



## Class 4

# You are Transformed by the Truth

### SLIDE

- *You were created to become like Christ*

### SLIDE

- Romans 8:29 MSG

29) God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. **He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son.** The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him.

- From the very beginning of creation God's plan has been to make you like His son

- You know you are created in the *image* and *likeness* of God

- What does the full image and likeness of God look like? It looks like His son:

### SLIDE

- Colossians 1:15 MSG

15) We look at this Son and see the God who cannot be seen. **We look at this Son and see God's original purpose** in everything created.

**SLIDE**

- You were created to be like Christ

**SLIDE**

- God's desire is for you to change your **LIFE**, your **HABITS**, and your **CHARACTER** to become like Christ

**SLIDE**

- For you to rid yourself of every bit of your natural selves and put on a **SPIRITUAL SELF**

**SLIDE**

- This process of transforming yourself to be more like Christ is called **DISCIPLESHIP**

**SLIDE**

- Discipleship is your **3<sup>rd</sup> Purpose**

**SLIDE**

- Ephesians 4:22-24 MSG

- 22) Since, then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance, everything - and I do mean everything - connected with that old way of life has to go. It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then **take on an entirely new way of life** - a God-fashioned life,
- 23) **a life renewed from the inside**
- 24) and working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.

**SLIDE**

- What does God want from you?

- It's quite simple really...

**SLIDE**

- God's ultimate goal for you is not comfort, but **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT**
- God wants to work with you to develop you into the person that He has had in mind since the beginning of time

- He doesn't want to break you down to nothing, and replace you with something else...
- Becoming like Christ doesn't mean losing your personality
  - God doesn't want mindless drones
- God created your uniqueness and He wants it part of the Body
- God wants you to transform your character, not your personality
  - God wants you to develop a Christlike character
- When you are feeling frustrated and beaten by life...

**SLIDE**

- *It's important for you to remember that life is **SUPPOSED** to be difficult*
- *This stress is what stretches you and causes you to grow*
- *Never forget that life is not about you*

**SLIDE**

- *You exist for **GOD'S PURPOSE**, not vice-versa*
- It is the power of God's word working in our lives that transforms us

**SLIDE**

- It's important for us to realize that we can't make this transformation ourselves

**SLIDE**

- It is the job of God's **HOLY SPIRIT** to produce a Christlike character in you

**SLIDE**

- You cannot reproduce the character of Christ by **YOURSELF**
  - Willpower, resolutions and good intentions aren't enough
  - Only through the power of the Holy Spirit are you changed
- Now, as soon as I say "**Holy Spirit**", many people start thinking of healing and speaking in tongues

- But, the Holy Spirit works in your life in a very quiet, unassuming way
  - Most people aren't even aware of it, nor can they even feel it
- You all agree that God is at work in your lives, right?
  - No one would disagree with that simple fact

### **SLIDE**

- Philippians 2:13 NIV

13) ...for it is **God who works in you** to will and to act **according to his good purpose.**

### **SLIDE**

- God is at work in your life, and it is through his Holy Spirit power that He accomplishes this work

### **SLIDE**

- ***Becoming like Christ is not about IMITATION, it's about INHABITATION***
- You allow Christ to live in you
  - You allow the spirit of our Lord to be dominant in your personality
- You bring Christ into your everyday life through the power of God's Word
  - God performs this miraculous transformation by the power of the Holy Spirit

### **SLIDE**

- Colossians 1:27 MSG

27) God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: **Christ is in you**, therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message.

### **SLIDE**

- So, it's not us imitating Christ, but us becoming Christ, as he becomes a part of us

- Throughout the Bible we see an important truth about how the Holy Spirit works in our lives...

