Has this even been poorly done to you? How did you move forward?
  - What are some the notable difference between someone telling truth in love and some being brutal, mean, aggressive, or immature?

## **3. Stop going back and start participating in God's kingdom work. / Read Ephesians 2:10 (NLT)**

The beauty in transformation is that it is happening in everyone and available to everyone. We are in this together! By being a part of the kingdom of God we can spot and participate in the transformation happening in our lives and the lives of others. God does not expect us to be transformed before we begin to do our part for his kingdom. He invites into his work as we are and he continues that transformational work as we move forward.

- If you are involved in a ministry inside or outside the walls of the church, share a little about what it is that you do.
- If you are not currently on a ministry team, what is holding you back?

## **Closing Prayer**

God, you know the details of our life. You know the areas of our life we need to outgrow in order to transform into our best selves. Help us to be open to stopping the right things and to starting the right things. Thank you for your loving guidance. Amen.