



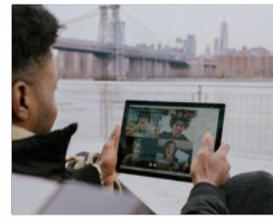
AUGUST 1 - 29

WINNING

THE WAR ^{IN} YOUR MIND

**6. “3 STEPS TO BATTLE
NEGATIVE THOUGHTS”**

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 the best compliment you've ever received?

Share with your group.

WHAT TO EXPECT

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



Getting a compliment is pretty nice. Receiving criticism can be tough. It's the difference between hearing something positive or negative. Of course, it's the same with our thoughts. If we want to win the battle in our minds, we need to focus on the positive and not the negative. In this lesson, we will look a little closer at the three steps to reframe any situation so we think positive thoughts instead of negative thoughts.

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.) Remember back in week 3 when we looked at this same topic. It was then that we talked about "filter" and "frame." As a refresher, recall that every one of the scouts in Numbers 13 came back with a bad report about the Promised Land. All except for Joshua and Caleb, that is. They were able to "filter" out the negative thoughts such as fear or discouragement, and instead focus on the positive, like the great riches of the land.

Another time, Paul was stuck in prison. In Philippians 1:12-14 he doesn't focus on his hardship or hang-ups. Instead, he "frames" his imprisonment as a way to reach those he may not have reached before with the Gospel message.

We can all experience the same facts, but see things completely differently based on our “filter.” We can also go through similar situations, but have different outcomes based on how we “frame” our lives. You can’t control what happens to you, but you can control what thoughts you filter in or out and how you frame the situation.

What are some things that “clog” up your filter, allowing negative thoughts to fester, or get in the way of framing your day in a positive light?

2.) Let’s take a closer look at three steps we can take to shift our focus from negative thoughts to positive. They are:

- 1) Thank God for What Didn’t Happen.
- 2) Pre-frame Your Situation.
- 3) Look for What God is Up To.

Being grateful can be difficult. Whenever you have a bad day, your mind will naturally settle on the negatives, usually as a way to try to fix them or avoid them in the future. But gratitude has a way of eliminating those negative thoughts.

But have you ever thought to thank God for what didn’t happen? We know we need to thank Him in all things. Let’s read the following scripture.

Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NLT)

Well, there are certainly times when things didn't turn out bad. Maybe you got home late because of traffic, but you didn't get into a wreck. Maybe the microwave is on the fritz, but it didn't blow a fuse and burn the kitchen down. When you consider how things don't turn out the worst, you begin to see even more reason to thank God.

What is one thing that *didn't* happen recently to you that could have?

3.) The next step to deal with your negative thoughts is to pre-frame your situation. We learned about how to frame your circumstances while you're going through them or even after they happened. But pre-framing your situation means looking ahead to what is coming up and deciding that you'll face it in a positive way.

There is a story in Acts 21 about Paul when he is on his way to Jerusalem. One day, a man named Agabus told Paul that if he made this trip, he would surely be arrested! While everyone was trying to talk Paul into staying away from Jerusalem, he was busy pre-framing his situation. He said that he was not only willing to be arrested and imprisoned for Jesus' sake, but also to die (Acts 21:13). He had pre-framed his future in a way that would bring glory to God and peace for himself.

What is one thing that is coming up this week that you are dreading? How might you pre-frame your situation to avoid negative thoughts before and after it happens?

4.) Finally, to deal with negative thoughts we should look for what God is up to. It's true that He is at work in the world all around us. But not everyone can see what He's doing.

Have you ever considered that negative thoughts affect how you see the world? If you are constantly expecting to have a bad day, guess what - you'll have a bad day! If you're always looking for people to disappoint you, they probably will. But if you are looking for God to move in your life and the lives of those around you, you'll be able to find Him.

Paul, in Philippians 1:12-14, was always looking at how God was moving. Sure, he was locked in chains. But he was able to tell others about Jesus. He may have been facing an unfair trial. But there were people being saved. It was all in his outlook.

Has God been showing up in your life, either in a small way or big? How can seeing God move in someone else's life help you see Him in your own?

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

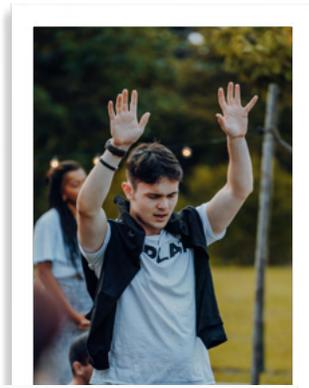


This week, you are sure to have a bad day or even just a bad moment. You can choose to focus on the negative and let those bad thoughts fest. Or you can “filter” and “frame” each moment of your life to let the positives shine through. Remember, here are the three steps to deal with negative thoughts:

- 1) Thank God for What Didn’t Happen.**
- 2) Pre-frame Your Situation.**
- 3) Look for What God is Up To.**

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:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the victory that we have in Your Son, Jesus. Because of what He accomplished on the cross, we know that we can overcome any negative thinking. As Your Holy Spirit is at work all around us reminding us of the truth, help us to respond in such a way that will always honor You. Help us put to practice pre-framing our response to a bad situation where we are choosing to respond the right way ahead of time. Help us to recognize where You are at work in our lives. Most of all we thank You for what didn’t happen because we know that Your ways are higher and better. You help us avoid some big, bad things in life. You take care of every step we are about to take. And You even show up in big and small ways all the time. Give us eyes to see you in every moment of our lives this week. In Jesus’ name we humbly pray, amen!

Group Prayer Requests:

Name

Request

Day 1: Give thanks to the LORD; proclaim His name! Make His works known among the peoples. Declare that His name is exalted. Sing to the LORD, for He has done glorious things. Let this be known throughout the earth.

Isaiah 12:4-5 (CSB)

Day 2: And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Day 3: For everything there is a season, a time for every activity under heaven.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NLT)

Day 4: All of this is for your benefit. And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory.

2 Corinthians 4:15 (NLT)

Day 5: Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at His work to this very day, and I too am working."

John 5:17 (NIV)