### **SLIDE**

- *The power of God is released in your life the moment you take a **STEP OF FAITH***

### **SLIDE**

- **OBEDIENCE** unlocks God's power
- God waits for you to act first
  - *Don't wait to feel powerful or confident*
  - *Move ahead in your weakness, doing the right thing in spite of your fears*

### **SLIDE**

- *While your own personal effort has nothing to do with your salvation*
  - *It has everything to do with your spiritual growth*
- God uses His **WORD**, His **PEOPLE** and **CIRCUMSTANCES** to mold you

### **SLIDE**

- God's **WORD** provides the Truth that you need to grow

### **SLIDE**

- God's **PEOPLE** provide the Support that you need to grow

### **SLIDE**

- **CIRCUMSTANCES** provide the environment that you need to grow
- If you study and apply God's Word in your life...
  - Connect regularly with other believers...
    - And learn to trust God in difficult circumstances...
- *You become more like Christ*
- Many people think that all is necessary for spiritual growth is Bible Study and prayer

- But, some of your issues will **NEVER** be changed by study and prayer alone
- God uses **PEOPLE** to change you
  - *He wants you to grow alongside your Brothers and Sisters*
- Those who are the most spiritually mature are **NOT** those who isolate themselves in mountaintop monasteries untouched by contact with any other people...
- *True spiritual maturity is learning to love like Jesus, and you can't practice love without being in relationships with other people*
- Spiritual maturity is neither instant nor automatic
- Spiritual maturity is a gradual, progressive development that takes an entire life

### **SLIDE**

- Much confusion in Christian life comes from ignoring the simple truth that God is far more interested in building your **CHARACTER** than anything else in your life
- You often worry when God seems silent on questions like, "What career should I choose?"
  - The fact of the matter is that there are many careers that could be God's will for your life
  - What God cares about most is not what you do, but that you do it in a Christlike manner

### **SLIDE**

- God is far more interested in what you **ARE** than in what you **DO**

### **SLIDE**

- Romans 12:2 MSG
  - 2) Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. **You'll be changed from the inside out.** Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, **God brings the best out of you**, develops well-formed maturity in you.

### **SLIDE**

- God is looking to see what kind of person you really are
- And He has a specific plan in mind...

### **SLIDE**

- God wants you to **MATURE**
  - *Too many people grow older, but never grow up*
  - *Too many people are stuck in spiritual infancy*
- Spiritual growth is not automatic
- Spiritual growth takes an intentional commitment

### **SLIDE**

- **DISCIPLESHIP** is the process of becoming like Christ

### **SLIDE**

- Discipleship always begins with a **COMMITMENT**
- The Commitments you make in your life define you

### **SLIDE**

- *The **COMMITMENTS** you make can develop you or destroy you*
- Tell me what you are committed to, and I'll tell you what you will be in 20 years
- Once you commit yourself to becoming more like Christ, God works with you

### **SLIDE**

- Philippians 2:12-13 NIV

- 12) Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,
- 13) for **it is God who works in you** to will and to act according to his good purpose.

- Notice that there are two parts to the verse?
  - “Working out” your salvation is your responsibility
  - But, God “Works in” you according to His good purpose for you

**SLIDE**

- To change your life, you have to change the way you think
  - Behind everything you do is a thought

**SLIDE**

- The first step in spiritual growth is to **CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK**
  - The way you think determines the way you feel
  - The way you feel influences the way you act
- There are two parts to changing your thinking

**SLIDE**

- The first part is to **STOP THINKING IMMATURE THOUGHTS**
  - Immature thoughts are self-centered

**SLIDE**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:20 NIV
  - 20) Brothers, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but **in your thinking be adults.**
- Infants, by their nature, are selfish...
  - They think only of their own needs
- Stop thinking only of yourself
  - Stop thinking only of receiving, and not of giving

**SLIDE**

- Stop thinking immaturely...



## SLIDE

- The second part is to start thinking maturely, and to **START FOCUSING ON OTHERS**, not on yourself
- Paul concludes his explanation of what love really is by saying,

## SLIDE

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:11 NIV

11) When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, **I put childish ways behind me.**

- ***Too many people assume that spiritual maturity is measured by how much Bible information and doctrine you know***
- While knowledge is one measure of maturity, it isn't the whole story
- ***The core of spiritual maturity is thinking of others***
- ***Thinking of others is the best evidence of spiritual growth***
- ***The Truth transforms you...***
- God's Word is unlike any other word... it is alive!

