

Spiritual Exercise

³¹ *As for God, His way is perfect;
The word of the LORD is proven;
He is a shield to all who trust in Him.*

³² *For who is God, except the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?*

2Samuel 22:31-32

⁹ *The LORD also will be a refuge for the oppressed,
A refuge in times of trouble.*

¹⁰ *And those who know Your name will put their trust in You;
For You, LORD, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

Psalm 9:9-10

³ *Trust in the LORD, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.*

⁴ *Delight yourself also in the LORD,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.*

⁵ *Commit your way to the LORD,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass.*

⁶ *He shall bring forth your righteousness as the light,
And your justice as the noonday.*

Psalm 37:3-6

*The LORD is good,
A stronghold in the day of trouble;
And He knows those who trust in Him.*

Nahum 1:7

There are many promises for the man that will trust God. Exploring the mysteries of the kingdom will require the grace to trust Him more.

The Mystery of God

And He said to them, "To you it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God..."
Mark 4:11

Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
1Corinthians 4:1

It is the glory of God to conceal a matter,
But the glory of kings is to search out a matter.
Proverbs 25:2



The Doctrine of Man

Prayer

The Adventure Begins (continued)

Introduction

Our God is a process oriented problem solver. Give Him a problem and He will give you a process to solve it. As we learned last week, the story of the Bible is the process God is orchestrating to get back what was lost in the Garden – His reign over, relationship with, and habitation in, His children.

Most of the major “concepts” of Scripture are process oriented. We are to continue and grow in them (e.g., faith, hope and love); or, they are processes that God uses to mature us (e.g., sanctification, transformation). Even the events (e.g., the fall of Man, the death and resurrection of Christ) are actively powerful years after their signature moments.

Recognizing that God operates “in process” will dramatically change our perspective of life. It will impact our relationships with God and all of His creation. This may seem overly bold. However, we have become an event oriented people – particularly in the West. We have become focused on the moment. “What have you done for me today?” has become our measure.

This subtle shift in thinking has affected our doctrine and our discipline. For example, we have become more interested in the salvation decision than the process of discipleship. We have also become more focused on the times I spend with God than on the life that He is living in and through us.

Therefore, as we consider the format for the remainder of our training together, we will search out a few of the processes God has instituted for our making.

Definition

Adventure: an undertaking usually involving danger and unknown risks; the encountering of risks; an exciting or remarkable experience. www.merriam-webster.com

For those that have a love of the truth, searching out the Scriptures is an exciting adventure. One way to better understand the meaning of a particular verse is to explore the verb tenses used. Two important Greek verb tenses are:

Present Tense – The present tense usually denotes continuous kind of action. It shows 'action in progress' or 'a state of persistence.'

Aorist Tense – The aorist is said to be "simple occurrence" or "summary occurrence", without regard for the amount of time taken to accomplish the action... 'viewed as a single, collective whole,' a "one-point-in-time" action, although it may actually take place over a period of time...

Sanctification is one of the processes God uses to mature us as Christians. The verb form, sanctify, provides a good demonstration in the differences the tense can make. First, let’s consider the definition. Then, we will explore a couple of verses that use both the aorist and present tense.

Sanctify (*hagiazō*): to render or acknowledge, or to be venerable or hallow; to separate from profane things and dedicate to God (consecrate things to God, dedicate people to God); to purify (to cleanse externally; to purify by expiation: free from the guilt of sin; to purify internally by renewing of the soul).

Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org

¹⁷ Sanctify [aorist] them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸ As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify [present] Myself, that they also may be sanctified [present] by the truth. John 17:17-18

The Adventure Begins (continued)

While God's sanctifying is a point in time action, Jesus and our sanctifying is a continuous action. This not only clarifies the meaning of the verses, but it exposes a truth that may be revolutionary – that Christ also was being sanctified. The encouragement here is that digging deeper – searching out the matter – is rewarded by our knowing more about God... and His ways... and Him and His Son (and this is eternal life, John 17:3).

