

# ALIGN\_\_2

## Embrace God's Best For Your Life

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-make you so that your whole attitude of mind is changed. Then you will prove in practice that the will of God is good, acceptable to him and perfect.  
- Romans 12:2

Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness.  
- 1 Timothy 4:7

Are you developing or deteriorating? You are always changing for better or worse. This happens physically, and although it's less obvious, spiritually as well. As a Christ-follower you cannot change yourself spiritually (alone), but you are commanded to put yourself in a position to be changed. Spiritual growth requires separation from the world's way of thinking (keep in mind there's a difference between *conformity* with the world and *isolation* from it). And as you allow your life to be transformed by spiritual truth, "...you will learn from your own experience how God's ways will really satisfy you" (Romans 12:2, Living Bible).

### Welcome

In what way are you most like each parent?

### Word

1. Share a decision or two that have significantly shaped your life. What was the deep held belief behind each decision?
2. Respond to the following statement: "*Our lives aren't so much the result of circumstances as the result of decisions—and our decisions are shaped by what we believe.*" If, for the most part, you agree with the statement, what are its implications?

#### Read Romans 12:1-2

3. Verse two speaks of our relationship with *the world* (separated), and provides a natural corollary to verse 1, which speaks of our relationship to *God* (surrendered). The grammatical structure of verse 2 is *passive*, and yet at the same time involves a command: "stop *allowing yourselves* to be conformed...but *allow yourselves* to be transformed." In what way is spiritual growth (transformation) a "joint" effort? How does the imagery of sailing as opposed to piloting a motor boat help illustrate what's involved? Do any other illustrations come to mind?
4. On a scale of 1 (never) to 5 (always), how often do you consciously think about "being squeezed into the world's mold" on a daily basis? Personally speaking, what *influences* and *pressures* affect you the most?
5. What fears, preoccupations, beliefs, or attitudes are holding you back from giving God what He wants most in your life? According to this passage, God transforms us as we continually refocus our minds on spiritual truth. What practices have helped you most in nurturing a new way of thinking?

### Works

Would you say that you are training to become more like Jesus, or merely trying to be more like Jesus? What's the difference? How would the Lord have you respond to the study and discussion tonight?

### Worship

Reinforce the focus of your study and discussion through praise and prayer. "Change My Heart, O God" (692), "Thy Word" (449), "Have Thine Own Way, Lord" (552).