## SLIDE

- Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV

12) For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**

13) Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- The Bible is far more than a doctrinal guidebook
  - God Word is alive...
  - God's Word generates life, creates faith, produces change, causes miracles, heals hurts, builds character, imparts joy, overcomes adversity, defeats temptation, infuses hope, releases power and cleanses our minds
- You must abide in the Word...

## SLIDE

- John 8:31 NASV

31) Jesus said to those Jews that had believed him, **If you abide in my word**, then you are truly my disciples

## SLIDE

- You have to accept the authority of the Bible
- Many of our troubles are caused because we base our choices on unreliable authorities

## SLIDE

- **Culture**

## SLIDE

- That's like saying, *"Everyone else is doing it!"*
  - That's usually a sure fire reason **NOT** to do something!

## SLIDE

- **Tradition**

## SLIDE

- That's like saying, *"We've always done it this way!"*
  - I'm sure that no one in **YOUR** Ecclesia has ever done anything simply because of Tradition, right?

## SLIDE

- **Reason**

## SLIDE

- That's like saying, *"This seems like the logical way to do it!"*
  - "My **BEST** thinking got me into the position I am in today"

## SLIDE

- **Emotion**

## SLIDE

- That's like saying, "*It just feels right to do it this way!*"
  - God's Wisdom is often counter-intuitive to Human Wisdom...
    - If it feels good... **Don't do it!**
- ***It's vitally important for you to settle for ONCE AND FOR ALL what is the ultimate authority in your life***
- Decide that regardless of culture, tradition, reason or emotion, you are going to choose the Bible as your final authority
- Determine to first ask, "What does the Bible say?" when making decisions
  - ***Even if it's about something you've addressed before in the past***
- Resolve that when God's word says to do something, that you will do it, whether it makes sense to you or whether you like doing it
- Assimilate the Truth

## SLIDE

- Don't just believe in the Bible, but fill your mind with it
- Here are 5 ways to fill your mind with the Bible

## SLIDE

### 1 - **RECEIVE** it

- You receive God's word when you listen and accept it with an ***open, receptive attitude***
  - It's NOT just a matter of hearing it... We are talking about receiving it!
- The Parable of the Sower illustrates how your receptiveness determines whether or not God's word takes root in your life
  - There was a **closed mind** - The hard soil

- There was a **superficial mind** - The shallow soil
- There was a **distracted mind** - The weedy soil
- The Word of God only takes effect in an open, receptive mind...
  - **“Carefully consider how you listen”** Jesus said

### **SLIDE**

- James 1:21 AMP

21) ...In a humble spirit, **receive and welcome the Word** which implanted and rooted in your hearts contains the power to save your souls

### **SLIDE**

- If you want to fill your mind with the Bible, you have to begin by opening your mind up to receive the word

### **SLIDE**

## **2 - READ it**

- After you open yourself up to be receptive to the word of God, you actually have to read it
  - You've got to get it in there somehow!
- The first thing a man had to do when becoming king was....

### **SLIDE**

- Deuteronomy 17:18-19 NIV

18) When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the priests, who are Levites.

19) It is to be with him, and **he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God** and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees

- Why is it that you don't skip eating each day no matter how busy you get, or no matter what special TV program is on?
  - But, somehow you can manage to skip your daily Bible readings if you feel you don't "have the time"

## **SLIDE**

- We have to read the Bible if we want it in our minds

## **SLIDE**

### **3 - RESEARCH it**

- Studying the Bible is another practical way to abide in the Word
- ***The difference between studying and reading is two things:***
  - ***Asking questions***
  - ***Writing down your insights***
- ***The secret to good Bible study is simply learning to ask the right questions***
- You will discover far more if you pause to ask simple questions like, Who? What? Where? When? And How?

