

# different

## Week 1: Don't Conform, Transform

Pray: In your own words, ask God to transform you during this journey.

Culture: it's all around us. It influences us. We swim in it every day. Yet to follow Jesus, we often feel we are swimming upstream. Some things in the culture bless us. Sometimes it tempts us to turn away from God. We can't avoid our culture. So how do we live IN it but not be OF it?

Read: Daniel 1:1-21

Watch: "Makeover"

Reflect

1. Share with your group a fad you once thought fashionable but now think is kind of foolish. Why did you embrace it? What changed your mind?
2. What influences in the past or present mold you into who you are? Which of these do you feel are good influences? Which are harmful? Could any fit in both categories?
3. Imagine you are Daniel – young, captive, separated from home, family and religion, elevated to a position of power. How would you feel? How might you be tempted to conform?
4. Daniel complied with some requirements – new name, learned the language, submitted to training - and resisted others – eating the king's food and wine. Why did he make this distinction? How do you know where to draw the line between following the culture and following God? Give an example.
5. Paul writes, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). The world tries to squeeze you into its mold but God releases and transforms you like a butterfly breaking out of a cocoon. Paul says this change begins by thinking differently. Are there ways you think differently today (about your life, the world, God) than you did before you followed Jesus?

Steps:

If God transforms you, you'll be different than you were, different than the world. How do you feel about this?

Share a current situation where you feel God is urging you to step out and be different. Is something getting in your way? How can you overcome these fears or obstacles?

Share with your group one step of faith that will help you think different this week. Ask one person to hold you accountable to this step. Examples:

- A. Take a digital Sabbath – shut off your devices and TV and take a holiday from the internet. Spend time reading Scripture and praying and strengthening your relationships with God and others
- B. Clean out your closet of old clothes or items and drop them off at a thrift store. Think about how and why your tastes have changed. How is God changing your thinking?
- C. Create an action item of your own.

Pray: As you pray, picture Jesus breaking you out of your old patterns and making you new. Praise God for His gift of freedom.