

## TOTAL REVOLUTION of IDENTITY

### Session #1 – "...Christ formed in you..." Galatians 4:19

**Session Objective:** Living the Christian life is about total transformation. Although our effort is required, our real goal for transformation is that Christ is formed in us. In other words, Christ's nature is allowed to permeate ALL of our life. Therefore, students will:

- Understand God's central place in the "Who am I?" question
- Discover that the Christian life is about "Christ being formed in us"
- Learn practical ways to have 'formed in us'

#### Extended Preparation Options:

- Bring enough small jigsaw puzzles for your small groups. A 200-piece Disney jigsaw would work well or puzzles that would take under 10 minutes. Secretly switch box tops. Ask the groups to put the puzzles together – first group done wins a prize. Debrief this experience with the following questions:
  1. How did they start the jigsaw puzzle? Why? (i.e. lay out all pieces, start with corners/edges).
  2. How do you know what the puzzle is supposed to look like? (Box top picture).
  3. What if you were given a 10,000-piece puzzle but someone had secretly switched the box top to one of another box? (Frustration!) Lead in point to question #3 - "Doing a jigsaw puzzle is similar to trying to figure out who each of us really are. And, our world offers us many different box tops to follow, but all but one box top leads to frustration. See question #3
- Design "Guess the Secret Identity Game" – similar to the "Who am I?" pictures used in most movie theatres before a movie begins. Give progressive clues to reveal the identities of members of the group or church, Christian heroes, cultural icons, etc. Using powerpoint and the Internet would put the icing on the cake!

## Session Outline

### Small Group Questions:

1. What did you want to 'be' when you were growing up? Why?
2. Has your desire changed over time?

*It doesn't stop changing either. Studies show that the average adult changes careers completely several times over the course of their life.*

3. Psychologists say that the biggest job of the teenage years is for a teenager to figure out who they are and who they want to be. This doesn't sound like easy job – is it difficult? Why or why not?

*Difficult with all the changes and pressures – internal pressures (physical, emotional, mental, sexual, social, etc) and external pressures like family, friends, media, church, culture, ethnicity, etc.*

4. When we try to fit God into answering the question, “Who am I?”, it's tempting to hear God and respond to God as just one more competing voice. How does God fit into answering the question “who am I?”

### Possible Responses:

**One More Competing Voice** - Sometimes it's easy to see God as just one more voice with a competing opinion – sometimes other voices are much louder than His. But, if He's the One who created us, maybe His voice should count heavily.

**The First Voice We Listen To** - Sometimes it's easy to see God as one piece of the larger puzzle. We try to listen to Him first and do our best. Then, we move on to fit the rest of life together. (God is compartmentalized with the God part of us and then there is the rest of us).

**Leader Say:** There is another option: In the following Scripture passage, Paul is talking to the people of Galatia – they've been trying to figure out who they are. They've been listening to a lot of different voices and trying to do their best, but Paul is deeply frustrated and desires that they move beyond all these voices. Read Galatians 4:17-20.

5. Paul's desire is that “Christ is formed in you.” What do you think “Christ is formed in you” really means?

**Leader Say:** *Paul is calling the Galatians to move beyond following outward rules to show they are followers of Christ. Why? Two reasons: 1. You can have outward obedience (going through the motions for others) without internal obedience (God cares most about our inside attitude and desires), and 2. The Christian life isn't about trying to live up to a bunch of rules (which we will fail at in our own strength anyway), but about the transformation of our identity from the inside out. Specifically, that Christ's identity or nature is formed within the uniqueness of each of us and that all areas of our lives are transformed by Christ.*

**6. How does Christ become formed in us? What can we do? What does God do?**

**Leader Note:** Share or expand on the following concepts as the group shares...

- **Supernatural Power** – Read John 15:1-8. Ask:
  - a. Who is the vine? Who are the branches?** (Answer: Christ is vine, we are the branches)
  - b. What is the Father's role as the gardener?** (Cut off and prune for more fruit).
  - c. What is the job of the branches?** (“to remain in me”, another phrase is “to abide in me”)
  - d. What are the results of abiding or not?** (bear much fruit or nothing).
  - e. Practically? How do we abide in Christ?**  
**Answer #1 – Rely and Submit** - We don't change on our own. We need God to change who we are and to form Christ in us. That's why the Holy Spirit's power is at work in us. We need to rely on and submit to His power at work in us.
  - Answer #2 – Spiritual Training** – Transformation doesn't happen by chance – it requires us to partner with what God is doing. Read 1 Timothy 4:7 –**f. What does training mean?** Systematic, Intentional. Work that takes time. **g. Who is responsible?** We are. **h. What is the goal?** (Godliness, but another way to state it is that “Christ is formed in you”).

**7. What is one area of your life that you would like God's supernatural power to focus on and to start spiritual training in? What steps can you take this week?**

*Help students brainstorm one practical step they could take this week. Help them to make a reasonable and practical plan. If you can, follow-up with some encouragement this week by email, phone, etc.*

**Leader Closing, Say:** *Over the next several weeks, we are going to focus on the **TOTAL REVOLUTION of IDENTITY**. We are going to break down the question “How does Christ become formed in us?” and look at Intimacy with God, Character, Community and Ministry. My hope is that God would show us if He*

*wants us to individually concentrate on one of these 4 areas this semester. Then, we can start training together with God's power.*

**Prayer Options:** Help us to see who we really are, Christ's character formed in us, pray through the answers to question 7, pray for the impact of the next weeks of study.

### Comments and Feedback

**Leader Note:** This is your place each week to record significant sharing or growth in the lives of your students for subsequent follow up. You can also use this space to provide feedback on the material. All suggestions are welcome.

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Please see the following handout. You have permission to reproduce these handouts for your group.