



STUDY GUIDE August 13, 2023

Message Series: Road Trip
Message Title: The Road to Transformation
Teaching Pastor: Ellis Hopson

Warm-up/Icebreaker: (10 min.)

Did you ever have a road trip that ended up being different than you had expected? Share details.

Pray:

Dear Lord, prepare our hearts and minds to be open to some personal introspection. We do not want to miss out on what you may be trying to accomplish in and through us. Help us see evidence all around us that points toward Your transformative power. And teach us how to understand and see that Your life-changing message is for everyone. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Get Started: (20 min.)

"[Saul's transformation] was the kind of transformation that only Jesus was capable of doing. Some of us here today believe with everything in our being that God is able to radically transform lives and situations. Some of us think that's true...but with some exceptions. We know that God can enter people's lives and completely turn them around - except for our own lives. God can't change ME! I've done too much. I'm too far gone. Maybe you haven't come to any conclusions about who God can and can't change - maybe you haven't come to any conclusions about Him at all. Because you're not on a spiritual journey, or you're still exploring. Or maybe you have experienced God's transformation in your life, and you're wondering what comes next." – Pastor Ellis Hopson

- Which of these statements most accurately reflects where you stand at the moment?
- What is the most profound transformation you have ever experienced or witnessed? What changed?

"When we think about transformation, as a society we have made transformation all about a singular moment. We celebrate the instantaneous scene where the superpowers activate. Where the magic spell is cast. Where a flashing light and a booming voice intervene. But putting all of our focus on that moment leaves a critically important question unanswered: NOW WHAT?..... We fix our eyes so intently on the moment of transformation that we miss the importance of what happens next. And the story of Saul shows us that what happens next matters. It shows us that transformation isn't about one moment...." - Pastor Ellis Hopson

- When you think about transformation, either in your own life or in the life of another, do you think in terms of a one time event, or as an ongoing process?

Read Philippians 2:12-13, 2 Corinthians 3:18 and Galatians 2:20.

- What stands out to you from these verses?
- What does it look like to live out your salvation with fear and trembling? What does it have to do with being transformed?

Watch and Discuss Video (running time 8:20 minutes, 15 minute discussion)

In the follow-up video, Pastor Ellis talks about how Paul's identity and even his very name was changed as a result of his transformation. He also pointed out that it wasn't *just* about Paul, but also about the impact on other people. (Consider the fact that Paul, inspired by God, wrote most of the New Testament!)

- Going back to the previous question about the most profound transformation you've experienced or witnessed – how did that person (whether it was you or someone you know) ultimately impact other people?

Reflect and Commit: (20 min.)

*“Saul’s been transformed in his heart - he’s had it turned towards Jesus. He’s been transformed in his body - he now has his eyes fixed on God and his ears attuned to hear God. And an ally has helped him begin to step into his calling, but to fully walk into what God has for him - Saul needs more than an ally. He needs an **ADVOCATE**: someone who speaks or intercedes on behalf of another....Barnabus is an advocate for Saul here. He doesn’t just try to pick Saul up when he sees that he’s down - he tries to help Saul grow further up. And that’s not to diminish the impact that Ananias had as an ally, because that’s what Saul needed at the time. But for Saul to be surrounded with allies, who were serving a common purpose and would help him to live the life God had called him to - Saul needed Barnabus to be an advocate on his behalf.” - Pastor Ellis Hopson*

- Do you have an advocate? Describe the relationship. If not, consider and pray about who you could ask. Is there someone for whom you can be an advocate?

Read Proverbs 27:17, Hebrews 1:-24-25 and 1 Thessalonians 5:11.

- How would you summarize the main point of these verses as they relate to an advocate relationship?

“No matter where you are, remember that transformation begins at the source. The only source with the real power to create radical life change: Jesus. We can stand in awe for how He’s able to transform us. And we can spend our lives, as we chase after Him, immersed in His great love for us.” - Pastor Ellis Hopson

Read Ephesians 2:8-9 and Hebrews 12:1-2.

- Have you ever experienced trying to change yourself by your own effort or power? How did/does that work for you?
- What is one thing you can do to *connect* with the person of Jesus and to *stay* connected with His transformational power?

Gather prayer requests and pray. (5-10 min.)

Pray: Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that it is only through Your power and grace that we can experience life change. May that change be the reference point from which we see everything else and anyone else. Empower us to make decisions out of this transformation, so that our lives reflect who You are to the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.