



AUGUST 1 - 29

WINNING

THE WAR IN YOUR MIND

2. “TAKE YOUR MIND BACK”

ICEBREAKER



If this is a new group or there are new people, please take a moment to **introduce yourselves**.

To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following questions:

Do you consider yourself to be a “techie” ?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT

Let’s get a big picture of what we’ll be learning today...



Whether you know your way around a computer hard drive or can barely operate a TV remote, we can all appreciate what happens to any of our electronics when the wires get crossed. The same thing can happen in our minds as well. Ever wonder why you do and don’t do some things that you wish you wouldn’t do? Our mind is a battlefield and because of that, every thought matters. Our life is always moving in the direction of our strongest thoughts. It’s time to take our mind back! In this week’s small group session, we’re going to learn some practical tools that are helpful in winning the war in your mind.

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: MAKE GROUP A PRIORITY. Communicate in advance when you will be unable to attend by either calling and/or texting your host or responding to the zoom email invitation by accepting or declining. This will help your host to plan accordingly especially if it is an in person small group gathering.

Tip: IN PERSON GATHERING. Per State current requirements, please observe the following if your group decides to meet in person: No more than 25 people gathering indoors at this time. This may change based on what Tier we are currently at in the State of Hawaii; wear a mask; and maintain 6 feet social distance.

ONLINE Tip: ZOOM (ONLINE) GATHERING. If you're meeting together on Zoom, familiarize yourself with the Zoom features on your electronic device. It is helpful for everyone to know where the mute button is located. Ask the attendees to self-mute to avoid environmental noise when someone else is talking & sharing. Doing this will help with the flow of your SG discussion time.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1.) Our brains are full of neural pathways. From the very day we were born, our brains have been sending signals back and forth and building these pathways. They affect our actions, behaviors and habits. We learn to walk, speak, and even eat because of neural pathways. There are moments, however, when we mess our lives up. We behave irrationally. We engage in the wrong pattern of thinking. The more negative thoughts you have, the more broken the neural pathways you'll create.

The bottom line is this: **If you can't control what you think, you'll never control what you do.** That's because your behaviors will follow your thoughts. As a follower of Christ, you have to remember that you have spiritual weapons that are able to demolish strongholds. What is a stronghold? It's a wrong pattern of thinking. The output of these wrong patterns of thinking can be downright devastating. Yet, if your dominant thinking is on truth, the output will be life-giving.

What can we do? There is some help! Take a look at this passage.

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. Romans 12:2 (NLT)

What are some things that we can copy and paste from the world and into our mind that cause toxic and wrong patterns of thinking? In other words, what top wrong mindset (stronghold) is holding you hostage? (Ex. Sin is no big deal, guilt over a past mistake, I'll never get out of debt, I can't overcome this addiction, I'll never be healthy, I'm never going to be close to God, I'm never going to have a meaningful job, I'm never going to get married, I'm never going to have children of my own, consumed with worry, etc.)

2.) The way you can change your mind is by laying down new neural pathways. How do we do this? One word: Meditation.

That may sound sort of spooky, let's be honest. But we are not talking about the type of meditation that certain New Age beliefs practice. Instead, we're talking about the meditation that the Bible prescribes.

Meditation means to engage in mental exercise, not disengage. It's not about emptying your mind but filling it with something positive and life-giving. The Bible tells us to meditate on God's word. It's focusing your thoughts on something, or someone. Take a look at this verse:

*And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts...
Philippians 4:8 (NLT)*

That word "fix" means to stick or stay connected. But in a way, it also means to fix. In other words, if you want to "fix" your mind, then "fix" your thoughts on God! We do that by meditating (focusing) on Him. Our minds need to focus on Jesus' examples. This means renewing our minds by reading, reviewing and remembering God's truths found in scripture. By remembering and reviewing who God is and what He's done in your life.

Have you ever spent time just meditating on God's Word? What were some of the obstacles you faced? What are some of the benefits you got from it? If you haven't, what's holding you back?