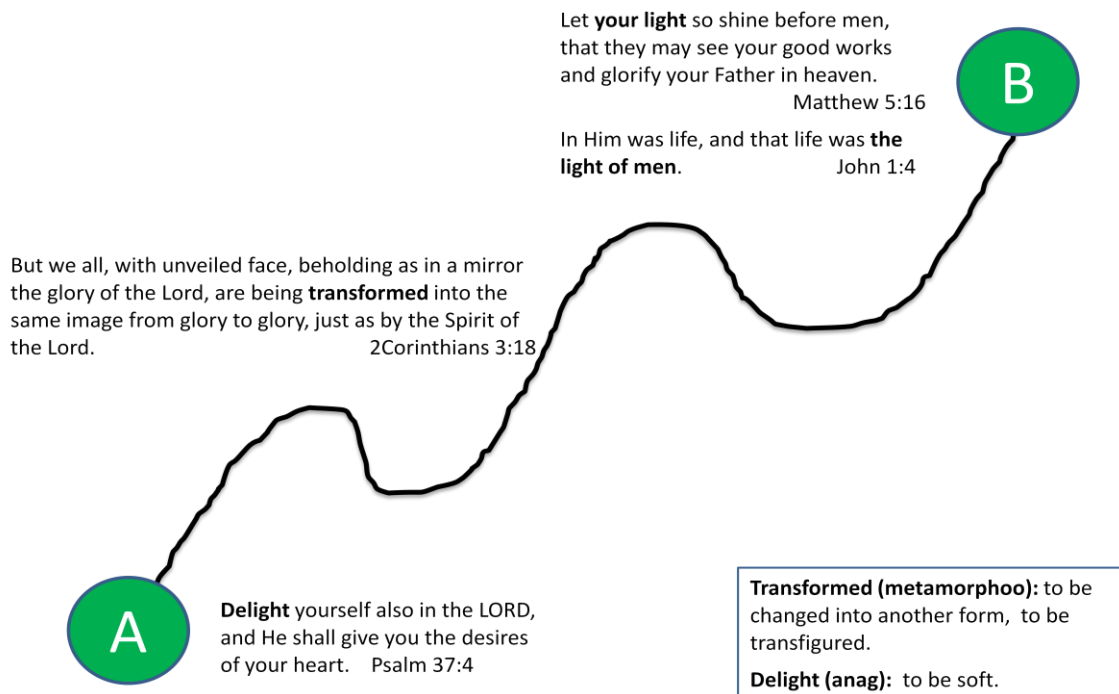
BTW: Verb tenses can easily be found using the tools provided on www.blueletterbible.org.

Searching Out the Matter

(All Scripture references, but those noted, are NKJV; Thomas Nelson, Inc.; footnotes excluded)

Transformation

God is calling Marketplace Leaders to an adventure that will transform them and those in their spheres of influence.



If we are beholding Christ – in prayer and meditation, in Bible study, in others, etc. – we will be transformed from one level of glory to another. This new level of glory is simply a condition where more of Christ can be seen in us, and more of His character is getting out of us onto others.

It is interesting to note that the Greek word for transformed – metamorphoo – is only found in two other places in the New Testament. The second is in Romans:

And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Romans 12:2

The transformation process involves the renewal of our minds – and it stands against conformity to the world. This is exciting stuff... and it gets better. The third occurrence of metamorphoo is found in:

The Adventure Begins (continued)

¹ Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; ² and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. Matthew 17:1-2

That's right: Jesus was "metamorphoo'ed on the Mount of "Metamorphoo". Could this be possible for us? Well, I haven't seen too many Christians glowing like Jesus, but it has to make you think, "What's possible?" Perhaps God intends for us to be having a greater impact on our surroundings. Consider the following:

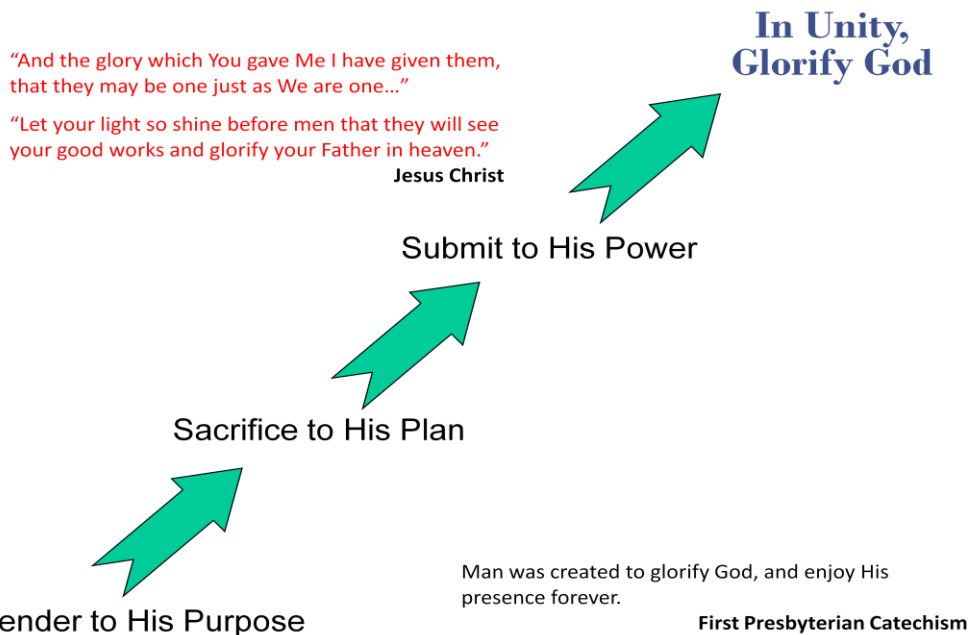
For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 2Corinthians 2:15

One of the most inspiring quotes I have ever read speaks volumes about the potential in those that will lay hold of the truth regarding our transformation:

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you *not* to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others. *(Return to Love by Marianne Williamson, Harper Collins, 1992)*

Finding Joyful, Spirit-filled Ministry

The context for our adventure is the discovery of joyful, Spirit-filled ministry – for leaders and the ones they disciple.



The Lord desires that every Marketplace Leader find joyful, Spirit-filled ministry in every area of their life – work, home, church, etc. It is important to note that this includes their ministry in the workplace. This is, after all, the place where they spend the largest portion of their waking hours.

The Adventure Begins (continued)

The first step in the journey towards joyful, Spirit-filled ministry is discovering the desire God has placed in your heart for this season of your life (Psalm 37:4). As you surrender to that desire, it becomes a purpose of God that will not be denied Him (Job 42:2).

God has the perfect plan for accomplishing His purpose. That plan is a true adventure. It is complex (by human standards) and involves many other individuals. It is an orchestration in the fullest sense. It's best left to Him; and it's okay not to know the whole plan. God does, however, reveal enough of His plan to allow a counting of the cost. This is one of Christ's commands (Luke 14:28).

In counting the cost, we find that God's plan will require a sacrifice. Sacrificing for His plan is the second step of the journey. As Christ said, "And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." (Luke 14:27) In other words, following Christ requires that the Marketplace Leader take the same road. This is the most decisive moment in the journey – The Marketplace Leader must ask himself, "Will I trust Him enough to agree to sacrifice for a plan I don't understand?"

In step three, the Marketplace Leader submits to the power of the Holy Spirit – to work out what doesn't belong and to work in all that is needed for the supernatural work He will do in and through the Leader. Like going through boot camp, the old man is torn down that the Leader might be built up into the image of Christ.

Finally, the Marketplace Leader is prepared to let their light so shine before men that they will see their good work and glorify their Father in Heaven (Matthew 5:16). It is important to note that the "your" in this verse is plural. There are no lone rangers in God's economy. God gives the Marketplace Leader influence for the purpose of discipling others through the process and into the work – a work of unity for His glory.