## **SLIDE**

### **4 - REMEMBER it**

- In 1983 I used to work in a clothing store... I remember that part # 505-0217 cost \$15.35 and retailed for \$24.95
- In 1989 I used to sell Health Insurance... I remember that Blue Cross' toll-free number was (800) 333-0912, and my Broker # was OC815
- Yet two weeks ago I read Joshua 20 for probably the 30<sup>th</sup> time, and I still don't remember the names of the Cities of Refuge
- ***You remember things that are important to you***
- ***God's word is important to you***
  - ***You should take the time to memorize it***
- There are enormous benefits to memorizing Bible verses
  - It will help you resist temptation, make wise decisions, reduce stress, build confidence, offer good advice and share your faith with others

- Memory is like a muscle...
  - The more you use it, the stronger it will become

### **SLIDE**

#### **5 - REFLECT on it**

- Meditation won't come natural to you
- For many meditation conjures up images of putting your mind in neutral
  - This is the exact opposite of biblical meditation
- ***Meditation is focused thinking***
  - ***You select a verse and think over and over about it***
- No other habit can do more to transform your life and make you more like Jesus than daily reflection on Scripture
- Receiving, Reading, Researching, Remembering and Reflecting on the Word of God are all useless if you fail to put them into Practice
- You fool yourself when you assume that just because you have heard or read or studied the Truth, you have internalized it
  - ***Actually, you can be so busy going to the next class, or Study Day or Bible School that you have no time to implement what you've learned***

### **SLIDE**

- Matthew 7:24 NIV
  - 24) “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and **puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

### **SLIDE**

- Too often we resist putting into practice what we learn...
  - Too often we don't want to change
- One of the reasons we avoid personal application of the Word is that it can be difficult or even painful

### SLIDE

- *The Truth may set you free...*
  - *But it first might just **MAKE YOU MISERABLE!***

### SLIDE

- God's word exposes your motives, points out your faults, rebukes your sins, and **EXPECTS YOU TO CHANGE**

### SLIDE

- It's human nature to resist change, so applying God's word is **HARD WORK**
- Another thing that transforms you are troubles
  - God has a purpose behind every problem
- *God uses circumstances to develop your character*
  - God actually depends more on circumstances to make you more like Jesus than He depends on you reading the Bible
  - You only read the Bible for a half hour a day, yet you face circumstances the entire rest of the day
- Jesus warned you that you would have problems in this world

### SLIDE

- Life is best defined as a "series of problems"
  - Not all of them are big, but all of them are significant in God's growth process for you

### SLIDE

- God uses **PROBLEMS** to draw you closer to Him
  - Your most intimate moments of worship will likely be your darkest days

### SLIDE

- It is during suffering that you learn to **PRAY** your most authentic, heart-felt prayers

### **SLIDE**

- Problems force you to look to God and **DEPEND ON GOD... *Instead of yourself!***
- Look at Paul's account of one of his visits to Asia...

### **SLIDE**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 1:8-10 MSG

- 8) We don't want you in the dark, friends, about how hard it was when all this came down on us in Asia province. It was so bad we didn't think we were going to make it.
- 9) We felt like we'd been sent to death row, that it was all over for us. As it turned out, it was the best thing that could have happened. **Instead of trusting in our own strength or wits to get out of it, we were forced to trust God totally** - not a bad idea since he's the God who raises the dead!
- 10) And he did it, rescued us from certain doom. *And* he'll do it again, rescuing us as many times as we need rescuing.

### **SLIDE**

- ***You'll never know that God is all you'll need, until God is all you've got...***
- Everything... **EVERYTHING** that happens to you is part of God's plan for you...

### **SLIDE**

- Romans 8:28-29 NIV

- 28) And we know that in **all things God works for the good of those who love him**, who have been called according to his purpose.
- 29) For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

- Notice how Verse 28 **doesn't** say,

***"God causes everything to work out the way that I want it to."***

- It also doesn't say,

***"God causes everything to work so that it has a happy ending."***

- God designs, creates and organizes everything in your life to work together towards His purpose



- These are not isolated, senseless acts
- ***God's purpose is for you to become like His son, and everything He does in your life is working towards achieving that purpose within you***
- ***Every problem is a character-building opportunity, and the more difficult it is, the greater the potential for building spiritual muscle***
- Problems don't automatically produce what God intends
  - ***Many people become bitter, rather than better***
- You have to remember that God's plan is good
  - God knows what is best for you
- ***Stay focused on God's plan, not your pain or problem***
- That is how Jesus endured the pain of the cross
  - By focusing on the long term plan of God

