

SMALL GROUPS

Growing in Christ

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Week of November 12, 2017

BIG IDEA:

I can choose what I think about.

1

GETTING STARTED

How do you keep up with current events?

2

LOOKING BACK

How have you seen God at work over the last week?

Looking back on Sunday, is there anything that stood out to you, confused you, or challenged you?

(See Big Idea above)

3

MY STORY

How do you talk to yourself? Are you more negative or positive towards yourself?

What's one example of a time you were acting on thoughts or feelings that turned out to be wrong?

4

DIGGING DEEPER

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

We probably all have some media we take in and enjoy, even though we know it isn't "true, and honorable, and right, and pure..." How do we justify that?

What are some honorable inputs (specific books, music, movies, activities, etc.) that could replace negative inputs in your life?

List three things you could think about that are excellent and worthy of praise:

4

DIGGING DEEPER (CONTINUED)

Romans 12:2 (NLT) 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.

The audience Paul was writing to in the passage above lived in an age where sexual promiscuity was rampant, homosexual behavior was celebrated, worship of pagan gods was largely about personal indulgence, children disrespected their parents, and the economy was driven by greed. These were all customs that Paul specifically said were contrary to God's ideal (Romans 1: 23-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:10, Galatians 5:21, Ephesians 5:5). Paul told disciples in that setting not to copy the behavior, and even to change the way they think.

What would it look like if someone became a disciple during that time and changed their behavior, but didn't change the way they think?

What accusations might someone make against a person who doesn't copy the behavior and customs of the world around them?

Paul doesn't suggest that changing the way we think happens by our own effort. A more literal translation is: "...do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." **Romans 12:2 (NASB)**. How can we yield ourselves to God's transforming work in us?

"...you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." What an amazing promise! Rewrite this into an "I" statement, a promise that you personally can remind yourself of when you feel anxious about a lack of purpose or direction:

Feelings aren't facts. I can choose what I think about.

How would you explain to someone that although feelings are real, they are not facts?

Thoughts are flooding our minds all the time. How can you really choose what you think about?

For someone who struggles with thinking negative thoughts about themselves, what are some facts from God that can replace the fiction that keeps them stuck?

Prayer is sometimes driven by feelings that can't be put into words (Romans 8:23). Other times, prayer is an intentional effort to organize our thoughts and align them with God's will. Use your own feelings and thoughts to fill in the blanks in the short prayer below.

God, I sometimes feel like:

I know the truth is:

Thank You for:

5

BRINGING IT HOME

Science can now prove what Paul already knew: our minds are pliable ("neuroplasticity"). God wants to transform us by the renewing of our minds, an absolute metamorphosis! Yielding our thought life to Him instead of riding the waves of our own feelings is an important discipline for followers of Jesus. Let your prayer time together be an exercise in letting God direct your thoughts.

6

PRAYER REQUESTS