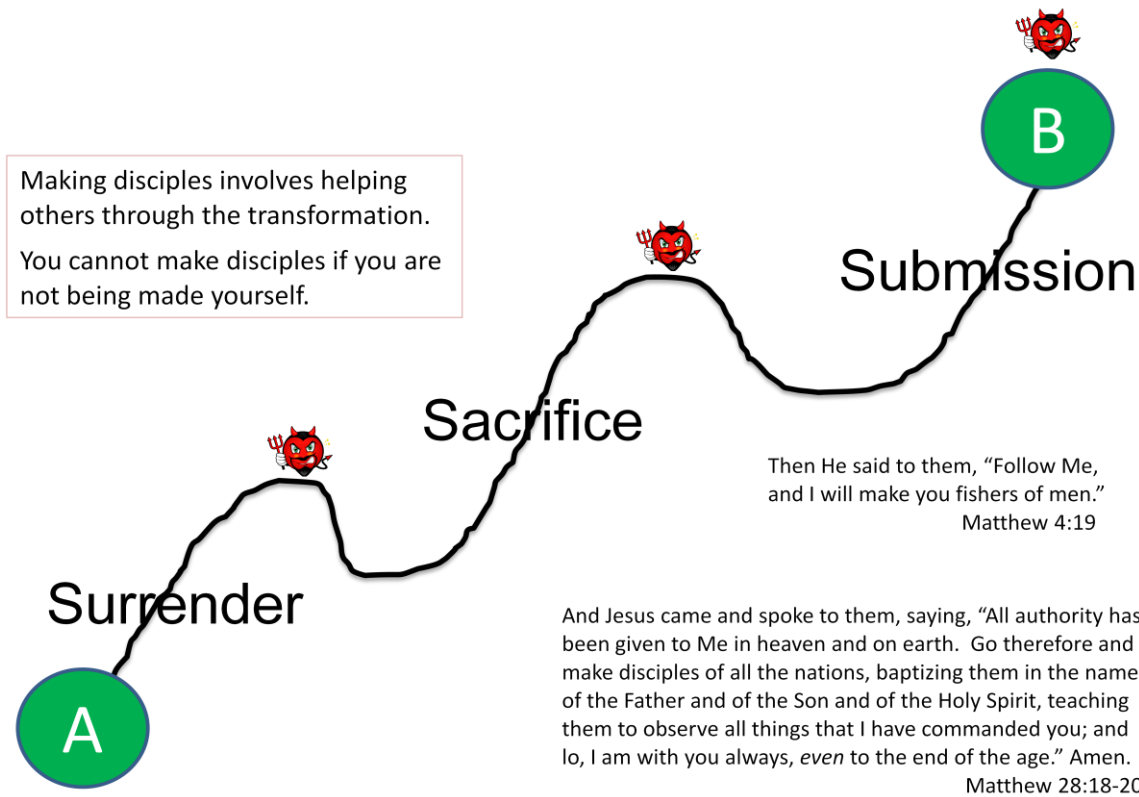
¹⁵ Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, ¹⁶ do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: ¹⁷ that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, ¹⁸ the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹ and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power...

Ephesians 1:15-19

The Adventure Begins (continued)

Disciple Making

Marketplace Ministry requires the making of disciples God's way; helping others through the transformation process.



When we combine the processes of transformation and joyful, Spirit-filled ministry, we discover that our maturing into the work God has ordained is not going to be easy. That is why disciple making is so critical. We all need someone to encourage and edify us through the process. And we need to be that for others.

A big part of that encouragement is "THIS IS NORMAL." And, it is a wonderful adventure.

It is also important to note that the Great Commission is one of the commands that Jesus commissioned them to follow by "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you". It is an iterative, self-perpetuating command.

Believe

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. John 3:16

Many of us have learned that the believing of John 3:16 is a continual (Greek present tense). A Greek scholar once shared with me that the meaning was even deeper. After years of study and meditation (he's 80), he understands the verse to read something like:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever is believing into Him should not perish but is having everlasting life.

The Adventure Begins (continued)

Salvation

Salvation is also a process. It has a beginning – justification; and it has an end – glorification. Most understand the middle part to be sanctification (also a process). And praise God for that. Because it is a process where God is doing the greatest thing He has ever done for man; and not just in a moment, but in all of our life. He is continuously saving me.

