



Recalibrate.

New Year, New Beginning

TIPS TO A SUCCESSFUL GROUP

- **BE COMFORTABLE WITH SILENCE.** Uncomfortable silences are bound to happen. It's okay! A long pause during a group discussion can be powerful. A *pause* gives space for quieter people to break into the conversation; silence allows people to figure out exactly what they would like to say.

Week 3: Recalibrate your Soul

ICEBREAKER

What is something new (started in the last year or so) that you do regularly which brings happiness and joy to your life?

INTRODUCTION

In this series we have taken a wholistic approach to recalibrating our mind, body, and soul to prepare us for all that God has in store for us in this new year. We will finish the series by talking about our soul and the three things that can contaminate our soul. We will also equip you with some ideas and things you can put into practice to help recalibrate your soul to be focused on God's truth in 2024.

READ I

God made us as vessels for our living souls (*Genesis 2:7*). Our soul is our inner being or "true self" that is created by God to live eternally. It is the core essence of our identity, thoughts, emotions, spiritual life, and moral awareness. As we live our lives in the world, our souls are affected by what we experience and how we feel about ourselves and others. When our souls are calibrated to the lies of harmful feelings and emotions, it can make us bitter and unhappy. Luckily, God wants to help us recalibrate.

Since you have purified your souls in obedience to the truth for a sincere love of the brothers and sisters, fervently love one another from the heart. -1 Peter 1:22 NASB

Peter, in helping believers to be more holy, teaches that our souls are not purified through our own works, but through our faith and obedience in the truth of Christ's redemptive work for us on the cross. When we believe and apply God's truth to our lives, our souls can be cleansed of sin and selfishness. When we recalibrate our souls in obedience to His truth, a sincere love overflows that helps us find joy and happiness in serving and supporting others.

What are some harmful feelings or emotions you would like cleansed from your life? (Examples: Unforgiveness, envy, anger, worry, etc.) What can you do to better obey and surrender to Christ's truths this week?

READ I

One illustration of us as vessels for the soul is to think of our lives as hot air balloons. The more we are weighed down by unhealthy things, the closer we stay to the world and further we feel from our heavenly father. Nothing can weigh us down in our walk quite like the heaviness of unforgiveness.

*"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."
-Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)*

In this passage, Jesus is not teaching that forgiveness of sin is based on forgiving others, but that forgiveness is based on realizing we have been forgiven by God of all our sins. When we practice unforgiveness toward others, we are in fact denying and rejecting God's forgiveness of us. Holding onto unforgiveness is a foothold for the enemy to keep us burdened, bitter, and far from fellowship with God. (Eph. 4:26-27)

Do you find it hard to forgive others when they have wronged you? What is something you can choose to forgive to let go of a burden or bitterness you have been carrying around?

READ I

Another way we can keep our soul tied to the world and away from God is by comparing ourselves and validating our worth based on what others have or what we believe we deserve. The Bible makes clear what we can expect when we do this.

But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.
-James 3:14-16 (NIV)

In this passage, James is highlighting and contrasting two types of wisdom: Worldly wisdom described above which invites disorder and evil into our lives. And, God's wisdom, that comes from heaven, which invites peace, righteousness, and good fruit into our lives. When we recalibrate our souls to compare ourselves and validate our worth based on God's wisdom, it can protect us from worldly pressures to "measure up".

What is one comparison or validation you have struggled with in your worldly wisdom? (Ex. looks, money, job, etc.) How does (or would) seeking validation from God and not from others help you to find more peace and confidence in your life?

READ I

The next feeling that can hijack us and steer our soul away from God is anger. It's not a sin to be angry, but anger often leads us to sin. Whether it is harsh and open anger or quiet hidden anger, when we let this feeling pollute our soul it can seriously effect our health and well-being.

“But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.”
-Matthew 5:22 (NIV)

Anger is so powerful that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus equates it to murder in some cases. When anger flares up, our souls become filled with hatred, bitterness, resentment and thoughts of retaliation. This often leaks out through our words, thoughts and actions to reveal a decay and corruption growing inside of us that needs cleansing.

We can recalibrate our souls to better deal with anger when it shows up by: Pausing and asking the Holy Spirit for wisdom and self-control, identifying triggers behind the anger to help us evaluate our expectations and set better boundaries, and releasing the situation and people involved through prayer to God who we trust will judge them justly.

How do you usually respond when faced with situations that make you angry? What steps can you take to invite God into these situations to better react and respond?

READ |

It is important that we regularly take steps back to evaluate how unforgiveness, envy, and anger have calibrated our souls for bitterness, disorder, and resentment. When we identify areas of concern, we should obediently look for ways to turn them back towards God. Here are three things that can help recalibrate your soul to better seek God's truth:

Foster Healthy Relationships. Surrounding ourselves with people who share our values and aspirations to honor God, brings accountability to our lives. This accountability can help us in confessing, forgiving, and ultimately finding joy with others.

Embrace God's Identity. When we understand that God loves us and values us because He made us, we can stop trying to be what we think others want us to be. Instead, we can focus on becoming who God created us to be.

Practice Unselfishness. When we set aside personal desires and let go of disappointment over unmet wants, we can appreciate more of what we have and care less about what we lack.

How can you develop forgiveness and healthy boundaries in your relationships? How can you strengthen your identity in Christ to be more confident in serving God over the expectations of others? In what ways can you be more intentionally unselfish?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

This week is the perfect time to start evaluating what is in your heart and soul. As you identify any bitter roots or other feelings that come from unforgiveness, envy, and anger in your life, take time to address them. Stay close to God's word and truth to help you purify your soul to pursue the better life He wants for you. Look for ways you can start to foster healthy relationships, embrace God's identity, and practice unselfishness.

CLOSE IN PRAYER:

Dear father God, thank You for making me with a soul. Thank You for forgiving me despite all my sins and the ways I have polluted by soul. Give me the courage to turn away from any lies that control my life, to accept and obey your truth and love. Search my heart and soul for any unforgiveness that is buried, and help me to forgive every offense I am holding onto. Reveal and refine my identity in Christ so that I can be free of the comparisons I make with others to fully seek validation from you above all else. Guide me in letting go of my wants and desires daily to be content in what you have given me. Recalibrate my soul to be focused on you first always. In Jesus' name, amen.



Make Time to be in God's WORD

Reading God's Word daily re-patterns the way you think & transforms your mind. Doing your daily devotions is an excellent way to record, process, & share what God is teaching you on a personal level. We do this using S.O.A.P.

- S - Scripture**
- O - Observation**
- A - Application**
- P - Prayer**

Here's an example:

S: *Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' "*

--Matthew 4:4 (NIV)

O: Jesus said that we can't live on food alone. Our life is sustained through His Word.

A: Just as food is important to me, God's Word is even more because it will sustain me and give me the strength to live out my life.

P: Jesus, thank You for reminding me that I need Your Word to give me the wisdom & strength to follow You. Help me to make time to spend with You daily. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

SCRIPTURES FOR S.O.A.P.

Day 1:

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.

--Ephesians 4:26-27 (ESV)

Day 2:

And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.

--Mark 11:25 (NIV)

Day 3:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

--1 Corinthians 13:4 (NIV)

Day 4:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

--1 John 1:9 (NIV)

Day 5:

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

--James 1:19-20 (ESV)