

Personal Transformation Experiment



Most of us get to a point in life where our normal patterns of thinking and being aren't working and we feel stuck. We may experience this as separation from God or from the self and as frustrations in our relationships. This isn't just about behavior, but what drives us towards certain actions: our intentions and habitual ways of thinking and doing life. We've believed things that are not true and these lies distort our perceptions of reality. These patterns begin to take shape early in life. Jesus shows us another way of being and points to a reality called the Kingdom of God. You are invited to design and practice your own 21-day personal transformation experiment through the Vision, Intention and Means model based on the work of Dallas Willard.

V-I-M The Vision, Intention, and Means of Spiritual Formation

Vision-The Why?

Jesus came announcing, manifesting and teaching the availability and nature of the Kingdom of God. Experiencing this life in the Kingdom begins with vision and desire. It's a picture of life as we were created to experience it. Jesus often asked people, "What do you want me to do for you?". What reality do you want Jesus to enter into and change? What do you long to be true? For example, if you are experiencing anxiety, your picture of life in the Kingdom is to not experience anxiety but rather peace and security.

Intention-The What?

Intention is brought to completion only by a decision to fulfill or carry through with the intention. Basically, are you going to commit to the vision of the Kingdom you seek to experience? Do you really want to live under the will of God? Do you trust that transformation is possible? Getting beyond the reach of our will, to transforming our hearts and minds and becoming different people from the inside out, requires direct participation with the Holy Spirit. Wanting to be different is not enough. We actually need to decide to commit to the vision and the means we plan to cultivate.

Means-The How?

The means are the practices that make space for us to engage with God. We need to arrange the rhythms of our lives to make space for a real connection that feeds our soul and changes our minds and hearts. Over the centuries certain practices have emerged that open up a space for engaging with God. Our part is to slow down and create the environment for listening to Holy Spirit. God's part is giving us the words of truth and life that penetrate deep into our soul. Spiritual practices, such as Scripture reading, meditation, sabbath, solitude, prayer, exercise, rest, community, discernment, etc. do not change us, rather they cultivate the connection we seek with our Creator.

Designing a personal transformation experiment:

A GOOD EXPERIMENT:

- Is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound and avoids ambiguity
- Requires intensity and daily consistency (daily, or 5-6 times week will yield more results than 1-2 times a week)
- Includes both abstinence and engagement (What will you stop? What will you start as a healthy alternative?)
- Corresponds to a positive vision of what is possible (Life in the kingdom of God)
- Is taken as a serious promise and does not allow for exception or compromise.

Experiments and practices are not an end in themselves. They are useful if they help you move towards your goals – e.g. to be more open to God and available to love others.

21-Day Experiment



1. Where do you feel stuck? What's not working?
2. What are the false scripts and fears that might underlie this pattern?
3. What is the good reality and vision of life in the kingdom that you are invited into?
4. What new mind, body and relationship habits are you going to say "yes" and "no" to for 21 days?
5. Why are you making this change? How does it help you live in the reality that Jesus modeled and taught?
6. How you plan to track and record your progress?

Seeking to live in greater cooperation with the Spirit, I commit myself to the experimental path of action detailed above.

Signature:

Date:

Accountability Partner signature:

Sample 21-Day Personal Transformation Experiment

1. Where do you feel stuck? What's not working?

Living in posture of scarcity rather than abundance which creates some anxiety in my spirit around relationships, finances.

2. What are the false scripts and fears that might underlie this pattern?

Fears that resources are limited rather than overflowing. Fear that if I don't protect my time/energy I won't have enough when I really need it.

3. What is the good reality and vision of life in the kingdom that you are invited into?

I'm being invited into abundant life spiritually that is free from worry and invited to love others through faithful presence by exercising more trust in God rather than in self-reliance (Matt 6:25-34, Philippians 4:6).

4. What new mind, body and relationship habits are you going to say "yes" and "no" to for 21 days?

Mind:

Scripture before Screen: meditate on passages above in morning.

Daily Gratitude practice (remember God's faithful provisions)-reflect and write something down each morning that's evidence of God's abundant provision

Body: spontaneous gifting of cash resources to people in need (goal of \$75)

Relationships:

Make myself more emotionally available to wife and kids by having intention of being more fully present to their needs each day by either responding more quickly to a need I see or by asking the question (what can I do for you today?)

No to scrolling social media

5. Why are you making this change? How does it help you live in the reality that Jesus modeled and taught?

To live in more freedom in my mind and to be more generous/present with time/attention to those around me

6. How you plan to track and record your progress?

- Use journal to record each day that I did scripture before screen and wrote something I was grateful for or was evidence of God's provision that day
- Before bed, make note in my journal of how present/responsive I was to needs of family
- List ways \$75 was gifted out