### **SLIDE**

- Hebrews 12:2-3 MSG
  - 2) **Keep your eyes on Jesus**, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed - that exhilarating finish with God - he could put up with anything along the way: cross, shame, whatever. And now he's *there*, in the place of honor, right alongside God.
  - 3) When you find yourselves flagging in your faith, go over that story again, item by item, that long litany of hostility he plowed through. *That* will shoot adrenaline into your souls!
- Don't give in to short term thinking...
  - Stay focused on the long term results
- Be patient and persistent in problems and pain...
- Character building is a slow process
- ***You know you are maturing when you begin to see the hand of God in the seemingly random, baffling and pointless circumstances of your life***

### **SLIDE**

- You also grow through temptations
  - ***Every temptation is also an opportunity to do good***
- A temptation is just as much an occasion to do the right thing, as it is to do wrong
  - God wants to develop you through this process
- How do you develop the Fruits of the Spirit in your life?
  - ***God develops the Fruits of the Spirit in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you are tempted to express the exact opposite quality***
  - Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity

### **SLIDE**

- ***God teaches you LOVE by putting you around some UNLOVING people***
  - It's takes no character to love people who are loving toward you
  - God wants you to learn the kind of love that Christ felt towards the Jews that killed him

### **SLIDE**

- ***God teaches you PEACE by allowing times of CHAOS and confusion***
  - Anyone can be peaceful watching a beautiful sunset
  - You learn real peace by choosing to trust God in circumstances in which you are tempted to worry or be afraid

### **SLIDE**

- ***God teaches you PATIENCE by forcing you to have WAIT for things***
  - I'm a very patient man when things are going my way and everything moves right along
  - It's only when I become tempted to get angry or lose my temper that I really learn what patience is

- ***You can't claim to be good if you've never been tempted to be bad***
  - ***You can't claim to be faithful if you've never had the opportunity to be unfaithful***
- ***Every time you defeat a temptation, you become more like Christ, and develop more spiritual muscle***
- You actually have to defeat your temptations to really learn from them

**SLIDE**

- Here are 3 easy steps to helping you overcome temptations

**SLIDE**

**1 - Refuse to be **DEMORALIZED****

- Many Brothers and Sisters feel ashamed just for being tempted
  - Many feel guilty that they aren't somehow "beyond" temptation
- ***This is a misunderstanding of spiritual maturity***
  - ***You will never outgrow temptation***
- Be realistic about the inevitability of temptation
  - You will never be able to avoid it completely
  - Don't be shocked, or surprised, or discouraged by it
- ***It is not a sin to be tempted***

**SLIDE**

- Hebrews 4:15 NIV

15) For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been **tempted in every way**, just as we are - **yet was without sin.**

- Temptation only becomes a sin when you give in to it
  - Don't be caught off guard thinking it could never happen to you

## SLIDE

- Don't become demoralized and give in to your temptations

## SLIDE

### **2 - Recognize your **PATTERN** of temptations and be prepared for them**

- There are certain situations that make you more vulnerable to temptation than others
  - These situations are unique to each person's weaknesses
- Don't think that because you don't have another Brother's weaknesses that you don't have to worry about your own
  - I've **NEVER** been tempted to gamble
  - But, there are plenty of thin gamblers out there...
- Learn what circumstances make you the most vulnerable and learn to avoid them
  - Continually ask yourself questions:
    - *When am I most tempted? What specific time of the day?*
    - *Where am I most tempted? Work? Home? Hotels? Neighbors?*
    - *Who is with me when I am most tempted? Friends? Coworkers?*
    - *How do I usually feel when I am most tempted? Tired? Bored? Lonely? Depressed? Stressed?*
- Identify your typical pattern of temptation and avoid those situations

## SLIDE

- James 4:7 NIV

7) Submit yourselves, then, to God. **Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

