Small Group Questions:

The Heart’s Welcome Mat: Why emotional honesty is necessary for spiritual transformation

1. What do the following texts have to say about the end result (goal, telos, grand purpose) of ***spiritual formation***?

* *And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Corinthians+3%3A18&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28860a" \o "See footnote a)] the Lord’s glory, are being* ***transformed into his image****with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. (2 Cor. 3:18)*
* *…until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the* ***whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*** *(Eph. 4:13)*
* *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices****10****and have put on the new self, which is being* ***renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator***. (Col 3:9-10)

2. Discuss what “the image of Christ” would actually look like for you, in your life? Or… knowing the kind of person you are, how would greater conformity to “the image of Christ” change the way you presently live?

3. In light of the metaphor of us being like an iceberg, with the vast majority of our life consisting of what’s below the water line, unseen by others, how does emotional honesty play a role in our spiritual formation? The paragraph from my sermon may help stimulate discussion:

*“Prayer is a conversation between my real self (below the surface) and the real God”. Spiritual formation demands the truth. Jesus said, “The Father is searching for worshippers who worship in spirit and in truth”. Truth (Aletheia) here is translated “disclosure”, unconcealedness”, or the “state of not being hidden”. The Psalmist put it this way, “Deep calls to deep”, or “cleanse me from my hidden faults”. David prayed, “Search me O God and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me…”*

4. What commonly holds us back from engaging with God and others at a heart level where our deepest fears, insecurities, and failures live? What’s the solution to this?

5. Honest disclosure of our inner life to God leads to the possibility of transformation. However, God will call us to “the obedience of faith” in the process of transformation. For example, see the graph below. Observe how God will call us to an action (in bold) that corresponds to the emotion. How has this been your experience in your own sanctification process?

Guilt “I owe you” **Confess**

Anger “You owe me” **Forgive**

Greed “I owe me” **Give**

Jealousy “Life owes me” **Gratitude**