

A photograph of a wooden boat on the water, with a red life preserver on the roof and a red cloth on the deck. The boat is made of weathered wood and has several ropes and a metal ring on the deck. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some white clouds. In the distance, there are several large, dark, rocky islands or mountains. The overall scene is one of a tropical or coastal environment.

THE TRANSFORMATIONAL ADVENTURE

STUDY GUIDE

BY ALAN & INDA WILLIAMS
WITH KERI WYATT KENT

Copyright © 2016 by Alan and Inda Williams
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Copyright and use of the curriculum template is retained by Keri Wyatt Kent and A Powerful Story.

Scripture marked (NKJV) taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations (marked (NASB) taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®, Copyright © 1960,1962,1963,1968,1971,1972,1973,1975,1977,1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.”

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) taken from THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations marked (The Message) taken from The Message. Copyright © 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of NavPress Publishing Group.

Scripture quotations marked (NLT) are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

ISBN

Printed in the United States of America



THE TRANSFORMATIONAL ADVENTURE

STUDY GUIDE

CONTENTS

SESSION ONE:

Salvation: The Wake-Up Call of a Lifetime

SESSION TWO:

Brokenness: A Death Sentence That Brought Life

SESSION THREE:

Restoration: Pain That Brought Healing

SESSION FOUR:

Power: An Anchor in the Storm

SESSION FIVE:

Forgiveness: Love That Changes Everything

SESSION SIX:

Grace: The Power to Turn It All Around

SESSION SEVEN:

Hope: Worthy of Purpose

WELCOME TO THE ADVENTURE

Something within us longs for adventure, yearns to be part of something bigger than ourselves. We have this feeling that life should offer more than what our ordinary days provide. Some will try to fulfill that longing by scaling mountains, running marathons, or climbing the career ladder.

Mountain climbing is exhilarating. Business success can be exciting. But our longing for adventure can never be met by engaging in extreme sports or amassing wealth—or just dreaming about those things. Why? Because we were made to live an adventure that happens only when we follow Jesus—when we take risks not for the adrenaline rush they offer, but because of the eternal consequences they impact. I have lived in both spaces, and the latter is so much more adventurous!

The life of faith is not for the faint of heart. We mistakenly believe it's tame, but faith is only boring when we keep it safe and convenient for ourselves and the people around us. In reality, faith is the ultimate adventure!

The study in your hands is a challenge to change. To find a path of faith, and discover the life that is truly life. A more abundant life! Whether you are just beginning your spiritual journey or you've been walking with God for years, this study is for you. It's an invitation to transformation, to a deeper, more meaningful, walk of faith.

In almost anything in life (sports, business, relationships) you get out of something what you're willing to put into it. Just show up for work and put in your time, and you probably won't experience accelerated career advancement. Go to the gym and do some

mild exercise in between chats with friends, and you may not see much change in your fitness level. Give your spouse, kids, or friends the leftovers of your time and energy, and you probably won't find the love and support you need and want. In fact, you might even end up lonely.

But the opposite is true as well: go all in, and you'll get a lot out.

The same is true for this study. Over the next seven lessons, you're going to learn a lot—if you're willing to engage. Don't worry, you don't need to be an expert. In fact, it's better if you can humbly admit you're not one. Just bring enthusiasm and a willingness to learn, and ask God to teach you.

These studies correspond to the videos at www.transformationaladventure.com. They are also meant to supplement the books in the Transformational Adventure series, which are available on the website (and on Amazon) as well.

Here are some simple recommendations and a bit of an overview about what to expect in each lesson.

Before each study, read over the lesson, to familiarize yourself with the Scriptures and the questions. You don't need to do "homework" and write out your answers before the meeting, because part of what you'll be discussing will be presented via video at the meeting. But knowing what to expect will give you time to reflect and pray prior to the meeting. If you like, you can look up the Bible passages in other translations to compare them. (You can find about 40 different English translations on www.biblegateway.com or similar sites.)

Each lesson consists of the following components:

OPEN: These open-ended questions may feel light or simple, but they provide an opportunity for everyone to "warm up" to the discussion and get comfortable. During this part of the meeting, focus on listening carefully to other group members in order to get to know them better. You don't have to have every person answer every question. Let everyone share (or not) at the level that feels comfortable to them.

LISTEN: Here, you will watch the video for the session, which can be found at www.TransformationalAdventure.com.

NOTES: This page provides space for you to take notes on what you hear and see in the video. Jot down ideas that strike you or questions that come to mind as you watch. What key ideas do you want to remember? What questions come up as you watch and listen? Each video includes three revelations or key points. These are listed in the notes section with some keywords left out so you can fill in the blanks as you listen and see them on the screen. (If you need the full text of each revelation, you may find that in the appendix.) Refer to your notes as you discuss the video and Scriptures with your group.

