



Week Six | Small Group Guide



Transform Our Commitments

Review: Which of the three — Poise, Prayer and Praise — did you focus on last week as you sought to find God’s peace in your life about a particular issue?

Opening: Share any Easter traditions or stories from childhood, or from family, or church experiences?

TRANSFORMER Fans:

Which Transformers movie is your favorite and why?

What do you think causes transformer characters to remain committed to their “group”?


Transform Our Commitment

Read Joshua 24:14-15

“So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.” (NLT).

Joshua is nearing the end of his life. Throughout Joshua 24, Joshua reminds the people of Israel of the faithfulness of the LORD God. The LORD has taken them from Egyptian slavery to become landowners. Under Joshua’s leadership, the LORD went before them and with them to conquer the Promised Land. This acquisition fulfilled promises made long ago to Abraham,

Isaac, and more recently, to Aaron and Moses. Joshua reminds the nation to have a healthy fear of the power of God, to serve Him wholeheartedly by remaining true to the commitment they have made to God and not return to the idol worship of their ancestors. As a leader, he leads by declaring his commitment “But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”



Each day, like the nation of Israel of old, we need to affirm our commitment to Him and say, “As for me and my family, as for me and my church, we will serve the Lord!” Do you remember the equation from last week: Poise + Prayer + Praise = God’s Peace ? It illustrates how we can commit to serve the Lord.

- Live with Poise, confident composure, knowing that just as the LORD went before the nation to conquer the Promised Land, Jesus goes before us on our journey.
- Pray (talk) to Jesus everyday to put away any idols, false beliefs, and sins, and to receive guidance to become like Him and to serve Him alone.
- Praise the Lord everyday for His past faithfulness and His daily presence.
- This leads to a Peace which passes understanding.

Each day, with this posture of humble surrender, He will transform us: heart, mind and soul. This is good news! Great news! Hopeful news! Celebrate!

Discussion Questions

1. Celebrate a way or two in which commitment to the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit has transformed your life.

2. How about a do-over where your commitment wavered and you suffered the consequence?

3. What does a commitment like “as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord” look like to you?

4. In week one, you were asked to put on a scale of -2 to +2 the contrasting ideas on the next page. Now consider the words or ideas on each line from the standpoint of commitment. Which of the areas have you committed to the Lord for your good and His glory? Which area or areas would you like to commit to the altar of transformation? Add your own area or areas, which may not be listed.

This time evaluate if you have given this area to the Lord for Him to Transform	I'm stuck	I have a plan	I am working my plan	I'm making progress	I'm good here
chaotic /too busy or planned/reasonably paced?					
failure (some failure mark -1) or success (mostly success +2)?					
sadness or joy?					
polluted thought life or pure thought life?					
financial burden or financial peace?					
gratefully producing Kingdom fruit or fulfilling obligations?					
work to pay bills or work as a place to serve Jesus & others?					
school – a have to or get to – a place to serve Jesus & others?					
strained relationships or supportive ones? (may need to think about just one or two of the most important ones)					
fear or trust					
anger/frustration or at peace/calmness					
Additional area or areas:					

Talk with your group about how to manage one area about which you have concern and to pray with you about that area this week. What are one or two steps you can take this week to commit this area to the Lord and move towards transforming it?

- _____
- _____
- _____



Commit What You Have

READ *John 6:1-10*

1 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. 3 Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. 4 (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) 5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" 6 He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!"

8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. 9 "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?"

10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.)

It is springtime. The smell of April flowers, green grass, and the familiar smell of fish coming from the lake filled the air. Jesus has returned to Galilee from Jerusalem and is with his disciples in the vicinity of the city of Tiberias, which is a town located on the sea of Galilee just north of Jesus's hometown, Nazareth. Tiberias, like so many other towns around the sea, was a fishing town. Actually, the Sea of Galilee was not really a sea; it is more like a freshwater lake in northern Indiana, and instead of catching Bluegill, they would catch Musht (a fish similar to a Crappie). Most of these hard-working people eked out a living by fishing and farming.

The season is Passover (vs 4), the most significant time of year for Jews. We saw this as we briefly reviewed Joshua 24. Traditions and retelling the stories associated with them powerfully impact us. They capture our hearts. Jewish children would hear the Passover story every year. They knew by heart the story about the miraculous escape from an evil Egyptian ruler, Pharaoh, who held their ancestors in slavery. It took God-sized plagues to sway Pharaoh's mind to let God's people go. The final plague would kill every firstborn male animal and child. Amazingly, God had given a special instruction to His people: if each household will sacrifice a lamb and put its blood on the doorpost of their house, death would "Passover" the house of God's people and not harm the first-born. This last plague wins their freedom and includes an exciting chase scene and escape, culminating in Moses parting the Red Sea and the drowning of Pharaoh's army. Upon retelling that part of the story, the children would all clap in delight. This is their story. It captures their hearts, focuses their trust, calms their fears, and encourages their commitment. "As for me and my family, we will follow this LORD."



In the wilderness, even with all of God's interventions, the Israelites' faith faltered. They began to worry. They were hungry and complained, "We need food!" God took care of Moses and the Israelites in the desert by providing a sweet-tasting bread that fell from heaven (manna). As young Jewish children heard this part of the story, they would go to bed believing that since YHWH took care of their ancestors, He would surely take care of them.