Salvation (*sōtēria*): deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation; deliverance from the molestation of enemies; in an ethical sense, that which concludes to the soul's safety or salvation (of Messianic salvation); salvation as the present possession of all true Christians; future salvation, the sum of benefits and blessings which the Christians, redeemed from all earthly ills, will enjoy after the visible return of Christ from heaven in the consummated and eternal kingdom of God. *Outline of Biblical Usage, BlueLetterBible.org*

As you can see, the definition of salvation describes a process – as do the verses below:

⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹
not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 1Corinthians 1:18

For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. 2Corinthians 2:15

⁹ Much more then, having now been justified (aorist) by His blood, we shall be saved (future) from wrath through Him. ¹⁰ For if when we were enemies we were reconciled (aorist) to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled (aorist), we shall be saved (future) by His life. ¹¹ And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation. Romans 5:9-11

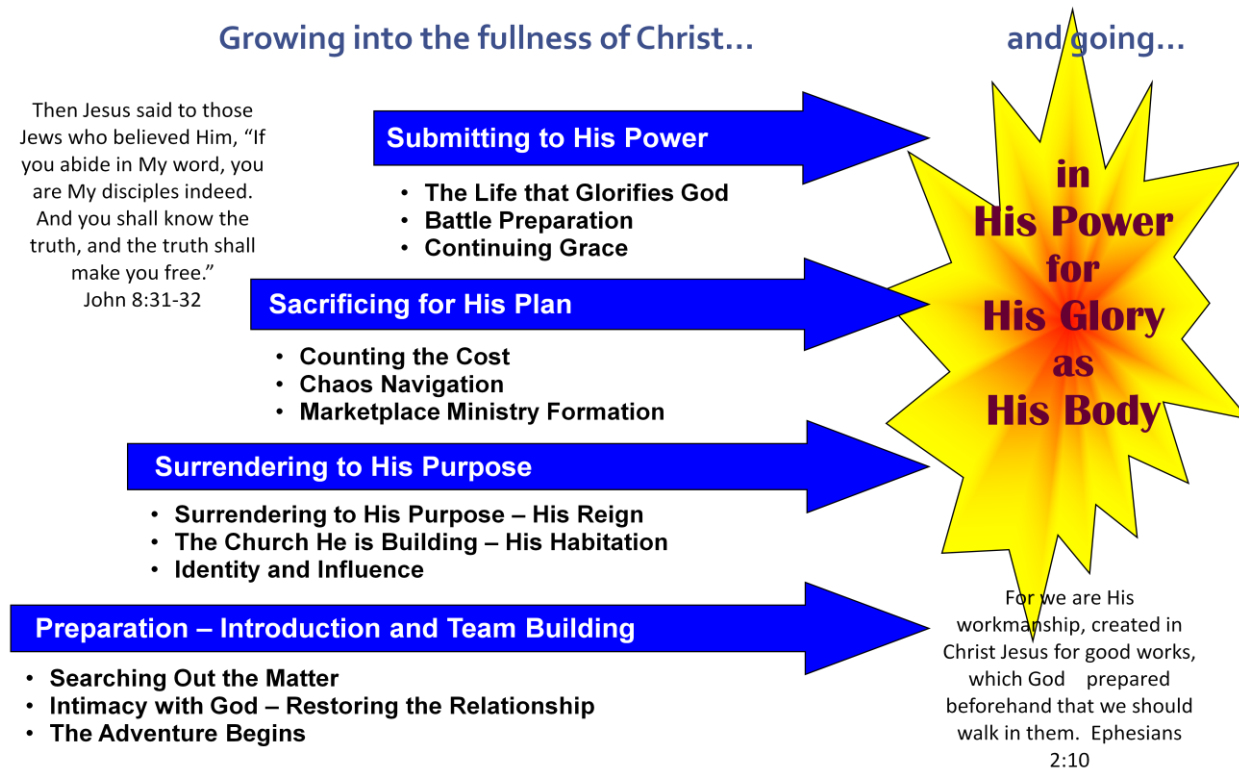
But he who endures to the end shall be saved. Matthew 24:13

As followers of Jesus Christ, we “have been saved”, “are being saved” and “shall be saved”. It is a wonderful adventure!!

The Adventure Begins (continued)

Curriculum

Finding joyful Spirit-filled ministry requires surrender, sacrifice and submission. The result is God's glory; in and through the work.



The curriculum God has given us to explore the transforming, disciple-making adventure follows the steps for discovering joyful, Spirit-filled ministry. Our fervent prayer is that we will find His purpose, plan and power for this season of our lives; and ministry that will lead to God's glory and the furtherance of His Kingdom.