READ: This section is simply a passage or two of Scripture related to the topic of the lesson. You'll have one person read it aloud, or you can ask several people to read, each reading just a few sentences. Feel free to underline words or phrases that stand out to you, or jot notes in the margins as you read together.

RESPOND: This section allows you to learn by talking it over—and by listening to the insights of other group members. This should make up the bulk of your meeting time. Allow plenty of time—we recommend at least 45 minutes—to discuss the

questions. If your group is larger than 7 or 8, you might want to divide into two smaller groups for this part of the meeting, just to give everyone adequate time to share. Doing this will allow you to go deeper in your discussion of the teaching and storytelling, dig into the Scripture you just read, and explore and wrestle with how to live out what you're learning. Again, there's no pressure. **Every person does not need to answer every question**—whoever would like to speak may do so, but you always have the right to "pass" on a question. Share as much of your story as feels safe. (Early on, it would be a good idea to agree, out loud, to confidentiality—what is shared in the group, stays in the group.) Strive to make other group members feel comfortable by listening to them with empathy and compassion. Resist the urge to "fix" each other! Instead, receive each other with compassion, and respect each person's perspective.

DIVE DEEPER: This optional section is for those who would like to study more of what the Bible says about each lesson's topic, to dive a little deeper into God's word. Optimally, you'd take the time between meetings to work through this section a little at a time. This section is for individual study and journaling, not necessarily group discussion. Some groups choose to allot a few minutes at the beginning of each meeting for people to share what they've learned during individual study time.

RESOURCES: Here, you'll find some Bible commentary, footnotes and a deeper look at the Scriptures and their context. This section will help you understand and apply the Bible verses in the lesson.

ACTION STEP: These are suggested steps that you can take to learn more or live out what you've learned. These will challenge you not just to think about an adventure, but actually take steps to begin one. This is the most important part of transformation: putting what you learn into action.



SALVATION

THE WAKE UP CALL OF A LIFETIME

[1]

A wake-up call: that moment, that event, maybe an actual phone call, that changes everything. Most of us would say we've had at least one pivotal moment like that in our lives. The question is, does that call—that turning point, that decision—actually wake us up? Does it get our attention, turn us in a new direction? Or do we just keep on with business as usual?

(Romans 10:9-11, NIV)

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”

Many of us are taught our whole lives to compete, to push through pain, to just try harder when things get difficult. But what if God wanted to speak to us through our pain? What if he wanted to use our challenges to bring us into closer relationship with himself? What if we responded to life's wake up calls by actually waking up, by responding to God's invitation to live with meaning and purpose beyond our own success?

OPEN

◆ *Is there something you have seen in the news or an incident that happened to you or a friend, that has made you second-guess justice in America?*



◆ *Tell about a time when you felt you were unfairly punished by a parent, teacher, or boss.*



◆ *What happened? How did that feel?*



WATCH VIDEO



WATCH THE VIDEO FOR THIS SESSION NOW.
ACCESS THE VIDEO AT: TRANSFORMATIONALADVENTURE.COM/HEART

SESSION NOTES

- 1. Acting _____ does not make you a _____ .
- 2. Thinking is not _____ .
- 3. Feeling _____ often means we're _____ .

READ

Ephesians 2:1-10, NASB //

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, ² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. ³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. ⁴ But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), ⁶ and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; ⁹ not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. ¹⁰ For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.



Before I came to faith with Jesus in my heart, a friend and mentor of mine quoted Ephesians 2:8-9 to me numerous times, trying to help me really understand grace, but I didn't "get it." I acted as if I had received Jesus in my heart, but I really hadn't. I was going through the motions, fooling everyone including myself. Then, at age 43, I realized that I might understand them on a surface level in my mind, but did not understand them, not in my heart. And the depth of these verses are bottomless, unending, limitless....Ironically, when I finally understood them, I realized no one can ever fully understand the depth of these verses. -Alan Williams

//



RESPOND

◆ Read carefully through the passage from Ephesians again. What does this text say God has done for us? Go through and underline things God has done for us. As a group, make a list of those things you find in this passage. Which of these do you find most surprising? Briefly explain.

◆ What do you think it means to be “saved by grace through faith” (vs. 8-9)? Use the context around this verse to help you determine its meaning.

◆ In the video, you heard Alan describe himself as being “lukewarm” before he fully opened his heart to God, even though he went to church and read his Bible. What does a person with lukewarm faith look like? In what ways might they appear to be a Christian or at least a “good person”? What are that person’s chances of going to heaven, do you think?

