



## TRANSFORMED

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To study and apply the Scriptures cited in this article, see pages 3-8.

Conflict is everywhere. It's in the news. It's on our streets. It's in the workplace. It's in our homes. It's everywhere.

But amidst all this conflict, there are oases of peace. There are people who resolve differences, find common ground and work together for good. There are friendships that endure, marriages that thrive, businesses that flourish, and lawyers who negotiate just agreements and reconcile parties.

In many cases, the source of this peace is found in a single person: Jesus Christ. God sent his son into the world "to guide our feet onto the path of peace" and tear down the walls that divide us (Luke 1:79; Eph. 2:14-16).

This mission of peace is typically referred to as "**the gospel**," which is the good news that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God, and he rose from the dead to give us new life (John 3:16-17; 1 Pet. 1:3). Through faith in Jesus, we can be reconciled to God, adopted into his family, empowered to love others as we love ourselves, and given the gift of enjoying him forever.

When we believe this message and trust in Jesus, God begins a supernatural process that steadily transforms us more and more into the likeness of Jesus himself (2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 12:2). One of the most wonderful aspects of this transformation is that God calls and empowers us to be part of Jesus' mission to promote peace and reconciliation:

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:17-19).

Through the gospel, God has not only given us eternal life but also transformed us into *new creations with new purposes and powers*, which he calls us to enjoy and employ every day of our lives. One way to do this is to constantly look for opportunities to reflect the gospel with this kind of attitude:

"God saved me by giving his Son to die for me. Since he loved me that much, I will love others. Since he forgave me, I will forgive others. Since he reconciled with me, I will reconcile with others."

You can embrace God's transforming work in your life by *praying* that Christ would dwell in you so fully that your mind and heart will be transformed to be like his, and by constantly *meditating on* and *delighting in* the gospel and its manifold implications (Eph. 3:16-19). As Tim Keller writes:

"All change comes from deepening your understanding of the salvation of Christ and living out of the changes that understanding creates in your heart. Faith in the gospel restructures our motivations, our self-understanding, our identity, our view of the world." (*The Prodigal God*)

The chart on the following page provides twelve practical ways to live out the transforming power of the gospel in your life and your relationships.

## The Transforming Power of the Gospel

	Apart from the gospel ...	Transformed by the gospel ...
1-In daily life	I'm preoccupied with my own desires, plans, reputation and convenience.	I find my greatest joy in pleasing God and serving others (John 8:29; 12:26).
2-When I feel negative emotions	I either stuff them or allow them to move me to say or do things that may disappoint or hurt others.	I draw on the power I have through Jesus to wisely manage my emotions, words and actions (2 Tim. 1:7).
3-When others may be hurting	I'm often so focused on my own goals and needs that I overlook others' needs.	I respond with the kindness that Jesus has shown to me (Luke 7:13; 10:33).
4-When I realize a conflict exists	I wait for others to come to me, especially if I think they are more at fault than I am.	I imitate Jesus by taking the initiative to seek reconciliation, even if others seem more in the wrong (Rom. 5:8).
5-When I see things differently than others	I assume the worst about others, judge their motives, magnify our differences, or cast their positions in the worst possible light.	I am open to learning new views and looking for common ground, shared interests and areas where we can work together for good (Phil. 2:1-4).
6-My top priority when I'm in conflict	Is to vindicate myself, win my points and make myself look just, good and right.	Is to honor God by mirroring his reconciling love and character (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ex. 34:5-7).
7-When others behave like an enemy	I treat them like an enemy, thinking and speaking ill of them, or staying as far away from them as possible.	I walk in Jesus' steps by loving them, acting like a friend, and risking to be reconciled to them (Col. 1:21-22).
8-When I've done something wrong	I cling to my self-righteousness by hiding or minimizing my wrongs and shifting the blame to others.	I trust that Jesus has paid for all my sins, so I can stop hiding and find mercy and freedom in confession (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5).
9-When others or I keep doing the same sins	I become discouraged and hopeless and give up on relationships or working to change myself.	I have hope because Jesus promised to steadily change us, so I view conflict as a path to growth (Phil. 1:6).
10-When others have done wrong	I point out their sins with as much detail and persistence as is needed to force them to admit they are wrong.	I recall how kindly Jesus deals with me, so I seek to correct and restore others gently (Rom. 2:4; Gal. 6:1).
11-When others hurt me deeply	I dwell on their wrongs, indulge in self-pity, lash back, or avoid having anything to do with them again.	I forgive just as God has forgiven me, refusing to dwell on their sin or let it stand between us (Eph. 4:30-32).
12-When I feel inadequate, ashamed or vulnerable	I hide, compensate, posture or withdraw from reality and others or pretend to be better than I know I am.	I know that Jesus accepts me as I am and has removed my shame, renewed me as God's beloved child, and will raise me to glory (John 1:12; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:6).