So if we can “fix” our mind by “fixing” our thoughts, what do we need to fix them on? Let’s keep reading:

...Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

Philippians 4:8 (NLT)

If you want to experience more of God’s peace, fix your mind on these various types of thoughts:

True - *Thoughts that conform to God’s Word*

Honorable - *Thoughts worth mentioning but not ones that bring you shame*

Right - *Thoughts that are unselfish; looking to the needs of others and ending quarreling; thoughts that promote peace*

Pure - *Thoughts that are clean and not contaminated by evil; without a stain of sin*

Lovely - *Thoughts that bring people together in peace rather than separating them in fighting and feuding*

Admirable - *Thoughts that are carefully evaluated that ultimately lead to fearing the Lord*

Excellent - *Thoughts, feelings and actions of moral excellence*

Worthy Of Praise - *Thoughts that lead you to think of things that are worthy to praise God for*

Pick one of these categories of thoughts that you’d like to fix your mind on this week. Share with the group what category.

3.) Now that you've got some things to think about, let's come up with a simple way to continually build those pathways that produce good and healthy results. Take a look at this pattern:

Write It: *List a scripture*

Think It: *Review it over and over*

Confess It: *Say it out loud*

Believe It: *Choose to believe it even if you have some doubts*

First, you need to **write it down**. Last week we talked about coming up with a truth that demolishes the negative thoughts in our head. Write it down! But it's not good to just write, you need to **think about it**. Next, make it really stick by **confessing it** out loud to yourself. Go ahead. It may feel funny, but it will work! Finally, you'll start to **believe it**.

Why do you think this whole process works? Why is it that God created us with the ability to create neural pathways to fix our minds? (Ex. He created us to be an overcomer, He created us to have a mind that is capable of training itself for good works, He created us in His image, etc..)

Pick a promise you can meditate on below and Write it, Think it, Confess It, Believe It over and over this week:

Battling Worry - *Philippians 4:6 says, "Don't worry about anything; instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank Him for all He has done."*

Fighting Lustful Thoughts - *1 Corinthians 10:13 says, "...God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand...He will show you a way out..."*

Battling Unhealthy Eating - *1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "...your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit..."*

Lacking Confidence - *Philippians 4:13 says, "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength."*

Struggling to Know God's Will - *James 1:5-8 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord."*

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week, you may come up against a few negative thoughts. When you do, don't wait around. **Train your mind with TRUTH!** Attack them with good thoughts you've been meditating on!

- Write it down!
- Think about it!
- Confess it out loud!
- Believe it in your heart!

ADDITIONAL ACTION STEPS (Optional):

- Do at least one (1) SOAP Devotions this week
- Share with your group one of your SOAP Devotions from this past week

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Take a few minutes to close your time together with prayer and to pray for each other's prayer requests. Below is a sample prayer to read if you choose to. You can also choose to write down each other's prayer requests to remember throughout the week.

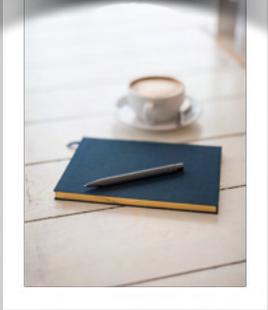
Sample Prayer:

God, thank You for teaching us how to win the war in our mind. You have given us weapons of divine power to demolish strongholds. When our minds are tired, would You bring to our remembrance the truth -- Your Word which is powerful and alive sharper than any two edged sword. When the neural paths in our mind are in a wrong pattern of thinking, help us to recognize it immediately. Help us to take the necessary actions as we have learned in today's study. With every wrong and stinking thinking, help us come up with the truth to attack it head on by writing it down, thinking about it, confessing it out loud until it becomes second nature and we begin believing the truth in our heart. We know that You have given us a mind to think. You have made us wonderfully and marvelously, we still don't know all that goes on in there. But we do know that when we fix our minds on You, You keep us in tune. In fact, You help change our minds to line up with your truth. Help us walk in that truth this week. In Jesus' name we pray, amen!

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request



DAILY DEVOTIONS For the Week:

Day 1: *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all You have done; I reflect on the work of Your hands.*
Psalm 143:5 (CSB)

Day 2: *By now, by means of the physical death of His Son, God has made you His friends, in order to bring you, holy, pure, and faultless, into His presence.*

Colossians 1:22 (GNT)

Day 3: *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.*

2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT)

Day 4: *In everything we have won more than a victory because of Christ who loves us.*

Romans 8:37 (CEV)

Day 5: *Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*

2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)