◆ In the video, Alan talked about realizing that Satan is real. What does this passage say about Satan and his influence?

◆ What is the difference between thinking something is true “with your head,” and believing in someone completely with your heart?

◆ Alan’s heart surgery was a “wake-up call” to live and believe differently. Tell about a time you experienced a “wake-up call” in life. What happened? Identify one specific thing you changed as a result?

DIVE DEEPER

(This section is for personal study between meetings.)

“But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...”

Romans 3:21-24
NKJV

- ◆ *When we have faith to believe in Jesus, what does this passage tell us that God gives us?*

- ◆ *What does it mean to “fall short of the glory of God”? According to Romans 3, who falls short? What do you think it means to be “justified freely”? How can we be justified in God’s eyes?*



“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
NKJV

◆ *What motivates God, according to this verse?*

◆ *What promise do you find in this verse?*

◆ *How would you describe the difference between thinking that Jesus is the way to eternal life, and actually believing in Jesus? Which of these most accurately describes your current relationship with Jesus?*





Say the welcoming word to God—“Jesus is my Master”—embracing, body and soul, God’s work of doing in us what he did in raising Jesus from the dead. That’s it. You’re not “doing” anything; you’re simply calling out to God, trusting him to do it for you. That’s salvation. With your whole being you embrace God setting things right, and then you say it, right out loud: “God has set everything right between him and me!”

Romans 10:9-11
The Message

◆ *What does it mean to embrace God with your whole being?*

◆ *What is the difference between thinking God is real and saying “Jesus is my Master”? How would declaring Jesus as your Master change your current attitudes and actions?*

◆ *What do you think it means to “call out to God, trusting him to do it for you”?*





THE WALKING DEAD

Ephesians 2:1, 5

Paul writes about “being dead” in our sins, even though we’re alive physically. While it might seem like metaphorical language, Paul is pointing toward an important truth about us: we are not just physical beings, but spiritual ones as well, and without Jesus, we are spiritually dead.

We can seem very alive; we can even go through the motions of acting like a religious person—to the point where we even fool ourselves! But what brings us to life, spiritually, is not our own efforts at good behavior, but trusting Christ alone with our whole lives.



RESOURCES

THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR

Ephesians 2:2

Again, Paul writes about a spiritual reality: Satan is real. He influences us, whispers lies, tries to confuse us. Satan does not necessarily want us to go out and do awful things. He’d rather confuse and deceive us and make us think we have a pretty good chance of getting into heaven, because we’re pretty good. He’d rather deceive us into thinking our religious words and pious actions will make us right with God, He would have us embrace complacency, as we practice a comfortable and convenient religion. The truth is, that lie keeps us from really knowing God—which is exactly what Satan wants. Where do you see the “ruler of the air” attempting to exert influence and authority in your life?

BELIEVE IN HIM

John 3:16

In our culture and language, we tend to understand “thinking” and “believing” are the same. We use the word believe as a general attitude, thought, and even wishful thinking. It is commonly misunderstood. For example:

- *I believe I will get a good job.*
- *I believe I will be rich.*
- *I believe I will win a championship.*
- *I believe I will go to heaven.*
- *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who died for my sins and rose from the dead.*



As an English-speaking nation, we can easily swap out the word believe with think in the sentences above. I think I will be rich. I think I will win a championship. And yes...I think I will go to heaven.

The word in our Bible translated “believe” is the Greek word pisteuo which means an “absolute belief or confidence in certain divine truths.” It goes far beyond just thinking something is true. An absolute is something you have a surety about. You know it will come to be, like a warranty or guarantee.

John 3:16 does not say, “whoever believes Him” (in other words, believes what He says is the truth). Rather, it says, “whoever believes IN Him.” True, saving faith requires us to trust in Jesus, not in ourselves. Belief goes beyond intellectual understanding of Jesus, to an intimate relationship with Jesus. A relationship that is more certain than the ones you have with your spouse, children, relatives, or friends. A relationship where you know that you know that you know . . . and He knows you!





ACTION STEPS



The passage we studied reminds us that “God is rich in mercy.” Between now and the next session, during your time with God, list some specific ways in which God has shown you mercy.

Then, try this experiment: each day, choose to show mercy to someone you interact with. It might be a co-worker, your spouse, your kids, or a random stranger

(maybe the guy who cuts you off in traffic). Instead of revenge or competition or even giving someone what they deserve, choose mercy. Make this a daily habit—live a life of mercy that reflects God’s mercy to you.

Report back to the group on how this goes. What happens? How does this experiment impact your relationship with God? With other people?



