



## Week Five | Small Group Guide



# Transform Our Fears

## Review:

How did your prayer experience work out from last week? The challenge was to make more personal the Prayer of Transformation and David's prayer from 2 Samuel 7:18-29.

So far in our Transform series, we have considered the following: Why Transform, Transform Our Hearts, Transform Our Trust and Transform Our Mindsets. This week we add Fear.

## Week 5

### Opening:

Share a time when you were really scared.

What things do you fear?


I was sitting at my desk at the church I served in Elkhart, just minding my own business, when Linda, a children's Sunday School teacher, came in. "I hate spiders!" she declared. (Hate translated, I am very afraid of these little, hairy-legged, creepy, crawly arachnids.) "There's one in my room. Would you kill it for me?" I played the hero and eliminated one spider from the planet.

Fears. What makes your spine tingle? What causes the hair to stand up on the back of your neck? On a mission trip, our team was removing everything from a flooded Houston-area home. One WRCC staff member was in the back bedroom and I was in the front one. As we tore moldy, soggy drywall off the wall dividing two bedrooms, light poured into the back room he was cleaning up. He left the room rather quickly, so I wondered what had happened. After we got outside, we took off our masks and hooded overall remediation suits. I asked, "What's the problem?" He replied, "When I moved some of the final things out of that back closet, I felt a presence move past me. This has happened one other time — a cold wetness on the back of my neck as something moved past me. It was a demon

### Transformers Fans:

Which Transformer characters in "real" life would you fear most?

Ultra Bee has expressed a fear of abandonment, do other Transformer characters tend to be fearful? Who? and Why?



leaving that space.” Weird. Eerie. That was and is a reminder of the spiritual battle we fight. (See Eph. 6:10-12.)

## Overview

As we focus on transforming our fears, we will discover that our mindset and our fears are linked together. The Transfiguration story of Matthew 17 gives us an eerie but not evil experience of the presence of God. Three of the disciples experience a glimpse of the spiritual world. Even though they see Jesus in His glory, as God and King, and Moses and Elijah who died centuries before this experience, something else in the story terrifies them more than this. We will get to that part of the story in a bit.

As we think about transforming our fears, please note, some fears are reasonable, some become phobias and others paranoia. Those in the latter two groups may need Christian counsel to receive freedom from them.

## Fear this!

### Background Matthew 17:1-13 — The Transformation

Matthew 17 begins “Six days later...” It is often very helpful to understand what is going on in the verses or a chapter before the verses you are going to study. This helps us understand the circumstances surrounding the events or ideas described.

Here’s a quick summary of what happened six days ago based on Matthew 16:13-28:

- Peter declared that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. (This proclamation fulfills the promises God made to Noah, Abraham and David.)
- Jesus affirms Peter’s statement saying that “You are correct about who I am, and I will build My church on faith like yours.”
- Jesus says the unthinkable in verses 21-28: “I will be killed by the religious leaders in Jerusalem.” And, “On the third day, I will be raised from the dead.”
- Peter disagrees that Jesus will be killed. “This will never happen to you!” (vs. 22). (Notice Peter got so hung up on Jesus being killed and he didn’t even ask about His resurrection.) With a typical Jewish mindset of the day Peter believed when The Messiah comes, He doesn’t die; He re-establishes the nation of Israel. Jesus says, “You have a human point of view in mind. I know you want me to establish an earthly kingdom and throw out the Romans. Peter, there is another step before that can happen. I will be crucified shortly. In spite of denying me three times, you will follow me. Your dedication will cost you everything, but you will gain eternal life.”
- Then, Jesus says in Matthew 16:27, “Peter, you are right though, that in the future, I will come in power with My angels, I will judge all people, declaring, Fear This!”



With that background information...

## **READ Matthew 17:1-13**

Jesus gives the trio of disciples (Peter, James and John) a sneak peak of what He looks like (re)wrapped in the glory of God.

### **Reread verse 2**


Jesus experiences a physical transformation visible to the disciples. This amazing experience reminds us: Before He became a human being, He was God in all His glory (John 1:14, 18; 17:5), and He will come again in His Glory as our Eternal King (2 Peter 1:16–18; Rev. 1:16). This transfiguration glory demonstrates the presence of royalty. This trio of disciples witness a profound revelation of Jesus' identity as well as His mission.

The three disciples seem to be okay with the Transformed brightness of Jesus and were somehow able to identify Moses (who died in 1273 BC) and Elijah (who left the earth in the 800s BC), likely from their Facebook pages. We are not totally sure if Peter's words are intended as a statement or a question. The phrase is usually translated as a statement: "It is good for us to be here." The statement reflects the typical Peter — bold, confident response. If it is a question "Is it good for us to be here?" Peter may be thinking, "Are we going to be okay here? Should we be afraid right now?" What happens next rocks their world.

### **Reread verses 5-6**

The glorious scene continues, interrupting Peter's feeble attempt to make sense of the situation. A "bright cloud" appears, reminiscent of the way that God appeared at different times in the Old Testament. At the sound of the voice of the Father coming from the cloud of His presence, the "disciples were terrified and fell facedown to the ground." (17:6). The change in appearance of Jesus and the arrival of Moses and Elijah may have made the disciples knees knock a bit. They seemed to take that in stride or were more amazed than fearful. However, the voice and bright cloud of God the Father, overwhelmed them completely. "Fear This! Listen to my son — He fulfills the Law given by Moses and completes the mission of the prophets as represented by Elijah!" They crumpled to the ground as the only appropriate response to being in the Presence of Yahweh!

