

## CORE COMPETENCIES

### Core Beliefs

- Trinity
  - Salvation by Grace
  - Authority of Bible
  - **Personal God**
- “I believe that God has a purpose for my life.”**
- Identity in Christ
  - Church
  - Humanity
  - Compassion
  - Eternity
  - Stewardship

### Core Practices

- Worship
- Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

### Core Virtues

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- Self-Control
- Hope
- Humility

**W**elcome to a new series—even if it’s a brief one! If you’re new to the Engage, I pray that you’ll find it to be a helpful tool in knowing God and studying His Word. For those who’ve been using Engage, you’ll most likely notice that this one’s a little different. For starters, we’re not focused on a specific book of the Bible for this mini-series, but rather the overall topic of being transformed spiritually. We’ll be looking at various places in the Bible that give us help and insight. You’ll also notice that you will be asked to reflect often about your own life. That’s because we really can’t move forward with Jesus very well if we’re not paying attention to our lives and letting God hold up a mirror to them. So, please take the opportunity to let God speak to you and to reflect carefully on His Word and the insight He brings. Finally, I’m indebted much to one of my favorite authors, John Ortberg, for some of what you’ll see here, as well as to Suzan White for putting this in a way that fits where we’re headed in this brief series. I pray that God will use this to encourage you—and challenge you, too!

Morphing,

**Richard Gotthardt**, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

### Day 1: Transformation

In the space below, describe what spiritual transformation means to you.

What would you consider to be the indicators for spiritual transformation?

The nation Israel, God’s chosen people whom He deeply loved, had turned their backs on God and had gone their own way. Read Ezekiel 11:19. In this passage, what is the transformation that God promised His chosen people?

What was the condition that had to be met for this transformation to happen?

Read Colossians 1:10-14. What transformation is described in this passage?

As believers, we were transformed through His mercy when we, in faith, accepted Christ’s forgiveness for our sins. This transformation took us from being lifeless sinners living in the dominion of darkness to beloved children belonging to the kingdom of the Son (Colossians 1:13).

Describe the transformation you experienced when you first came to know Christ.

There is also an ongoing aspect to the spiritual transformation process. Read Romans 12:1-2. In the space below list all of the commands that Paul has given in this passage.

Spend some time thinking on Romans 12:1-2. How do these verses accurately depict your pursuit of Christ-likeness?

Pray Romans 12:1-2 back to God asking him to work in you to bring about enduring transformation.

*Ex. God, Thank You for Your great mercy and love that was demonstrated through giving Your Son for me. Show me what it means to truly offer my body as an ongoing, living sacrifice...*

### Day 2: Example of True Transformation

Today we will take a look at an example of authentic transformation in the life of Paul who was known as Saul prior to becoming a follower of Jesus.

Read Acts 8:3 and 9:1-2. How is Saul described in these verses?

Read Acts 9:3-22. List some specific areas of transformation that we see take place in Saul's life.

Before Damascus Road

After Damascus Road

Paul's life was drastically changed from that moment on. Read the following passages. Next to each verse jot down a few observations regarding Paul's motivation for transformation, the fruit of God's transforming work in his life, or the spiritual disciplines that he practiced.

Passage:	Motivation for transformation:	Fruit of transformation:	Spiritual Practices:
Acts 17:16-31:	<i>His desire to see other lost people know Christ</i>	<i>Boldly proclaiming truth of Christ</i>	<i>Giving his faith away</i>

Acts 15:16-34:

Acts 21:10-13:

What is an area of your life in which you have seen God's transforming power?

Thank God for this transformation and ask him to help you continue in the process of transformation.

### **Day 3: Pseudo-Transformation**

In Jesus day, the Pharisees were the example of righteousness that was held up for all to see. Today let's take a look at Jesus' response to the Pharisee's brand of righteous transformation.

Read Matthew 23:1-36. List some of the measurements that the Pharisees used to determine righteousness?

The Pharisees had a false sense of security and pride in their position of authority and in their acts of righteousness. In this passage, Jesus exposes the true motives of their self-righteous pseudo-transformation. What were some of the motivations behind their transformation?

Read Luke 10:25-28 and John 13:34-35. Instead of focusing on the external religious practices as the Pharisees did, what did Jesus emphasize?

In 1 Corinthians 13:1-7, what evidence of true spiritual transformation is given?

Spend some time in silence reflecting on Luke 10:27.

Reflection:

\*Slowly read through the verse several times.

\*Ponder the meaning of each word or phrase and let these words sink into your heart and mind.

\*Ask God to reveal where you fall short or where you can celebrate transformation in regards to the commands found in this verse.

Are there areas of your life in which you have pursued pseudo-transformation instead of true transformation?

What has motivated your pursuit of pseudo-transformation?

Confess these areas to God and ask Him to help you pursue deep and authentic transformation.

### **Day 4: Ongoing Transformation for Spiritual Growth**

*"Whether we like it or not, we are all undergoing continual transformation; we are always changing either for the better or for the worse."* John Ortberg

Change is inevitable. As we age, we are obviously continuing to change physically, but we also change spiritually. Think about your current daily practices. How are these causing you to be spiritually formed in one direction or another?

What standards are you currently using to evaluate your spiritual condition? Be specific.

Read 1 Corinthians 9:24-27. What caused Paul to take his spiritual training very seriously?

When we get serious about ongoing spiritual transformation, it won't work to simply "try harder;" instead we must train wisely. Growth in our relationship with God results from training in spiritual disciplines. Spiritual disciplines are practices we live by that enable us to do what we cannot do by our own willpower alone. These practices help us grow in the ability to love God and people—truer indicators of spiritual well-being.

Where would you say that you are *training* to become more like Christ and in what areas are you *trying* to be more like Christ? Why?

### **Day 5: Examine Your Life**

The primary goal of the spiritual life is human transformation—real change in the essential nature of the person. God is in the business of transforming ordinary people like us so that we express His character and goodness. This is transformation from the inside out—learning to think as Jesus would think, to feel what He would feel, and to do what He would do. It is a far-cry from pseudo-transformation, the adherence to external rules or behaviors intended to identify us to others as "transformed" people.

Spend a few minutes sitting in silence, asking God to reveal areas of your life in which you need to pursue true transformation. Use Psalm 139:23-24 as a guide for your thoughts and prayer.

In what way(s) am I preoccupied with *appearing* to be spiritual?

In what area(s) of my life can I celebrate true spiritual transformation?

In which area(s) am I becoming judgmental, exclusive, or proud?

In which area(s) have I demonstrated genuine love?

To what degree am I becoming less approachable to other people?

In what area(s) am I seeing myself become more approachable to others?

In what way(s) am I becoming weary of pursuing spiritual growth?

In what way(s) have I seen myself grow excited in my pursuit of spiritual growth?

In what way(s) do I measure my spiritual life by superficial standards?

In what area(s) am I measuring myself by true standards of spiritual transformation?

Read Philippians 3:12. In the space below, write this verse as a personal prayer of renewal.