*Remember: Reflect much on Jesus and his gospel, and you will reflect much of Jesus and his gospel.*



## TRANSFORMED BY THE GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY

This Bible study is designed to help you prayerfully examine your life in light of the gospel, to celebrate the ways that God has been transforming you more and more into the likeness of Christ, and to identify areas where he is calling you to continue growing, either generally in your life and character or in regard to a challenging relationship or a current conflict.

As you read the Scriptures supporting each of the following statements, I encourage you to write a short reflection or prayer about how you would like God to continue transforming you through the gospel.

If you want to do this study on your computer so you have more space to write, you may download a Word document at [www.rw360.org/transformed](http://www.rw360.org/transformed).

To get even more out of this study, I encourage you to ask some close friends to go through it together so that you can benefit from one another's insights, experience and wisdom.

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A. God sent his son into the world "to guide our feet onto the path of peace" and tear down the walls that divide us.

*"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people ... to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace"* (Luke 1:68, 79).

*"For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility"* (Eph. 2:14-16).

Reflection or Prayer:

B. The gospel is the good news that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God, and he rose from the dead to give us new life.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him"* (John 3:16-17).

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"* (1 Pet. 1:3).

Reflection or Prayer:

- C. When we believe the gospel and trust in Jesus, God begins a supernatural process that steadily transforms us more and more into the likeness of Jesus himself.

*“And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit” (2 Cor. 3:18).*

*“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:2).*

Reflection or Prayer:

- D. One of the most wonderful aspects of this transformation is that God calls and empowers us to be part of Jesus’ mission to promote peace and reconciliation.

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:17–19).*

Reflection or Prayer:

- E. You can embrace God’s transforming work in your life by praying that Christ would dwell in you so fully that your mind and heart will be transformed to be like his, and by constantly meditating on and delighting in the gospel and its manifold implications.

*“For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith – that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph. 3:16-19).*

Reflection or Prayer:

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## The Evidence of Transformation

1. In daily life, apart from the gospel I’m preoccupied with my own desires, plans, reputation and convenience.

But when I’m transformed by the gospel, I find my greatest joy in pleasing God and serving others.

*“[Jesus speaking:] And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him” (John 8:29).*

*"If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him" (John 12:26).*

Reflection or Prayer:

2. When I feel negative emotions, apart from the gospel I either stuff them or allow them to move me to say or do things that may disappoint or hurt others.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I draw on the power I have through Jesus to wisely manage my emotions, words and actions.

*"For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control" (2 Tim. 1:7).*

Reflection or Prayer:

3. When others may be hurting, apart from the gospel I'm often so focused on my own goals and needs that I overlook others' needs.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I respond with the kindness that Jesus has shown to me.

*"And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep'" (Luke 7:13).*

*"A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him and departed, leaving him half dead.... But a Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion'" (Luke 10:30-33).*

Reflection or Prayer:

4. When I realize a conflict exists, apart from the gospel I wait for others to come to me, especially if I think they are more at fault than I am.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I imitate Jesus by taking the initiative to seek reconciliation, even if others seem more in the wrong.

