



PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

**CHANGING YOUR BEHAVIORS AND
ATTITUDES BECAUSE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS
WITH GOD AND OTHERS**



D I M E N S I O N S O F D I S C I P L E S H I P G U I D E

LOGAN | RIDLEY | DEVRIES



DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

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Tara Miller's exceptional writing skills bring our thoughts and ideas to life. Above all others, she makes this book possible. Over many years, her creative collaboration makes it possible to give written resources to the Church so that people can discover and live out their God-given purpose.

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PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Personal transformation is one of eight discussion guides for the Dimensions of Discipleship series. It doesn't matter which guide you start with—start wherever you'd like and move on to wherever God is leading you next. When we live in the dynamic rhythm and flow of a missional life, we need to take our cues from the Holy Spirit.

These eight guides are organized according to the tree diagram below; examine it to see how all of the pieces fit together. Personal transformation is the branch of the tree that represents the ways in which we are growing, changing, and being transformed-- both inwardly and outwardly-- by responding to our relationship with God and others.





DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

PERSONAL TRANSFORMATION

Personal transformation changing your attitudes and behaviors in positive ways as a result of your relationship with God and others. Inward change and outward change take place in tandem; each affects the other.



“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” Romans 12:2

Are we really changing? What does deep change look like? How do we know if we are experiencing it? Can we tell the difference between deep change and just going through the motions? The personal transformation guide is designed to help us engage questions like these. The following five-part journey covers these five essential expressions of personal transformation:

- Actively engaging with God in the examination of your heart
- Cooperating with God’s healing work in your life
- Processing feedback and input from others
- Living out new priorities and changed behavior
- Increasingly bearing the fruit of the Spirit

“The Christian does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us.”
—C.S. Lewis

Meet together in a group of three or four to talk through each of these expressions. Ask each other these questions. Wait for and listen to responses from the heart. Encourage, challenge, and affirm one another. Go at your own pace: you can do one a week or one a month, whatever pace works best for you. Be sure to allow enough time to live into these behaviors.



PART 1: ACTIVELY ENGAGING WITH GOD IN THE EXAMINATION OF YOUR HEART



KEY QUESTION: WHEN AND HOW ARE YOU SETTING ASIDE TIME TO REFLECT ON YOUR HEART?

Without taking the time to reflect on ourselves and our experiences, we can be exposed to great teachings and be a part of amazing experiences, yet not be transformed in any deep or meaningful way on a personal level. When we hear scripture, we need to reflect on it. When we do ministry, we need to consider how it is going and what we could do differently. When we experience God, we need to consider how that can change and mature us.

What are the ways we can actively engage with God as we reflect? We can reflect in silence and prayer, listening for the voice of God and being open to the leading of his Spirit. We can discuss and pray together with others in the body of Christ, asking for their insights and perspectives. We can work with a coach, mentor or spiritual director who asks us questions to help us discern where God might be at work in our lives. Engaging in this study with a few other people can be a great first step toward deeper reflection.

“Love all God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.”
—Fyodor Dostoyevsky

JOURNAL

Take some time alone and write or draw about these three questions: What have I been hearing from God lately? What am I learning from my experiences? Who might be able to speak into my life right now? Don’t worry about getting the words just right—you are the only one who will be reading it—just say what you want to say.

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discussion questions.



James 1:22-25

²² But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves. ²³ For if you listen to the word and don't obey, it is like glancing at your face in a mirror. ²⁴ You see yourself, walk away, and forget what you look like. ²⁵ But if you look carefully into the perfect law that sets you free, and if you do what it says and don't forget what you heard, then God will bless you for doing it.

Psalms 119:55

I reflect at night on who you are, O LORD;
therefore, I obey your instructions.

Proverbs 27:19

As a face is reflected in water,
so the heart reflects the real person.

Proverbs 20:5

The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters,
but one who has insight draws them out. (NIV)

Luke 18:9-14:

⁹ Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: ¹⁰ "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector!' ¹² I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'

¹³ "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.'

¹⁴ I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Tell about a time when you intentionally set aside some time for reflection. How did you do that? What came of it?

What are your impressions of the story of the tax collector and the Pharisee?

When is a time when you really felt God speaking to you? How did he do that?

