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“What Do You Think?”

Philippians 4 Small Group Plan

Consider the value and power of our thoughts, and the importance of what we give our thoughts to:

2 Corinthians 10:5 (NIV)

We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Romans 8:5-6 (NLT)

Those who are dominated by the sinful nature think about sinful things,

but those who are controlled by the Holy Spirit think about things that please the Spirit.

So, letting your sinful nature control your mind leads to death.

But letting the Spirit control your mind leads to life and peace.

Psalms 63:6 (NIV)

On my bed I remember you;

I think of you through the watches of the night.

Psalms 119:15 (NLT)

I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways.

Psalms 23:48 (JB)

I stretch out my hands to your beloved commandments,

I meditate on your statutes.

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How would you contrast the thoughts of God in the texts above with the world of thoughts that surround us every day?
- Describe the war of thoughts that we engage in every day.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— OUR THOUGHTS UNIFIED —

Philippians 4:1-3

¹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends! ² I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. ³ Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

- What is the “same mind” that Paul is asking Euodia and Syntyche to strive for?
- Is it possible to be of the “same mind” and yet hold different viewpoints? Explain.

— OUR THOUGHTS PROTECTED —

Philippians 4:4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- How does it impact your life to know that “the Lord is near” (v. 5)?
- Is the joy that Paul describes a choice, a mood or a personality trait? Explain.
- Paul says, “do not be anxious about anything, but ...” How does this way of thinking play itself out in our lives? What follows this way of thinking?
- How can something that is beyond “understanding” help our “minds” (v. 7)?

— OUR THOUGHTS DIRECTED —

PHILIPPIANS 4:8-9

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

- Take each of the eight qualities Paul lists in these verses and give a definition or a couple of synonyms.
- What does it mean to “think” as Paul describes? Describe the act of pondering, reflecting, meditating. How does it feel? What does it require? How does it benefit personal spiritual well being?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- On a scale of 1 to 10 how joyful are you? Is it moving up or down the scale? Explain.
- When did you last wonder where God was or if he cared? What was happening in your life that made you wonder?
- What destructive qualities compete with the eight qualities Paul mentions (v. 8)?
- Think about the challenge of turning everything over to God.
 - ✓ How is it challenging to release our lives to God?
 - ✓ Why is it foolish not to do so?
 - ✓ List some of the blessings of putting God in charge.
- Why has our society lost the practice of pondering, reflecting, mulling it over, contemplating? What has taken its place?
- What will you do need to remove from your mind in order to recover reflection and contemplation?
- What will you do first to begin the process of giving God control of your thoughts?
- Close with a prayer of thanks for the gospel of Jesus who saves us, gives us a spiritual family and begins the life-long process of transformation.