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COMMUNITY GROUPS

RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH

Community Group Discussion Guide

March 3, 2024

Mind Monsters Week #1 / Pastor Paul Taylor

Fear

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Icebreaker Question | What were your best (“high”) and worst (“low”) moments from the previous week? If you’re willing, share those with the members of your group.
2. Share your own experiences with fears or “mind monsters.” What are some common fears you’ve encountered in your life or heard others talk about? If it helps, recall that Pastor Paul the following acronym related to fear...

False, Evidence, Appearing, Real

“Mind monsters are those negative thoughts we all battle, the creeping shadows in the corners of our minds that feed our insecurities, worries, and fears; the thoughts that lead us to irrational anger or undefined depression.” – Kevin Gerald

What’s the difference between productive, protective fear and irrational, paralyzing fear? How can we discern between the two? Do you think this discernment matters when it comes to engaging God with our fears? Explain.

DIVING DEEPER

3. The Bible tells us that God, in providing salvation to mankind, transforms our mind. Read the following passages before discussing the corresponding questions.

Ephesians 4:17-18 (NIV) – ¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Romans 1:18 (NIV) – The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

2 Corinthians 4:4 (NIV) – The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 (NIV) – ¹⁴The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. ¹⁵The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, ¹⁶for, “Who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.

Ephesians 4:17-24 (NIV) – ¹⁷So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. ¹⁸They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. ¹⁹Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. ²⁰That, however, is not the way of life you learned ²¹when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being

corrupted by its deceitful desires; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NKJV) – ⁶Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

a) How does the Bible present the nature of our mind apart from Christ? How should we think of this in terms of the nature of “self-help?”

b) How does the Bible describe our mind when we’ve placed our faith in Christ?

4. Read 2 Timothy 1:6-7 together. Why is the Holy Spirit so important in our ability to overcome our mind monsters of fear?

2 Timothy 1:6-7 (NKJV) – ⁶Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

a) Reflect on the components of power, love, and a sound mind that are part of the Spirit’s presence in us. How do these counteract fear in our lives?

b) Read Romans 12:1-2. What does it mean – in the power of the Holy Spirit – to “be transformed by the renewing of your mind?” How can we practically live out this command from the Apostle Paul?

Romans 12:1-2 (NIV) – ¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

5. Pastor Paul shared that we can overcome our mind monsters of fear by, 1) crying out to God, and 2) naming our fears and taking self-controlled action to tame them and walk in the extraordinary life found in Christ. Read the following passages together before discussing the corresponding questions.

Romans 8:15 (NIV) – The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*”

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV) – ¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Reflect on the fears you shared in Question #2. Based on the above steps, what would it look like for you to confront and battle with your fears? Be practical!

Rivers Crossing Mental Health Resources | <https://riverscrossing.com/mentalhealth/>

TAKING IT HOME

6. Writing in 1925, Church of England member Kate Wilkinson's penned the following hymn titled *May the Mind of Christ, My Savior*. Read it together as a group.

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me,
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

What stands out to you from this hymn? As your close your Community Group, spend time encouraging and praying for one another regarding your fears.

PRAYER REQUESTS

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RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Clarifying the Bible Workshop | Interested in diving deeper into God's Word, but not sure where to start? Through the Clarifying the Bible workshop, you'll learn the basic framework and storyline of the Bible in just one morning! We'll gather at both campuses on Saturday, March 16th from 9am-12pm to watch the video course together over coffee. Register using this link: <https://riverscrossing.churchcenter.com/registrations/events/2163020>
2. Serve at Rivers Crossing | One of the marks of a fully engaged follower is their willingness to invest into God's kingdom with their time, talents, and resources. We have opportunities to serve all throughout the week! Find the team that's the right fit for you and partner with us to create an environment for people to become fully engaged followers of Jesus. Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/serve-here/>