What strategies have been most helpful in getting you to reflect? Which others might you want to try?

What gets in the way of your reflecting? What steps might you take to overcome that barrier?



ACTION STEPS

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

How will you do this?

When will you do this?

Who will help you?



PART 2: COOPERATING WITH GOD'S HEALING WORK IN YOUR LIFE



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU COOPERATING WITH GOD'S HEALING WORK IN YOUR LIFE?

God desires to do healing work in your life. It's not as if some people need healing and others don't. We all need healing in different ways, whether physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, or some other type of healing. We live in a broken world and we are broken people. We stand in need of God's healing, with nothing to offer him in return.

Yet with healing comes risk. We need to step forward and be willing to be healed. Not everyone who needs healing is willing to be healed. To recognize oneself in need of healing and to open oneself to the Spirit of God to do his work takes a great deal of courage and trust. It is not easy and it is not passive.

We need to stand before God with empty hands and allow him to do his healing work in our lives. That might mean we need to forgive, to let go, to stay, to accept. We do not know what God may ask of us when we put ourselves in his hands. What we do know is that he desires us to become our best selves, reflections of him, healed and whole.

"And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight in the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom."
—Anais Nin

JOURNAL

In what ways do you need healing? Meditate on the broken areas in your life and consider what healing might look like. What would you need to let go of in order for God to heal that area of your life?

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discussion questions.



John 5:1-9

Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. ² Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. ³ Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. ⁵ One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. ⁶ When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?”

⁷ “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.”

⁸ Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!”

⁹ Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!
Matthew 4:23-24

²³ Jesus traveled throughout the region of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. ²⁴ News about him spread as far as Syria, and people soon began bringing to him all who were sick. And whatever their sickness or disease, or if they were demon possessed or epileptic or paralyzed—he healed them all.

Matthew 9:10-13

¹⁰ Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. ¹¹ But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?”

¹² When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” ¹³ Then he added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

James 5:16

Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.

1 Peter 2:24-25

He personally carried our sins
in his body on the cross
so that we can be dead to sin



and live for what is right.
By his wounds
you are healed.
25 Once you were like sheep
who wandered away.
But now you have turned to your Shepherd,
the Guardian of your souls.

“Only people who are capable of loving strongly can also suffer great sorrow, but this same necessity of loving serves to counteract their grief and heals them.”
—Leo Tolstoy



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

What areas of your life stand in need of healing?

Are you willing to be healed?

What will that healing require of you?

What fears do you have around being healed?

How might God be able to use you if you cooperate with his healing work in your life?



ACTION STEPS

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

How will you do this?

When will you do this?

Who will help you?



PART 3: PROCESSING FEEDBACK AND INPUT FROM OTHERS



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU REQUESTING AND PROCESSING CONSTRUCTIVE INPUT FROM OTHERS?

How do we know if we're doing well? In certain fields such as math, there is a clearly right answer and clearly wrong answers. In other fields, such as spirituality, relationships, and personal transformation, it's not quite so clear. There are different perspectives to take into account and different goals that may-- or may not-- be agreed upon. It would be great if we had some built in way to determine how we're doing, but that's not the way it works. Like many other things, God has set this up organically in such a way that we need each other.

We need to find ways to open ourselves up to constructive input from others. Sometimes people, both inside and outside the church, will give us unsolicited feedback. In those cases, we need to evaluate the feedback to see if it is constructive and helpful.

If so, we need to reflect on it and find ways to incorporate it into our lives. If not, we are free to discard it. Yet most of the time people will not give uninvited feedback. We need to ask for it. We can often find a great deal of useful feedback simply by asking people we trust who are in a position to give helpful feedback.

"Computers are great because when you're working with them you get immediate results that let you know if your program works. It's feedback you don't get from many other things."
—Bill Gates

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discussion questions.



Ecclesiastes 4:9-13:

Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. ¹⁰ If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. ¹¹ Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? ¹² A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken. ¹³ It is better to be a poor but wise youth than an old and foolish king who refuses all advice.



Galatians 2:11-14:

¹¹ But when Peter came to Antioch, I had to oppose him to his face, for what he did was very wrong. ¹² When he first arrived, he ate with the Gentile Christians, who were not circumcised. But afterward, when some friends of James came, Peter wouldn't eat with the Gentiles anymore. He was afraid of criticism from these people who insisted on the necessity of circumcision. ¹³ As a result, other Jewish Christians followed Peter's hypocrisy, and even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy.

