

4 WEEKS

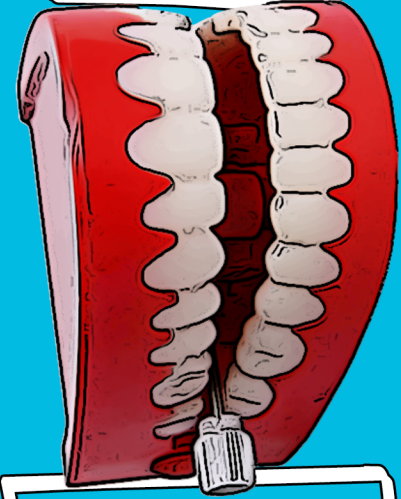
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 COMPLAINING 4

&

2 LYING 6

&

3 CRITICISM 8

&

4 GOSSIPING 10

Memory Verses 12

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group 14

Group Agreement..... 15

COMPLAINING

WEEK 1



SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

What in your life do you find yourself complaining about most?

Big Idea:

Do everything without complaining or grumbling.

Key Scriptures:

Exodus 14:11-12

"They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Exodus 16:8

"...You are not grumbling against us, but against the Lord."

Philippians 2:14-15

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation...'"

Philippians 2:17-18

"But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. So you too should be glad and rejoice with me."

Philippians 1:12-13

"Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ."

Psalms 103:2-5 NLT

"Let all that I am praise the LORD; may I never forget the good things he does for me. He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases. He redeems me from death and crowns me with love and tender mercies. He fills my life with good things."

Discussion:

1. What's the most menial thing you complain about?
2. Read Exodus 14:11-12 and 16:8. The Israelites were known for their complaining. How would it change your view of complaining if you knew God was the end recipient?
3. Read Philippians 2:14-15, 17-18. What do you think the writer, Paul, is trying to say here?
4. Paul obviously took difficult circumstances and turned them into a way to rejoice. Do you more often need to change your circumstances or your perspective?
5. Read Philippians 1:12-13. How could you, like Paul, flip your perspective about the struggles you're facing? What are some blessings you haven't been grateful for lately?
6. Read Psalm 103:2-5. How can you regularly turn these blessings into gratitude toward God?

Wrapping It Up:

Declare this week a complaining-free week. Report back to each other throughout the week about how it's going.

Memory Verse:

"Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation..." **Philippians 2:14-15**

LYING

WEEK 2

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

How did your parents teach you about lying as a kid?

What are some of the things they said?

Big Idea:

The Lord detests lying lips. The root reason most of us lie is because we don't completely trust God.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 12:22 NLT

"The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth."

Ephesians 4:21-25 NLT

"Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes. Put on your new nature, created to be like God—truly righteous and holy. So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body."

John 8:44

"... He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies."

1 John 1:9

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and

purify us from all unrighteousness.”

James 5:16

“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed ...”

Discussion:

1. How often do you think you lie, as if they’re just “little fabrications”?
2. What are the typical reasons you’re tempted to lie?
3. Read Proverbs 12:22. What does this tell you about how God feels about lying?
4. Read Ephesians 4:21-25. Why do you think being “parts of the same body” and not lying go together?
5. Read John 8:44. Satan’s plan is to
 - 1) GET YOU TO LIE
 - 2) GET YOU TO LIE TO YOURSELF and
 - 3) GET YOU TO LIVE A LIE.How does knowing that Satan is the author and father of lies impact your perception about lying?
6. Share about a time you got caught in a lie. What happened and how did you feel?
7. Pastor Jeff said most of us lie when we don’t completely trust God. How do you see this in your life?
8. Read 1 John 1:9 and James 5:16. What do you need to confess or get honest about? Share what you can with your small group.

Wrapping It Up:

Be attentive this week to the temptations you have to lie. As those temptations come, remind yourself to trust God.

Memory Verse:

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.”

Proverbs 12:22 NLT

CRITICISM

WEEK 3



SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

Did you grow up in a more critical or encouraging home atmosphere?

Big Idea:

Criticism is words that destroy a person, their self worth and their self esteem.

Key Scriptures:

Galatians 5:14-15 NLT

"For the whole law can be summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." But if you are always biting and devouring one another, watch out! Beware of destroying one another."

Proverbs 12:18 NLT

"Some people make cutting remarks, but the words of the wise bring healing."

Ephesians 4:29

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."

Romans 15:13

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

2 Corinthians 13:11 NLT

"... I close my letter with these last words: Be joyful. Grow to maturity. Encourage each other. Live in harmony and peace. Then the God of love and peace will be with you."

Discussion:

1. Read Galatians 5:14-15. Have you every experienced a time when you felt bitten and devoured by someone's criticism of you? Share about that.
2. Read Proverbs 12:18. How have you experienced healing words from another person?
3. Read Ephesians 4:29. How might this verse help you to gauge what comes out of your mouth?
4. Read Romans 15:13. What would it look like if each day your words overflowed with hope from the Holy Spirit? Have you experienced that?
5. Why do you think it seems easier to criticize than to build up?
6. Who are you most critical of? What could your criticism be destroying?
7. Read 2 Corinthians 13:11. To whom can you begin dealing hope and encouragement? What obstacles will you face? How will you go about it?