Jesus gets them up, asks them to not talk about this until His resurrection. He tells them the gloriously transfigured Jesus Messiah will be raised from the dead (17:9) after He is the divine sacrifice on the cross (17:12). He will live forever as their messianic deliverer.



Last week we considered transforming our mindset. One truth about the Christian faith is that we need a total makeover of how we, as sinful human beings, view the world. The transfiguration shows us a reality beyond what we normally see. It removes the veil from our eyes that screens us from seeing God as work. Angels battling around us. Demons flitting about.

The transformation reveals that Jesus is an eternal being. He may look like an everyday fella as He walked the land of Israel, but behold, He can also come riding on the clouds! While we speak often of Jesus as friend, brother or shepherd, we need to keep the picture that He also holds the power of life and death as Lord and Savior. He will judge the living and the dead. Fear This! Matthew 10:28 is quite sobering in our all effort to make God familiar, personal, “Don’t be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

This is the healthy balance and tension of faith: He is both Friend and Judge; Shepherd of our souls and King of the world.

### Shekinah Glory


The cloud of God’s presence appeared to Moses on Sinai (Ex. 34:5-7, 29-35), his Shekinah glory filled the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34-35), the cloud of God’s presence guided the Israelites during their wandering in the desert (13:21-22; 40:36-38), and the cloud of the glory of the Lord filled Solomon’s temple (1 Kings 8:10-13).

The Days of Elijah by Judy Jacobs puts part of these verses to music. It is over 8 minutes but very worshipful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PU1a674GGCo>

## Discussion Questions

1. Put yourself in the disciples’ sandals. Ponder this: What do you see, feel, sense? Why does the voice of God drive you to your knees and not the vision before you?
2. What thoughts or questions have come to you as we have walked through this passage?
3. Have you ever been overwhelmed by the presence of evil, a demon, the LORD God, an angel?
4. What are some of the differences between healthy fear and unhealthy fear?
5. In the midst of its necessity for doing life and work, the digital world has become an idol of distraction. Like Peter, we seem to always be talking, ready to go, asking what’s next?



Go, do, text, call. When do you stop to listen to God, stop and look for God, quiet yourself to sense and feel the presence of God?

## Poise + Prayer + Praise = Perfect Peace

*Read Philippians 4: 6-7*

*Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. (NLT)*

As we rest in Jesus, and our hearts, trust, minds and fears are transformed, we need an ongoing strategy to abide in Him to sustain this new reality. These verses outline a Godly equation that will transform fear into trust and guard our Christ-transformed hearts and minds: Prayer + Poise + Praise = Perfect Peace.

### **Poise**

Do not fret, do not be anxious, be anxious for nothing, do not worry ... regardless of your preferred Bible translation, Philippians 4:6 is a command to give no ground in your heart or mind to fear. We obey this command when we keep our poise in the face of fear. Poise is confident composure, and David in the Psalms. "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in You. In God, whose word I praise, In God I have put my trust; I shall not be afraid. What can mere man do to me?" (Psalm 56:3-4). Fear has a way of attacking our confident composure, but we are called and commanded to respond as David did, "I will not be afraid, I will trust in the Lord."


### **Prayer**

"With prayer and supplication ... make your requests known to God." Two forms of talking with God are part of the transform fear equation: First, pray about everything and "Pray without ceasing." (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Daily, keep the lines of communication wide open with the Almighty all the time. This allows us to maintain our poise in the moment.

The second type of talking with God which transforms fear is supplication — tell God what you need or what another person needs. This type of prayer involves asking or begging for something earnestly or humbly. It may include praying on your knees, praying with open hands giving it all to God, praying with your hands on a Bible passage as a symbolic act of claiming the God-given promises.

### **Praise**

"With thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." A thankful heart, full of praise for God alone, ushers us into His presence. God wants us to boldly come to Him with thankful confidence. He will answer the prayers prayed according to God's good and perfect and pleasing will. In the Psalms it is written, "From the rising of the sun to its



setting, The name of the Lord is to be praised.” (113:3). Find and look for moments every day to praise God.

### **God’s Peace**

When we add together Poise, Prayer and Praise we receive God’s Peace. He blesses us with His peace, which transcends all human understanding. The prophet Isaiah wrote, “You will guard him and keep him in perfect and constant peace whose mind is stayed on You, because he commits himself to You, leans on You, and hopes confidently in You.” (26:3 AMPC) When we respond to fear with Poise, Prayer and Praise, God transforms fear into His Perfect Peace.

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. Of Poise, Prayer and Praise
  - a. Which one comes easiest to you and why?
  - b. Which one is more difficult and why?
  - c. When you think about fears or “what if’s,” which of these three ideas (poise, prayer and praise) help provide you with peace?
2. How does the Transfiguration story or the Phillipians passage help you keep your fears in perspective?
3. What do you think the Lord would like for you to take away from this study today?

## **Exercise**

Which of the three — Poise, Prayer and Praise — will you focus on this week as you seek to find God’s peace in your life or about a particular issue?

Jot down your experience and share it next week.

**Again this week, please fill out the [WEEK 5 SURVEY](#) on the WRCC app or website.**

These surveys will provide valuable information for future group studies. Printed copies are available.

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