



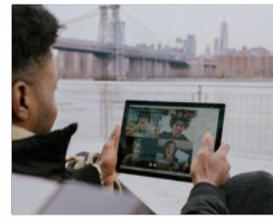
AUGUST 1 - 29

WINNING

THE WAR ^{IN} YOUR MIND

**4. “HOW TO FILTER & FRAME
YOUR LIFE”**

ICEBREAKER



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

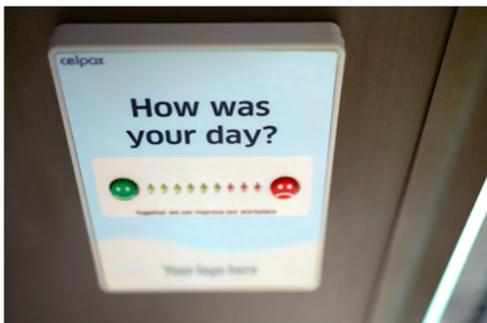
To start off your small group, briefly share your response to the following question:

What is something that seems very easy for others but is really hard for you to do?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT

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



Easier said than done. When we talk about clearing our minds off negative thoughts, that's really easy to talk about. Yet, the reality of putting it into good practice is a whole different story. Our life is full of complications and we are bombarded with problems all around us. This may seem small at times. However, it has the potential to increase our negative stinking thinking. So, how do we actually begin to create a daily habit where we begin to filter and frame our thinking? Last week we talked about cleaning our filters and reframing our experiences. This week, we'll see a simple three-step process to make that happen each day.

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Tip: SILENCE CELL PHONES. As a courtesy to those who are sharing in your group, please try to stay off your phones unless for emergencies. It is okay with the exception of the use of your smartphone device for online meetings (Zoom).

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.) How we think will likely determine how we live. What goes through our mind will come out in our lives. So thinking negative thoughts is a huge obstacle in experiencing God's peace and joy. To combat this, when we encounter problems, we can choose how we look at them. Take a look at this passage from the "NWW" translation:

"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me really sucks. As a result of the hell I've been through, I'm quitting Small Group and never going back to church."
Philippians 1:12-13 (NWW)

Or, if you prefer, here's the "PWBV" translation for us who live in Hawaii:

"I want you fo know, bruddahs and sistahs, dat wat wen happen to me, cuz, really suck,k! Bcoz o da result of da hell dat I bin tru iz dat, I going quit Small Group n I neva going back to church, eva."
Philippians 1:12-13 (PWBV)

Okay, okay...that's not what the Bible really says. In fact, the NWV is the "New Whiners Version" and the PWBV is the "Pidgin Whinas Bible Version." We're having some fun showing you how negative thoughts can impact how we interpret scriptures. Instead, take a look at what the Word actually says:

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ.

Philippians 1:12-13 (NIV)

Though Paul went through horrible problems, he didn't allow his negative thoughts and experiences to cloud what God was doing. Instead, he focused on the good, coming out of the bad.

Name as many differences as possible between these two ways of looking at life (negative vs. positive)? For instance, "Work has been way too busy lately" versus "A busy day makes work go by quicker!" Or, "My neighbors never ask about me anymore," versus "I haven't heard from my neighbors lately, I should go say hi." How many of those negative thoughts do you encounter on a daily basis?

2.) Let's look at a simple three-step process for defeating negative thoughts in our lives. This will help each of us filter out the bad and filter in the good while reframing our experiences.

The first step is to **Thank God for what didn't happen.** We often think of thanksgiving as being grateful for what God has done. And that's true! But have you ever thought to thank Him for what *didn't* happen? So, rather than seeing what's wrong, you're seeing what's right.

What is something that, looking back now, you can be thankful for that *didn't* happen? (Example, a job interview you missed that you now realize would have been a bad fit, a relationship you wanted to pursue but ended and you were much better off, a financial transaction that didn't go through that could have caused a financial setback, etc...)

3.) The second step is to **Practice pre-framing**. This is when you decide how you will frame a situation *before* you engage in a situation. Why does this matter? Because our thoughts or how we pre-frame our thoughts will often shape what we experience. We can easily thank God for the outcome of a situation because we made the initial decision to respond in such a way that would honor Him and others.

In Philippians 1, after Paul practiced pre-framing his current circumstances in a positive way, he goes on to see a bright future.

I fully expect and hope that I will never be ashamed, but that I will continue to be bold for Christ, as I have been in the past. And I trust that my life will bring honor to Christ, whether I live or die.
Philippians 1:20 (NLT)

No matter what was about to happen, Paul could be thankful. And that gratitude led him to envision a bright future where he did the right thing.

Think of something in your near future you're a little nervous about. You're unsure how it will turn out. (Example, you're waiting for a call back for a job interview, you're waiting for the results of a medical test, when you send someone an email with bad news and you don't know how they'll react, etc.) Now, how can you practice pre-framing that thought right now so that you envision a bright future?

4.) Finally, the third step is to **Look for God's goodness.** We often anticipate the worst. But the truth of the matter is we need to look for where God is at work. This is where we begin to recognize God's goodness in the midst of whatever situation we may find ourselves in.

Romans 8:28 in The Message reminds us of this truth. Let's read what it says,

"That's why we can be sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into something good."

God, through His word, has empowered us to reframe the outcome of our life events and experiences. If God is working in all things for good, then it's time to reject the unhealthy thought. It's time to do away with those frames that tell you "you can't," "you won't," "you're nothing," and "you're a failure" or "you're not smart." You CAN control how you frame your thoughts.

Think of a situation in the present where you can apply this third simple tool of "Look for God's goodness." What situation can you reframe to see God's goodness? Or think of an event that happened in the past where as you look back, you see His goodness. What was that? How did it change how you framed your situation?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

When we encounter bad days – and we will encounter them! - we can face them with a negative attitude or a positive attitude.

This three-step process is the key to reframing it:

- Thank God for what didn't happen.
- Practice pre-framing
- Look for God's goodness.

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, You are so good to us and for that we are eternally grateful. We know that every good and perfect gift comes from You. You shower us with compassion. Even when we least deserve it, You pour out Your grace, love and mercy. When we commit our actions and plans under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit, You bring success and a righteous outcome that not only blesses us personally. But, it blesses others in return. We commit to You our efforts to follow and practice these three simple tools in renewing our mind. Help us to always be reminded to be thankful for the things in our life that You didn't allow to happen. Instill in us the healthy habit of practicing pre-framing our thoughts so that we can decide beforehand to respond to situations in such a way that honors You. Finally, train our eyes to look for Your goodness in any and every situation that comes. We love You so much! In Jesus' name we humbly pray, amen.

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

DAILY DEVOTIONS For the Week:

Day 1: Surely Your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the house of the LORD forever. Psalm 23:6 (NLT)

Day 2: The LORD is good to everyone. He showers compassion on all His creation. Psalm 145:9 (NLT)

Day 3: Find out for yourself how good the LORD is. Happy are those who find safety with Him. Psalm 34:8 (GNT)

Day 4: Commit your actions to the LORD, and your plans will succeed. Proverbs 16:3 (NLT)

Day 5: As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give good things to people who ask. Matthew 7:11 (CEV)