¹⁴ When I saw that they were not following the truth of the gospel message, I said to Peter in front of all the others, "Since you, a Jew by birth, have discarded the Jewish laws and are living like a Gentile, why are you now trying to make these Gentiles follow the Jewish traditions?"

Proverbs:

The godly give good advice to their friends;
the wicked lead them astray. (12:26)

Pride leads to conflict;
those who take advice are wise. (13:10)

Plans go wrong for lack of advice;
many advisers bring success. (15:22)

Timely advice is lovely,
like golden apples in a silver basket. (25:11)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Who has given you unsolicited feedback that was constructive and helpful? What did you do with that feedback?

Who have you asked for feedback lately? Who might be in a good position to give it?

How can you tell the difference between constructive and destructive feedback?

What makes it difficult for you to ask for and receive feedback? What steps might you take to address those roadblocks?



ACTION STEPS

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

How will you do this?

When will you do this?

Who will help you?



PART 4: LIVING OUT NEW PRIORITIES AND CHANGED BEHAVIOR



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU LIVING OUT NEW PRIORITIES AND CHANGED BEHAVIOR?

The whole point of the gospel isn't to get us to think different things or even to do different things... it's to help us become different. Through his presence, God shapes us more and more into the unique person we were meant to be. We are transformed by our encounter with God, and that transformation shows itself in new priorities and new actions. We live out the change that God has worked with in us.

"Fairy tales do not tell children the dragons exist. Children already know that dragons exist. Fairy tales tell children the dragons can be killed."
—G.K. Chesterton



Acts 9:1-22:

Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. ² He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains.

³ As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. ⁴ He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?"

⁵ "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked.

And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting!" ⁶ Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

⁷ The men with Saul stood speechless, for they heard the sound of someone's voice but saw no one!

⁸ Saul picked himself up off the ground, but when he opened his eyes he was blind. So his companions led him by the hand to Damascus. ⁹ He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

¹⁰ Now there was a believer in Damascus named Ananias. The Lord spoke to him in a vision, calling, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord!" he replied.



¹¹ The Lord said, "Go over to Straight Street, to the house of Judas. When you get there, ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul. He is praying to me right now. ¹² I have shown him a vision of a man named Ananias coming in and laying hands on him so he can see again."

¹³ "But Lord," exclaimed Ananias, "I've heard many people talk about the terrible things this man has done to the believers in Jerusalem! ¹⁴ And he is authorized by the leading priests to arrest everyone who calls upon your name."

¹⁵ But the Lord said, "Go, for Saul is my chosen instrument to take my message to the Gentiles and to kings, as well as to the people of Israel. ¹⁶ And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

¹⁷ So Ananias went and found Saul. He laid his hands on him and said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road, has sent me so that you might regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁸ Instantly something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he got up and was baptized. ¹⁹ Afterward he ate some food and regained his strength.

Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. ²⁰ And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!"

²¹ All who heard him were amazed. "Isn't this the same man who caused such devastation among Jesus' followers in Jerusalem?" they asked. "And didn't he come here to arrest them and take them in chains to the leading priests?"

²² Saul's preaching became more and more powerful, and the Jews in Damascus couldn't refute his proofs that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

Mark 5:1-20:

So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. ² When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from a cemetery to meet him. ³ This man lived among the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. ⁴ Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. ⁵ Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones.



⁶ When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. ⁷ With a shriek, he screamed, "Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don't torture me!" ⁸ For Jesus had already said to the spirit, "Come out of the man, you evil spirit."

⁹ Then Jesus demanded, "What is your name?"

And he replied, "My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man." ¹⁰ Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place.

¹¹ There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. ¹² "Send us into those pigs," the spirits begged. "Let us enter them."

¹³ So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

¹⁴ The herdsmen fled to the nearby town and the surrounding countryside, spreading the news as they ran. People rushed out to see what had happened. ¹⁵ A crowd soon gathered around Jesus, and they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons. He was sitting there fully clothed and perfectly sane, and they were all afraid. ¹⁶ Then those who had seen what happened told the others about the demon-possessed man and the pigs. ¹⁷ And the crowd began pleading with Jesus to go away and leave them alone.