We review the Passover story because John 6 says that the Passover is near. This would be on the disciples' minds, but the disciples seemed to have forgotten the part of the story — God provides. The desert land around the Sea of Galilee was similar to the wilderness of Moses' day, dry and barren. Philip and Andrew start to worry just like the Jews in the wilderness with Moses, "We need food!" Philip asks, "Where are we to buy bread for this many people to eat." Andrew seeks a solution. He finds a little boy with a sack lunch. Did this child offer his lunch thinking, "If I share my lunch, maybe God will provide just like He did in the manna story I have heard every year from grandpa?" We don't know, but it is an interesting idea to consider.

Discussion Questions


1. How do you see Passover shaping the hearts, trust, fears, mindset and commitments of the nation of Israel?
2. Is there any one Bible story that shapes your faith more than another? Which one? Why?
3. In this story with whom do you relate? Why?
 - a. Philip, we can't feed all these people
 - b. Andrew, I'll find some way to do (fix) this
 - c. The other disciples, apparently uncertain or frozen
 - d. The little boy offering whatever he has

Read John 6:11-15

11 Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. 12 After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." 13 So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves.

14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" 15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

As suspected, Jesus provided. Jesus multiplies the boy's offering! When we have no idea what to do, when we are worried, when "we need food," the place to start is always the same ... Jesus. And, God not only provided, but provided more than any would have ever imagined.



Something else was going on, something deeper. The crowd was making mental connections. We do it all the time. The smell of fresh baked cookies takes us back to our grandma's house growing up. The sound of a baby crying in a restaurant reminds us of the hospital room, the nurses, and our family cuddling our newborn. The flashing lights of a police car makes our heart skip a beat as we remember the time when we were in too big of a hurry. The Jewish people gathering around Jesus were likely having one flashback after another. The barley loaves and the help of a young boy reminded the crowd of the prophet Elisha feeding 100 men with 20 barley loaves and some grain (1 Kings 4:42-44). Gathering the leftover pieces of bread reminded the hungry partakers of the story of Ruth, "She ate all she wanted and has some leftover." (Ruth 2:14).

And 12 baskets? Seriously? Could the number 12 really be a coincidence? God's people of Israel were made up of 12 tribes. Jesus called 12 disciples as representatives of Israel's 12 tribes to tell of God's plan to bring *all* the nations into relationship with Him.

As all these "coincidences" ran through the minds of the Jews, maybe Jesus' miracle feeding triggered the words of Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15. Moses said, "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him." Perhaps these were not coincidences at all. Could this prophet, who was like Moses provided manna (bread), be the Messiah? Was Jesus the great leader who would do for them what Moses did for their ancestors? Would this Jesus free them from slavery and shepherd them to freedom from their oppression? Yes! Yes! Yes!

Jesus is exactly who Moses was talking about. Jesus is the Messiah. He is Manna from heaven, the living bread. The crowd agreed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting." The crowd understands! Well ... maybe not so fast.

They wanted "to force Him to be their king." Curious language. They would force Him? How do you force someone to be a king? Jesus wanted nothing to do with that kind of "takeover." Like so many of us, when God is doing something amazing and miraculous, we try to get God to finish the work *our* way. The crowd had a different type of Messiah in mind. They wanted a political ruler. The crowd wanted Jesus to take over politically and solve their problems. They wanted a king that would free them from the oppression of the Roman government.

Jesus has something completely different in mind. In fact, Jesus eventually tells his disciples, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them ... but it is not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant" (Luke 22:25-26). Jesus was not interested in a military takeover. Jesus was interested in serving. Jesus changed the world not by bossing people around, but by serving all humanity, Jews *and* Gentiles alike, even through his death. A takeover alright. A very different kind of takeover. A takeover powered by love that would change everything and would force the question: Will you follow Me even when My (Jesus') perspectives and purposes differ from your own? Will you commit your ways to Me by faith, trusting in Me?

Discussion Questions:

1. We often think if we can get a new boss, a new coach, a new governor, or new president to take over and take charge, then our problems will be solved. What do these passages say about that kind of thinking?
2. Of time, resources/money, and abilities, which is the easiest for you to give? Hardest?
3. March 5-8 was Commitment Sunday at WRCC for the Transform initiative. How did you find the process of deciding how to give financially to the building project?
4. Passover, Easter, Christmas traditions and stories have a lasting impact on us. While it is helpful to learn the big stories of faith, it is also helpful to be able to tell your current faith story. Please pick one of the three options below and develop a 60-90 second story.

<p>Option One: My life before Jesus was ...</p>	<p>My life after I accepted Jesus ...</p>
<p>Option Two: Before _____ my life in Christ was ... (Fill in the blank. Which experience has impacted your faith journey? Marriage, medical diagnoses, emotional issue, divorce, lay off, children, infertility, graduating, that job, illness, accident)</p>	<p>Since that experience my journey with Jesus has ...</p>
<p>Option Three: I'm stuck in this experience or still trudging through this event ...</p>	<p>I'm not sure where I will come out, but I hope ...</p>

Please fill out the [Week 6 Survey](#) about Beliefs, Practices and Values on the WRCC app or website. Survey results will help in planning future small group materials.

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