- You might understand the Devil differently, but do not miss the message of that verse

## SLIDE

- Look for the pattern and your actions and use that information to fight the temptations

## **SLIDE**

### **3 - REQUEST God's help**

- God wants you to call on him in times of temptation, and He will rescue you
  - Unfortunately, sometimes you don't really want to be helped
  - You sometimes want to give in to temptation even though you know it's wrong
- Sometimes you are actually embarrassed to ask God for help because you keep giving in to the same temptation over and over
  - ***But, God is everlasting, and His patience endures forever***
  - ***God doesn't get irritated or bored when you continually come back to Him***
- Every time you stand up against temptation, you become more like Christ
- Always remember that there is a way out

## **SLIDE**

### • 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:13 MSG

- 13) No test or temptation that comes your way is beyond the course of what others have had to face. All you need to remember is that **God will never let you down**; he'll never let you be pushed past your limit; he'll always be there to help you come through it.
- It may seem that a problem is too overpowering for you to bear, but that is not true

## **SLIDE**

- You have to do your part, by taking steps to defeat temptation
- Here are 4 steps to practice

## **SLIDE**

### **1 - REFOCUS your attention**

- Trying to block a thought only drives it deeper into your memory
  - ***You can't stop thinking about something by trying not to***

- Instead the scriptures tells us to refocus our thoughts on something else
- ***Temptation begins by capturing your attention***
  - ***What gets your attention arouses you emotions***
- ***Your emotions activate your behavior and you act on what you feel***
- Ignoring a temptation, therefore, is far more effective that fighting it
  - ***Once your mind is on something else, the temptation loses it's power***
- This is the principle of **replacement**
- One of my favorite parables tells of an evil spirit that finally leaves a man, and wanders around in the desert for a while
- When it decides to return to the man it left, it finds him unoccupied and swept clean
- ***So, does it decide to stay away because the man has finally cleaned everything up?***
- **NO!** It goes out and finds seven friends to come join it
  - And the final condition of that man is worse than the first

### **SLIDE**

- Philippians 4:8 NIV

8) Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - **think about such things.**

### **SLIDE**

- Refocus! Think about something lovely, admirable, excellent and praiseworthy'

### **SLIDE**

## **2 - REVEAL your struggle to a godly friend**

- You don't have to broadcast your temptations to the whole world (*please!*)
  - But, you do need at least one person you can honestly share your struggles with

- This has to be stressed:
- If you are losing the battle against a persistent bad habit, addiction or temptation
  - If you are stuck in a cycle of Good Intention - Failure - Guilt
  - You will not get better on your own
- Some temptations are only overcome with the help of a partner who prays for you, encourages you, and holds you accountable
- God's plan for your growth involves your Brothers and Sisters

### **SLIDE**

- James 5:16 MSG

16) Make this your common practice: **Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other** so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a **person living right with God** is something powerful to be reckoned with.

- ***Don't repress it!***
  - ***Confess it!***
- Hiding your hurt only makes it worse
  - Problems grow in the dark and shrink in the light
- ***You are only as sick as your secrets***
- ***Stop pretending that you are perfect and share your inner self with a friend***
- ***The main reason you hide your faults is pride***
  - ***You want others to think that you have everything "under control"***
  - ***But, you can't...***
    - ***Willpower and personal resolutions are not enough***

### **SLIDE**

- Open up to one GODLY person that you trust, and ask them to pray for you

- You might be thinking... “Where am I going to find a perfect person to confess to?”
- They don’t have to be perfect in all things, just the area that are having a problem with
- If you are having a problem with your temper, then look around to find a person who you respect for having patience, and confide in them
- It’s not about finding someone who will agree with you, it’s about finding someone who will pray for you!