The following is a brief description of each module (we have completed the first three):

1. Searching Out the Matter: It is the glory of kings to search out a matter. We have been given the invitation, privilege and command to be stewards of the mysteries of God. Therefore, we will search them out in community; and the truth will make us free – from fear, doubt, deception, etc. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. The Holy Spirit will be our teacher.
2. Intimacy with God: Restoring the relationship we lost in the Fall requires a renewed perspective on the discipline of prayer. Loving Him requires knowing Him. How do we hear? Can we hear without first entering into His presence? How do we do that? Can we hear if we don't have ears to hear? How do we get them? If I have them, can I neglect to use them? What if I am doing all the talking?
3. The Adventure Begins: We will take a more in-depth look at the transformation process, and its relationship with the other processes of man's redemption – salvation, sanctification, belief. We will review the syllabus – designed for finding joyful, Spirit-filled ministry – and the outline/expectations for each session.
4. Surrendering to His Purpose: The ultimate purposes of God go far beyond the salvation of man. He fully intends to restore all that was lost in our Fall: relationship, habitation and reign. This is fully

The Adventure Begins (continued)

accomplished at the end of the story (i.e., The Revelation of Jesus Christ). In the meantime, God has placed desires in our hearts that He intends to give us (Psalm 37:4). As we become soft towards Him, these desires become His purposes. Becoming soft (i.e., surrendering) is easier when we understand the Gospel of the Kingdom, its place in the Story, and our place in it.

5. The Church He is Building: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit desire a habitation that is none other than the church – also mysteriously described as the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. Jesus has been praying for the unity of His Body, having left command to love one another. His vision for our fellowship is clearly laid out in Ephesians 4, and modeled in Acts 2. Our exploration into these truths will establish a foundation for the next session.
6. Identity and Influence: Every Marketplace Leader is a gift to the church for this season. We will seek to understand and embrace our identity within the spheres of influence we have been given. This is critical if we are to fully enjoy God’s purpose for our lives. We will also explore the concept of servant leadership in the hierarchy and functions God has ordained.
7. Sacrificing for the Plan: From the world’s perspective, the cost of discipleship is a high price to pay. We will face the challenge head on – counting the cost of the call. Much of the victory is receiving the truth that will destroy the deceptions of our enemies – satan, the world and our flesh.
8. Navigating the Chaos of Transformation: Why do people fear change? Because every transformation includes a period of chaos. This is a natural component (a relief in itself to many) of God’s work in transforming us into His Son’s image. It is encouraging to know that it has value. We will explore the ways God would have us navigate the chaos to His and our advantage.
9. Marketplace Ministry Formation: In this session, we will rediscover God’s way for ministry (i.e., making disciples). In the process, the group will learn the keys for implementing Marketplace Ministry in their fellowships and in workplace settings.
10. The Life that Glorifies Our Father in Heaven (Part 1): Through an exploration of the mystery of glory, we will discover the life that all followers of Jesus Christ are empowered to live. We will begin by studying the life of Christ – how He walked out the life that glorified His Father.
11. The Life that Glorifies Our Father in Heaven (Part 2): Now that we know how Jesus did it, we can apply this to our walk. We will discover that He is not asking us to do anything that He did not do – in the same way that He did it. Abiding in Him, and exchanging our lives for His, is the only way we can become His disciples – and effectively disciple others.
12. Battle Preparation: Most serious followers of Jesus Christ recognize that there is a fierce battle being waged for the souls of men, women and children. This module provides a great encouragement in regards to the battle preparation that has already been accomplished, as well as the weapons that have been provided. The leaders’ responsibility is to carry the truth and faith of this into battle, so that others will be encouraged.
13. Continuing Grace: This session will be used to wrap up what has been learned, to cover anything the Lord has in mind, and to establish next steps for those that will be starting Marketplace Ministries.

The Adventure Begins (continued)

Assignment

1. Review the Bible passages for this week. Study and meditate on those that may have challenged your understanding. Ask the Lord to give meaning to them for you.
2. The Greek word for transformed (2 Corinthians 3:18) and transfigured (Matthew 17:2) are the same. What does this tell you about God's purpose for your life?
3. The Hebrew word for delight in Psalm 37:4 means "to be soft" – like clay in the potter's hands. How does this affect your understanding of the verse?