¹⁸ As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. ¹⁹ But Jesus said, "No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been." ²⁰ So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Tell about a time in your life that you successfully changed a behavior or habit. What was it that enabled you to make that change?

What motivates you?

When have you had a true encounter with God? How did that change you?

How would you like others to describe you? What needs to change in your life for that to be an accurate description?

EXERCISE:

Make a list of what you see as your priorities, and write each one on a separate sticky note. Make a list of the ways in which you spend your time, and write each one on a separate sticky note. Now put the notes in two columns on the wall or a whiteboard. How do items in the two lists align? Where do you see connections? What do you need to do more of in order to make your time reflect your priorities? What do you need to do less of?

“I’m a little pencil in the hand of a writing God, who is sending a love letter to the world.”
—Mother Teresa



ACTION STEPS

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

How will you do this?

When will you do this?

Who will help you?



PART 5: INCREASINGLY BEARING THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT



KEY QUESTION: HOW ARE YOU GROWING IN THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT?

As we are transformed, we should increasingly see evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. Where do we see love? Joy? Peace? What actions of ours can we point to that demonstrate patience? Kindness? Goodness? What evidence can we find of faithfulness? Gentleness? Self-control? The more we can see specific instances of these qualities in our lives, the more we know that the Spirit is truly doing his transformative work in our lives... because these qualities are the result of that work.

Christian Schwarz, in his book *The 3 Colors of Love*, makes the case that there is only one fruit of the Spirit— Love— along with its 8 descriptors: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. When you compare 1 Corinthians 13 and Galatians 5, you'll see there's a great deal of correlation. Whether you see the fruit of the Spirit as 9 or 1, the issue is that we need to grow. We need to assess where we're at and how to deepen your character. Stagnation is not a viable option.

"Patience is waiting.
Not passively waiting.
That is laziness. But to
keep going when the
going is hard and slow
-- that is patience."
—Anonymous

This week read and reflect daily on the scripture below. Open a natural flow of conversational prayer with the Holy Spirit as you meditate on the scriptures, inviting him to reveal himself to you. Then gather with those who journey alongside you and interact over the discussion questions.



Galatians 5:13-26:

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.



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¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

I Corinthians 13:4-7:

⁴ Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud ⁵ or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. ⁶ It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. ⁷ Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

If someone invisible were to follow you around for a week, observing your behavior, what qualities do you think they might use to describe you?

What character qualities do you consider your strengths? What character qualities do you consider your weaknesses?

How have you approached improving your weaknesses?

What are your thoughts on Christian Schwarz's interpretation of the fruit of the Spirit (described above)? How might that perspective assist you in your growth?

What practices might help you increasingly bear the fruit of the Spirit?



JOURNAL THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Dedicate one page to each of the nine fruits of the Spirit. Underneath each, write as many examples as you can of times you experienced each of those qualities... either by demonstrating them yourself or by receiving them from others.



ACTION STEPS

In light of this, what is God asking you to do?

How will you do this?

When will you do this?

Who will help you?



WHAT'S NEXT?

So you've completed this guide. What now? Is there another dimension of discipleship you need to zoom in on? If so, which one?

Because the *Dimensions of Discipleship* guides aren't meant to be used in any particular order, it's up to you to do some listening to the Holy Spirit. Take a look at the big picture and decide where God is leading you next. With a holistic system, it's always a surprise. No matter which guide you choose next, you're engaged in an ongoing action-reflection process as you continue living incarnationally and missionally.

Maybe what's next isn't another *Dimensions of Discipleship* guide. Here are a few other options:

You can move on to a similar series: *The Journey Together Now* guides. You can find out more about these downloadable guides at www.loganleadership.com.

If you have a friend or mentor you've been going through these guides with—or if you'd like to begin discipling someone, you can start an online coaching relationship at www.mycoachlog.com: a tool to help you stay on track, reflect on what God is doing, and celebrate progress.

You may be ready to engage in a more formal coaching relationship with someone who can challenge you to the next level of missional living and leadership. Check out www.loganleadership.com for information on coaching.

No matter what's next for you, continue to grow in the ways you follow Jesus into your continuing journey of discipleship.