Wrapping It Up:

You can choose to be a fault finder or a hope dealer. Which will you choose? Pray this prayer together: God, You are the ultimate supply of hope, peace, and encouragement. It is out of an overflow of Your presence in our lives that we can build up others. We want and need more of You. Holy Spirit, we invite You into this week, into this moment, to transform us into dealers of Your great hope. Amen.

Memory Verse:

"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen." Ephesians 4:29

GOSSIPING

WEEK 4

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Kicking it off:

How would you define gossip?

Big Idea:

Gossip hurts the person it's spoken about. Gossip hurts the listener. And gossip hurts the speaker.

Key Scriptures:

Proverbs 18:8 NLT

"Rumors are dainty morsels that sink deep into one's heart."

Proverbs 16:28 NLT

"A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends."

Proverbs 17:4 NLT

"Wrongdoers eagerly listen to gossip; liars pay close attention to slander."

Proverbs 25:9-10 NLT

"When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret. Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation."

Matthew 18:15 NLT

"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back."

Proverbs 20:19 NLT

"A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers."

Proverbs 21:23 NLT

"Watch your tongue and keep your mouth shut, and you will stay out of trouble."

Discussion:

Read the verses above and discuss the following:

1. Why do you think you gossip? What are you looking to get out of it?
2. What are some of the ways gossip harms relationships?
3. Share about a time you caught yourself gossiping. How did it feel? Did you do something to stop it?
4. Do you have any tricks for avoiding gossip? What works?
5. Pastor Jeff said, "Gossip claims, 'I'm strong because they're weak.' The Gospel admits 'I am weak but He is strong.'" What step do you need to take to fight gossip with the Gospel?
6. Is there anyone you've hurt with gossip? How will you make it right?

Wrapping It Up:

Pray this prayer together: God, thank You for the gossip-destroying power of the Gospel. Thank You for Jesus. Thank You that in our weakness, You are made strong. Forgive us for the ways we've tried to put down others to build up ourselves. Give us the strength to lift each other up. Amen!

Memory Verse:

"A gossip goes around telling secrets, so don't hang around with chatterers."
Proverbs 20:19 NLT

“Do everything
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Proverbs 20:19 NLT

NOTES:

Top 10 Tips for Leading a Small Group

1. Establish a welcoming, accepting, and safe environment.
 - Take time to prepare.
 - Make sure to give a warm enthusiastic greeting to each person.
 - Verbally communicate the environment that you hope to create.
 - Ephesians 4:1-3
2. On the opening night of your group you need to have some intentional discussions centered around these questions:
 - What is the purpose of our group?
 - What is the vision for our group?
 - What are your expectations?
 - What do you hope to gain from this group experience?
 - What are some things we value as a group?
 - What are some healthy guidelines we need to have in place?Review and sign a group agreement.
3. Be authentic. Spend time sharing your life stories in order to get to know each other on a deeper level.
4. Find a good balance between:
 - Truth and grace/Bible study and life
 - Encouraging and challenging one another
 - Giving and receiving feedback from each other
5. Ask good questions to stimulate good discussion. Use open ended questions and follow up questions.
6. Hang out together, do things socially, eat together and have fun together!
7. Develop a missional lifestyle, find a service project to do together in the community.
8. Raise up new leadership by rotating facilitation of the group.
9. Share the responsibilities in order to increase individual commitment and ownership of the group.
10. Pray for your group and for each other!

Find ways to celebrate what God is doing in your group! Who else could you invite to join you in order that their life may be impacted by what God is doing in your group?

Group Agreement

OUR PURPOSE

To transform our spiritual lives by cultivating our spiritual health in a healthy small group community. In addition, we: _____

OUR VALUES

Group Attendance: To give priority to the group meeting. We will call or email if we will be late or absent.

Safe Environment: To help create a safe place where people can be heard and feel loved. (Please, no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes.)

Respect Differences: To be gentle and gracious to people with different spiritual maturity, personal opinions, temperaments, or imperfections. We are all works in progress.

Confidentiality: To keep anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group, and to avoid sharing improper information about those outside the group.

Encouragement for Growth: To be not just takers but givers of life. We want to spiritually multiply our life by serving others with our God-given gifts.

Welcome for Newcomers: To keep an open chair and share Jesus' dream of finding a shepherd for every sheep.

Shared Ownership: To remember that every member is a minister and to ensure that each attender will share a small team role or responsibility over time.

Rotating Hosts/Leaders and Homes: To encourage different people to host the group in their homes, and to rotate the responsibility of facilitating each meeting.

OUR EXPECTATIONS

- Refreshments/mealtimes _____
 - Childcare _____
 - When we will meet (day of week) _____
 - Where we will meet (place) _____
 - We will begin at (time) _____ and end at _____
 - We will do our best to have some or all of us attend a worship service together.
 - Our primary worship service time will be _____
 - Date of this agreement _____
 - Date we will review this agreement again _____
 - Who (other than the leader) will review this agreement at the end of this study _____
-



Big Mouth



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