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# COMMUNITY GROUPS

**RIVERS CROSSING CHURCH**

Community Group Discussion Guide

March 10, 2024

Mind Monsters Week #2 / Pastor Paul Taylor

Stubbornness

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. This is the final week of the Winter Quarter for Community Groups, so spend time reflecting and celebrating! The questions below set the stage for this time together. Reflect on your time in Community Group thus far in 2024. What has God been teaching you and how have you grown in your faith? Have you had any notable breakthroughs? How has your group supported you during this season?

Note: If it helps, recall that Community Groups have studied through the Change, God Breathed, sermons from Joey Furjanic and Jeff Sharp, and Mind Monsters series.

The Spring Quarter for Community Groups runs from April 7<sup>th</sup> – June 1<sup>st</sup>.

2. Icebreaker Question | Reflecting on your own experiences, has stubbornness ever held you back from taking risks and/or pursuing new opportunities? How do you balance being cautious with being open-minded?
3. Nineteenth-century Scottish Presbyterian Thomas Chambers said that, “There are few subjects or exercises more deeply important to professing Christians than...the work of self-examination. But self-examination is a work of great difficulty, and is accordingly shrunk from, or altogether declined by the great body of professing Christians.” As you consider Chambers’ words, read the following Bible verses and discuss the corresponding questions.

**Romans 12:3 (NLT)** – Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don’t think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

**Galatians 6:1-5 (NLT)** – <sup>1</sup>Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. <sup>2</sup>Share each other’s burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ. <sup>3</sup>If you think you are too important to help someone, you are only fooling yourself. You are not that important. <sup>4</sup>Pay careful attention to your own work, for then you will get the satisfaction of a job well done, and you won’t need to compare yourself to anyone else. <sup>5</sup>For we are each responsible for our own conduct.

**1 Peter 1:13-16 (NIV)** – <sup>13</sup>Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. <sup>15</sup>But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; <sup>16</sup>for it is written: “Be holy, because I am holy.”

**Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)** – Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

**2 Corinthians 10:3-5 (NIV)** – <sup>3</sup>For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. <sup>4</sup>The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. <sup>5</sup>We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

- a) What, if any, rhythms do you have for practicing self-examination? For example, journaling, prayer, meditation, etc. If you routinely practice self-examination, how has this affected your relationships with both God and others?
- b) Do you believe self-examination is a worthy endeavor on the part of a Christian? How might cultivating a habit of self-examination help us become more aware of and equipped to engage with our mind monsters?

## DIVING DEEPER

4. During his sermon, Pastor Paul cited a Harvard Business Review article which shared the following five signs that a person struggles with stubbornness:
- o You keep at an idea or plan, or insist on making your point, even when you know you're wrong.
  - o You do something you want to do even if no one else wants to do it.
  - o When others present an idea, you tend to point out all the reasons it won't work.
  - o You visibly feel anger, frustration, and impatience when others try to persuade you of something you don't agree with.
  - o You agree to or commit halfheartedly to others' requests, when you know all along that you're going to do something entirely different.
- a) Do any of these signs particularly resonate with you? If you're willing, explain.
- b) Are there specific circumstances and/or relationships that tend to bring out your stubbornness the most? Why do you believe that is?
- c) Have you ever experienced relational isolation – whether from God or others – as a result of your stubbornness? If so, what did (or does) this look like?
5. Pastor Paul said that pride is the fuel that feeds stubbornness. We can define pride as an excessively positive self-image that leads to disdainful behavior toward others. Read through the following scriptures and discuss the corresponding questions.
- Proverbs 16:18-19 (NIV)** – <sup>18</sup>Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall. <sup>19</sup>Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud.
- Matthew 23:12 (NIV)** – For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.
- Romans 12:16 (NIV)** – Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.
- James 4:6 (NIV)** – But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but shows favor to the humble.”

a) Why do you believe God so vehemently opposes the proud? How would you describe the mind and actions of someone who is humble?

b) How can we discern the difference between pride/stubbornness and resilience borne from Christ-centered, Spirit-filled conviction?

6. Read Psalm 81:10-13 and Philippians 2:1-11 as a group. What practical wisdom can we pull from these passages about addressing the mind monster of stubbornness?

**Psalm 81:10-13 (NIV)** – <sup>10</sup>I am the Lord your God,  
who brought you up out of Egypt.

Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

<sup>11</sup>“But my people would not listen to me;  
Israel would not submit to me.

<sup>12</sup>So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts  
to follow their own devices.

<sup>13</sup>“If my people would only listen to me,  
if Israel would only follow my ways,

**Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV)** – <sup>1</sup>Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. <sup>3</sup>Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, <sup>4</sup>not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup>In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God,  
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

<sup>7</sup>rather, he made himself nothing  
by taking the very nature of a servant,  
being made in human likeness.

<sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man,  
he humbled himself  
by becoming obedient to death—  
even death on a cross!

<sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place  
and gave him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

<sup>11</sup>and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

## TAKING IT HOME

7. Read Romans 8:1-17 together. We need power from the Holy Spirit to overcome – via repentance, surrender, and self-sacrifice – the mind monster of stubbornness.

**Romans 8:1-17 (NIV)** - <sup>1</sup>Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.<sup>3</sup>For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, <sup>4</sup>in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. <sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.

<sup>9</sup> You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ. <sup>10</sup>But if Christ is in you, then even though your body is subject to death because of sin, the Spirit gives life because of righteousness. <sup>11</sup>And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies because of his Spirit who lives in you. <sup>12</sup>Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. <sup>13</sup>For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live. <sup>14</sup>For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup>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.”<sup>16</sup>The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. <sup>17</sup>Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Is there an area or two where you believe God is leading you to take captive your mind monster of stubbornness? If so, explain. How can you address that with God and others and take steps - no matter how small - toward openness and flexibility?

How can your Community Group pray for and support you with this?

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

## PRAYER REQUESTS

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## RIVERS CROSSING - THINGS TO KNOW

1. Easter at Rivers Crossing | Celebrate this Easter at Rivers Crossing to discover how even the darkest moments can be brought back to life. Through powerful music and a relevant message, we're excited to share the hope and freedom found in Jesus!  
Friday March 29th Service Time - 7pm (Mason Campus)  
Saturday March 30th Service Times - 2pm, 4pm, and 6pm (Mason Campus)  
Sunday March 31st Service Times - 8:45am, 10:15am, and 12pm (Mason Campus)  
Sunday March 31st Service Time - 10am (Deer Park Campus)  
Learn more at <https://riverscrossing.com/easter/>
2. 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>
3. 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/>