

Summer With Jesus Week 2 LIFE Group Study – A Deeper Look at the Heart

Checking In

Welcome everyone. Look around and see who is missing. Assign people to contact those who are not present at the meeting. Do some of them need prayer or something else that our group can provide?

Is there a link between what we think and what we do? How much do our thoughts affect our actions?

Memory Verse

“And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. 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.”

Romans 12:1-2a

NOTE: THERE IS NO GROUP VIDEO FOR THIS SERIES

FACILITATION FOR THE GROUP LEADER

NOTE: *Use the following as a guide as you prepare to lead your group time. Use what is helpful for you to facilitate the discussion. Discovery questions and the group guide follow this material:*

This might be one of the hardest teachings of Jesus to understand. He is talking about the condition of your heart and your response to temptation.

If you recall the temptation of Jesus, Satan did three things to get into Jesus’ head. He offered him three temptations.

The lust of the flesh...fulfill the longings of being satisfied.

The lust of the eye...fulfill the longing of being inspired or stimulated.

The boastful pride of life.....becomes the center of your world.

In this passage Jesus addresses these three schemes of Satan and raises the bar of reaction to temptation.

Before we look at the passage, we must remember that the Pharisees were all about lowering the bar of expectations for themselves. They, like most, think the rules didn't apply to them. We still see that played out with current leaders. They will tell us not to do something but then turn right around and do the things they have forbidden. I heard a politician propose to defund the police only to find out she had hired private security for herself and her home. We call that being a hypocrite.

Let's look at this teaching of Jesus and discuss how we can live differently....

“You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Matthew 5:27-30

- Jesus ups the expectations of dealing with the heart.
- The Pharisees thought they could objectify a woman and lust with their eyes. Jesus said “no!” Women are not objects for a man's lust but daughters to be respected.
- To those who listened, women were considered property and could be used at the discretion of anyone who owned them or had power over them. There were laws regarding divorce that justified a man leaving his wife over the smallest thing...like burning dinner.
- This was not the teachings of the Old Testament but the perversion of the religious leaders of the day.
- See how the schemes of Satan are displayed
 - a man sees a woman and lusts after her...lust of the eye.
 - A man takes lust of a woman and sins against her through his thoughts...lust of the flesh
 - A man is proud of his “man” behavior...arrogance of pride
- Jesus says to stop the process...take out your eye.... not literal but condition your mind through the power of the Holy Spirit. (be careful little eyes what you see). God renews your mind by changing the way you think.

- Jesus is not into self-harm...he does say that an unconquered mind will lead to a life of hell.
- Taking captive thoughts is a “guarded” heart and mind...

For although we live in the flesh, we do not wage war according to the flesh, since the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but are powerful through God for the demolition of strongholds. We demolish arguments and every proud thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—if there is any moral and if there is anything praiseworthy—dwell on these things. Philippians 4:8

Don't focus on the sin but rather on Jesus.

Discovery Questions

- When battling temptation, we need to find the key, not just to avoid falling again and again, but to living the victorious life. What are ways we can do that?
- What do you think of this comment: “If lustful thoughts are sinful, why not go ahead and carry out the lustful actions, too.”?
- King David was a man “after God’s own heart” but that doesn’t mean that he had it all together. But David learned to keep short accounts with God. What does that mean for you and me?
- Do you have a greater tendency to assign too much or too little credit to our enemy, Satan?
- How does your understanding of your “position in Christ” affect the way you pray?

Putting It Into Practice

We sometimes tolerate sins in our lives that, left unchecked, can eventually destroy us. Experiencing the pain of removal (getting rid of a bad habit or something we treasure) is better than allowing the sin to bring judgment and condemnation. Examine your life for anything that causes you to sin and take every necessary action to remove it.

Prayer Time

In addition to prayer requests from your LIFE group take some personal/silent time to ask the Lord to show you things in your life that need to be confessed and changed. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you and lead me along the path of everlasting life."
Psalm 139:23