

No Left Turn

Big Idea: Spiritual transformation occurs as we struggle with our experiences in the light of God’s Word and among community. It’s essential in this process to choose the right turn through humility and dependence on the Holy Spirit rather than the left turn to self-control through willpower.

Friedrich Nietzsche, a nineteenth-century philosopher who was not exactly known for devout faith in God, described the life of faith as “a long obedience in the same direction.” The characters in our story are not finding this long obedience easy. Few of us do. But in this segment they learn the seven critical elements of spiritual transformation and find a few of those elements surprising. Your goal in this session will be to understand these seven elements.

1. According to the video, there are seven elements of spiritual transformation. What are they?

2. How do the characters’ lives illustrate aspects of the change process?

- Change is worked out in the context of life experience.
- The Scriptures enable us to make sense of our experiences and show us how to respond.
- The tension between our inclinations and the truth of Scripture produces struggle.
- God will help us if we humble ourselves, but will not help us if we remain arrogant about our strength.



The Seven Elements of Spiritual Transformation

- The Holy Spirit enables us to do what we cannot do in our own strength.
- An effective community enables us to keep up the day-in day-out struggle necessary for deep change.



3. What is the difference between the left turn and right turn?
4. What left turns have you seen Gerry take in his relationship with Erik? Have you seen him take right turns?
5. Think of an area of your life in which you need to grow. Where are you in the change process?
 - I've just had an experience that points out my need to change.
 - I need to find out what the Scripture says about an experience I've just had or am having.
 - I know what the Bible says about my situation, but I'm failing to do what the Bible says.
 - I am trying to do what is right by my own strength of will.
 - I'm struggling to get myself into a place of humility about this issue.
 - I've admitted my helplessness to God about this, and I'm asking for the Holy Spirit's help.
 - God's Spirit is helping me in this area, but I still have quite a way to go.

If none of these appear to fit your situation, describe it in your own words.

6. The opposite of humility is pride. Pride has several faces. Which of these (if any) are ones you can identify with? Think about which ones you have seen in others.

- A tough, I-can-do-it, I'm-better-than-this stance.
- False humility, where you claim to "give all the glory to God" but are really satisfied with your own performance.
- Self Contempt: "I'm so pathetic. I'll never get this right. Look, I did it again! What an idiot!" (This attitude implies that you can make yourself change if you just beat yourself up hard enough.)
- Despair: "I give up. I'll never change." (This may not look like pride, but it still refuses to trust God's power and goodness.)

7. What is the difference between humility and pride?

8. What environment do you have as described by Peterson?

*"A Christian must have an environment where he or she **can go and talk openly about how things are going** in this matter of following Christ. It needs to be a place where one can get personalized attention and give it to others.*

The transformation process we have been describing is characterized by struggle. Nobody can stick it out in an effort of this nature, day after day, year after year, if they attempt to go it alone. Hebrews 3:13 says, 'encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.'

*This passage implies **an intense, daily, accepting environment**, where the experiences we are dealing with can be an open topic of conversation. It implies commitment to one another, being there when the going gets heavy, when a sister or brother is more inclined to choose wrong over right... Honesty, mutual loving support, and intercession for one another are essential ingredients to repair the damage of our lives."*

*Jim Petersen,
Lifestyle Discipleship, pp. 118-119*

Suggested Additional Reading:

Read chapter 8 of *Lifestyle Discipleship*