

3 Layers of Life Changing Transformation

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The power of the Gospel is transformative in nature. *“Transformative: causing or able to cause an important and lasting change in someone or something.”* With that being true, why is it so challenging to see the change we pray for and desire?

In his very first acts of ministry, Jesus unleashed the power of transformation. Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons. However, very few encounters were the same. In fact, he said about some demons, “these only come out by fasting and prayer.”

Some transformation or change is more difficult than others. Change, in general, is resisted, some more aggressively than others. In Jesus’ ministry, some situations were particularly difficult; other times, Jesus was frustrated with his disciples – his leaders, because of their lack of faith.

It’s not so different today. At times it is us who are not ready to lead the change of transformation even though the spiritual power is available; other times, it’s just a really tough situation to resolve.

The transformation involved in life change is not easy, but it’s what we give our lives for as leaders. So much of ministry is consumed with the busyness of everyday leadership; therefore, it’s important to watch for and create moments conducive to transformation. We “watch for” what God is doing, and help “create” moments where God can intervene.

Let’s go back to the big question. If we have access to the transformative power of the Gospel, why is change often so difficult? Let me offer one reason inside the church.

When we jump over the first two layers of transformation in an attempt to transform culture for Christ, that subdues supernatural power into a mere program. That rarely works.

There are three layers of transformation that, if operating together, the results are exponentially more effective.

3 Layers of Life Changing Transformation:

1) Personal Transformation

Changing your community and changing your world starts with you. It’s easy to get so busy that the transforming nature of the Gospel is no longer true in your life as the leader. I’ve been there. Same prayers, same problems, just kind of stuck.

You love God, and you're going to heaven, but you've stopped growing. You're doing the same things with the same people over and over again. That cycle is a great way to become exhausted.

When you get that tired for that reason, there is no margin left to invest in your continued growth. There is no space to allow the work of God to continue your transformation to become the person God designed you to be.

Don't settle for comfort or getting stuck spiritually.

- *It starts with desire* – Are you in a place where your hunger is high enough to make room for continued growth and change?
- *It's activated by invitation* – Desire alone is not enough. It's important that you invite God in, tell Him what you need to breakthrough, and keep growing.
- *It's experienced by action* – What is it that you need to do? Who can you talk with? What is your simple and doable plan? You likely know what change you need to make, and you may even know how to do it, so take the first step.

3) Organizational Transformation

It's usually true that if the leader is growing, the organization is also changing and growing to best realize the mission in transforming culture. There are difficult circumstances that can prevent that principle from being true, but those circumstances are usually (hopefully) short-lived.

Healthy and growing leaders don't tolerate unhealthy and stagnant organizations. That doesn't mean it's easy to lead that transformation, but the healthy leader never allows the process to stop because organizational health is fluid, not stagnant.

If you're the senior pastor, that principle can be related to your whole church or businessman, or a volunteer leader of a small group. It's about the organizational scope of your influence.

A) Is your staff culture changing in healthy ways?

Every time a staff member joins your team or leaves the team, your culture changes just a little. It takes consistent and intentional effort to create the staff culture you want. Start with values like trust, honesty, grace, and dependability.

B) Are you organizationally productive?

Do you sense a connection between the natural and supernatural? Are your

structures and systems measurably connected to the life-giving, life-changing (transformative) nature of God?

C) Can you sense and see the presence and power of Jesus in your organization?

There are many ways you can see the power of God's transformation organizationally, but one classic is that your ministry results are greater than your leadership efforts

4) Cultural Transformation.

When personal transformation is active among the leaders and organizational transformation is sought after and natural, your efforts to transform culture are much more likely to succeed. The vision of every church is different, but the primary purpose is the same, to reach people with the transforming power of Jesus.

How you impact and redeem culture in your community is best left to your prayer and discernment. Intentionality is required. While there are many options to impact culture and see positive change, you can't do them all. Don't try. Figure out what God wants your church to engage.

A) Start with the needs, not your programs.

A common mistake of the church is to pursue the transformation of current culture by offering its programs without first asking what the community needs. Start there!

B) Think partnerships, not ownership.

When you engage culture out in the community, it's there that you have the greatest impact. You don't need to start new ministries that you own, partner with existing endeavors. Create transformation together.

C) Jesus is always the bottom line.

As you continually engage transformation at all three levels, Jesus is the one who actually makes it all possible.