### **SLIDE**

#### **3 - REPEL the Temptation**

- Fight it!
- That seems like an obvious statement, but often it gets lost
- ***You are in a war here...***
  - The Bible describes your life as a spiritual battle against evil forces
  - The Scriptures uses terms like, fight, conquer, strive and overcome
- You are supposed to **fight back**, not simply resign yourself to defeat
- Get aggressive in your battle against temptation and sin
- Use the Word of God as your weapon
  - In the wilderness, every time Jesus was tempted, he quoted scripture
  - He didn’t argue the point, he simply shot off a round of God’s Word
- Memorize Bible verses, so your gun won’t be empty at the time of the battle

### **SLIDE**

#### **4 - REALIZE your vulnerability**

- ***Remember that it is easier to stay out of temptation than it is to get out of it***
- Don’t fool yourself into thinking that you are strong, and place yourself in tempting situations
- Don’t ever get confident that you will do the right thing



- ***Develop a healthy appreciation of your own wickedness***
  - ***Realize your own vulnerability to sin***

### **SLIDE**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10:12 MSG

12) Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. **Forget about self-confidence; it's useless.** Cultivate God-confidence.

- ***There are no shortcuts to maturity***

- ***Come to appreciate that "growing up" takes time***

- It takes years for you to grow to adulthood

- The development of a Christlike character also takes time

- ***The older I get and the more I learn, the more I become acutely aware of my own lack of personal righteousness***

- You only know what you know

- You only try to improve the things in your life that you can see

- As you grow more spiritually mature, you start to be able to see more things to work on

- ***The process is continual and takes patience***

- Being like Christ is the destination...

- ***The journey lasts a lifetime***

### **SLIDE**

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:18 MSG

18) All of us! Nothing between us and God, our faces shining with the brightness of his face. And so we are transfigured much like the Messiah, **our lives gradually becoming brighter and more beautiful as God enters our lives and we become like him.**

- Although God **COULD** instantly transform us, he has chosen to develop us slowly

## SLIDE

- Here are 5 reasons why God develops us slowly

## SLIDE

### 1 - We are **SLOW LEARNERS**

- Don't take it personal! It's true!
- We often have to relearn something 40 to 50 times before you really get it
  - *We need repeated exposure to truly grasp a concept*

## SLIDE

### 2 - We have a lot to **UNLEARN**

- You've dedicated years to developing your bad habits and personal problems
  - It's unrealistic to expect them to go away quickly
- The Bible calls it, "Taking off the Old man" and "Putting on the New Man"
  - *Although at baptism you are given a New Life, you still have old habits patterns and practices that need to be removed and replaced*

## SLIDE

### 3 - We are **AFRAID** to humbly face the truth about ourselves

- Here's one you actually have some control over
- *The more you diligently throw yourself open to truthful, honest exposure*
  - *The faster you can remove your weaknesses and replace them with God's strengths*
- The fear of facing those painful truths often slows down the process

## SLIDE

### 4 - Growth is often **PAINFUL** and **SCARY**

- *There is no growth without change*

- ***There is no change without loss***
  - ***There is no loss without pain***
- Your resistance to the pain involved in change slows the process dramatically
- People often build their identity around their defects
  - ***“That’s just the way I am”***
- ***The unconscious worry is that if I let go of my defects, who will I be?***

**SLIDE**

**5 - HABITS take time to develop**

- ***Your character is the sum of your habits***
  - Developing a Christlike character means developing a complete new set of habits that redefine who you are, and make you more like Christ
- There is only one way to develop the habits of a Christlike character
  - ***You have to practice them***
  - ***Practice takes time***

**SLIDE**

- 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:15 MSG
  - 15) Cultivate these things. **Immerse yourself in them.** The people will all see you mature right before their eyes!
- Don’t be in a hurry for this process to work...
  - ***Believe that God is working in your life even when you don’t feel it***
- To reinforce your faith and your confidence in God, it’s a great idea to keep a journal of the lessons you’ve learned and the times you’ve seen God’s hand working in your life
  - This isn’t a daily journal, but a list of your insights and the things you have learned on this journey
  - You remember things better if you write them down

- Be patient with yourself (and God)
  - *Remember how far you've come, not how far you have to go*
  - *Don't get discouraged*
- You were created to become like Christ

**SLIDE**

- You are being transformed by the Truth

**SLIDE**

- **DISCIPLESHIP** is one of God's Purposes for you!