

TENSIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

GROUP LEADER GUIDE: WEEK FOUR

THE WORK OF THE SOUL

8 Happy Things in Life

Matthew 5:3-10 (J.B.Philips version)

How happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! How happy are those who know what sorrow means for they will be given courage and comfort! Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them! Happy are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness, for they will be fully satisfied! Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them! Happy are the utterly sincere, for they will see God! Happy are those who make peace, for they will be sons of God! Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs!

Understanding your soul and yourself

Brief definitions:

Soul: the person's total self including that which lives on after death.

Self: the object of introspection or reflexive action.

We previously learned that what you love becomes the basis for your identity. Based on Mark 12:28-31 how should you love your life?

Have you framed your soul (life) around Jesus or self? And what is the difference?

How do the following narratives reflect the potential neglect of the soul for the sake of self love?

Love Yourself

Be Yourself.

Believe in Yourself.

Take care of Yourself.

Stand up for Yourself.

Express Yourself.

Fulfill Yourself.

Transforming the soul

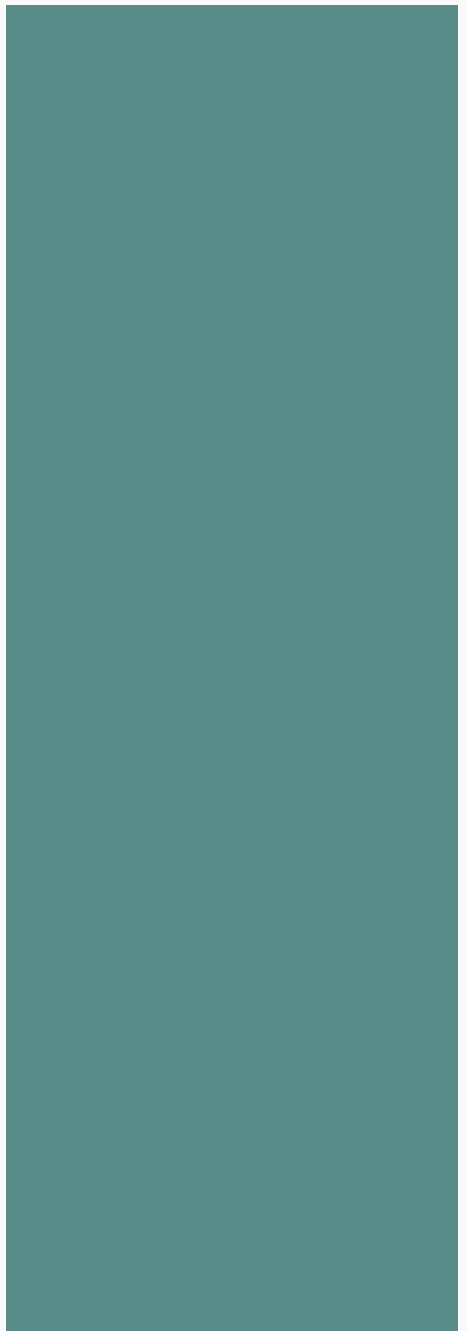
To bring change into your life you need transformation. This is a process of filling and emptying that demands something to be sacrificed. What can we learn from the following verses about the need for transformation?

KEY VERSES

Matthew 5:3-10

Return to your rest, my soul,
for the Lord has been good to
you.

Psalms 116:7



Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?"

Matthew 16:24-26 NIV

Sexuality and the Soul

Read Matthew 5:27-30.

If you applied Jesus statement, "you have heard it was said" to our current culture, how do you see people forming their identity around their sexuality, and what damage have you seen it do?

When Jesus says, "But I say to you", based on Jesus fulfillment of the law, what is God's heart when it comes to how men and women should treat each other in their sexuality?

As much as appropriate, how has your sexual identity shaped your life?

And knowing God's heart on this, what transformation would you like God to do in your life?

Leaders note: In the previous weeks and the weeks to come, more questions will arise that may not be answered in the sermons due to the expansive nature of these five values that should form the lives of those who follow Jesus.

Encourage people to write them down and pursue the answers in group, discover how Jesus is the answer to life's most important questions. If answers cannot be found after a couple weeks, ask a pastor:)

CLOSING PRAYER

2 Corinthians 13:5-14

The church in Corinth had problems understanding their new identity in Jesus including in their view of sexuality. Read this section and pick something out that you would like to include in a prayer for the group in closing.