*"Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph. 5:1).*

*"But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).*

Reflection or Prayer:

5. When I see things differently than others, apart from the gospel I assume the worst about others, judge their motives, magnify our differences, or cast their positions in the worst possible light.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I am open to learning new views and looking for common ground, shared interests and areas where we can work together for good.

*"So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others"* (Phil. 2:1-4).

Reflection or Prayer:

6. Apart from the gospel, my top priority when I'm in conflict is to vindicate myself, win my points and make myself look just, good and right.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, my top priority is to honor God by mirroring his reconciling love and character.

*"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor. 10:31).

*"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit"* (2 Cor. 3:18).

*"The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin'"* (Ex. 34:5-7).

Reflection or Prayer:

7. When others behave like an enemy, apart from the gospel I treat them like an enemy, thinking and speaking ill of them, or staying as far away from them as possible.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I walk in Jesus' steps by loving them, acting like a friend, and risking to be reconciled to them.

*"And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him"* (Col. 1:21-22).

*"But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you"* (Luke 6:27-28).

Reflection or Prayer:

8. When I've done something wrong, apart from the gospel I cling to my self-righteousness by hiding or minimizing my wrongs and shifting the blame to others.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I trust that Jesus has paid for all my sins, so I can stop hiding and find mercy and freedom in confession.

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).*

*"Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (Prov. 28:13).*

*"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye'" (Matt. 7:3-5).*

Reflection or Prayer:

9. When others or I keep doing the same sins, I become discouraged and hopeless and give up on relationships or on working to change myself.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I have hope because Jesus promised to steadily change us, so I view conflict as a path to growth.

*"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. 1:6).*

Reflection or Prayer:

10. When others have done wrong, apart from the gospel I point out their sins with as much detail and persistence as is needed to force them to admit they are wrong.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I recall how kindly Jesus deals with me, so I seek to correct and restore others gently.

*"Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?" (Rom. 2:4).*

*"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness" (Gal. 6:1).*

Reflection or Prayer:

11. When others hurt me deeply, apart from the gospel I dwell on their wrongs, indulge in self-pity, lash back, or avoid having anything to do with them again.

But when I'm transformed by the gospel, I forgive just as God has forgiven me, refusing to dwell on their sin or let it stand between us.

*“And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:30-32).*

Reflection or Prayer:

12. When I feel inadequate, ashamed or vulnerable, apart from the gospel I hide, compensate, posture or withdraw from reality and others or pretend to be better than I know I am.

But when I’m transformed by the gospel, I know that Jesus accepts me as I am and has removed my shame, renewed me as God’s beloved child, and will raise me to glory.

*“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12).*

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Col. 3:12).*

*“For it stands in Scripture: ‘Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame’” (1 Pet. 2:6).*

Reflection or Prayer:

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## Further Growth

The most important way for you to grow in faith and character is to find fellowship in a church that is faithful to traditional Christian theology, which means it would have a **statement of faith** similar to [this](#) and a **worldview** similar to [this](#).

If you would like to share the transforming power of the gospel with others, see [Six Ways to Use the Transformed Pamphlet](#) and [buy more here](#).

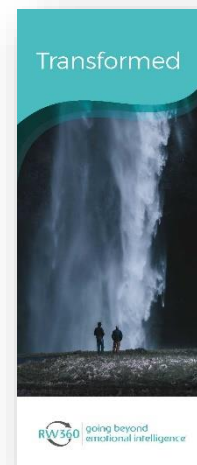
To learn how these principles may need to be modified when dealing with serious sin or abuse, see [Peacemaking and Abuse](#).

Download the [RW360 App](#) and subscribe to the [RW Blog](#) for ongoing insights on how to apply relational wisdom and peacemaking in daily life.

One of the best ways to pursue gospel transformation is to go through one of RW360’s courses on relational wisdom or biblical peacemaking, which are available for individual study online at the [RW Academy](#) or for group study using one of the study sets in the [RW360 Bookstore](#).

For creative ideas on how to use these resources to share your faith, see [Using Relational Wisdom for Witnessing](#). For advanced training as an RW Instructor, Coach or Conciliator, see RW360’s [Training and Certification Program](#).

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