



The Struggle Is Real

Week 1 - Self-Controlling Your Thoughts

Discussion Guide

Struggles come in all shapes and sizes. These can be small issues like straining to open the dreaded mayonnaise jar or deciding what to wear. They can also be more serious things, such as dealing with temptations or fighting bad habits. While our struggles can range in intensity and importance, they all have one thing in common; they begin in our thought lives.

Jump Start

1. Share a time when you struggled with something, only to find the solution to be both simple and right in front of you.
2. *We are responsible for our thoughts.* There are so many things that can influence our thoughts, but the good news is that we get to choose what we let into our minds and where we put our focus. What are some of the things that influence the way you think? (Study: Philippians 4:8)
3. *Resist destructive thoughts.* It's normal to have both constructive and destructive thoughts. However, the ones on which we spend the most time will determine who we are. Thankfully, as we just discussed, we get to choose. Share a time when you realized you were thinking destructively and, if applicable, how you resisted those thoughts. (Study: 2 Corinthians 10:5, 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22)
4. *Practice makes peace.* Practice doesn't always make perfect, but it does make a habit more set and a routine part of your life. . With your group, devise some ways that you can monitor your thought life. How can you put into practice these habits that will lead to peace? (Study Philippians 4:9)
5. **This Week:** Continue to be aware of your thoughts. Strive to exchange the bad thoughts for good ones. Pay attention to the time of day and your location when you start to think destructively. Keep track of the things you allow to influence your thoughts (people, music, tv, social media, etc). Instead, surround yourself with people who can keep you on track. If you aren't on a serving team, joining one is a great way to regain control of your thoughts. You will soon find yourself at peace with the way you think, able to begin dealing with struggles that come your way.

Keep Going

Read James 1:12-15.

- What does the Bible say about those who are steadfast under trials?
- According to these verses, how does an evil thought develop into an evil action?
- How can you apply what God says here to your everyday life?

Read 2 Peter 1:5-10.

- What is the progression of character traits God tells us to add to ourselves?
- For each trait these verses list, give an example of what that might look like.
- What does the Bible say about the person who does not “practice these qualities”?
- What does the Bible say about the person who does “practice these qualities”?
- How can you apply what God says here to your everyday life?