



WEEK 4: STOP MIND READING

Key Scriptures: *Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 18:2,13,15,17*

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

- God (Exodus 20:16 ESV)

*2 A fool takes no pleasure in understanding,
but only in expressing his opinion.*

*13 If one gives an answer before he hears,
it is his folly and shame.*

*15 An intelligent heart acquires knowledge,
and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge.*

*17 The one who states his case first seems right,
until the other comes and examines him.*

- Solomon (Proverbs 18:2, 13, 15, and 17 ESV)





WEEK 4: PRE-GROUP READING

**This week's tool has a short preparation. Please note the 'Before Your Group' section at the bottom of this page.*

Every time we make an assumption about someone who has hurt or disappointed us, we break the ninth commandment by "bearing false witness." In effect, we leave reality for a mental creation of our own doing. We create a counterfeit world. In that counterfeit reality, Satan—the "father of lies"—has ample room to create untruths that work to wreck relationships by creating endless confusion and conflict.

The Bible has much to say about not taking on the role of judge to others. When we judge based solely on our own assumptions, we place ourselves far outside of God's safe design for relational wholeness. Because we have not checked our assumptions with the other person for confirmation, it is very possible we are believing something untrue. Few things are as corrosive to relationships as this deadly trap, but it is often our default relational response to hurt or disappointment.

Acknowledging what we really do and do not know is a form of humility and truthfulness before God – and is essential both to keeping the ninth commandment and to cultivating healthy relationships.

This week's tool is "asking to mind-read." It's purpose is to train us to realize when we have made an assumption and ask if it is true or not. When we do this, we step out of our counterfeit world and back into God's world (the truth).

Learning to have these conversations is a valuable skill to both your Christian discipleship and your emotional health. As the Apostle John put it in 1 John 1:7: "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." Light in this verse represents truth. God wants all of us to "walk" our daily lives in the truth and not in a world of our own creation.

Before Your Group:

1. Consider the different relationship areas of your life: work, church, family (marriage, children, parents, siblings, extended family), friendships, neighbors, or roommates.
2. Pick one where you might be "mind reading" or making an assumption.
3. Write down the person's name (or initials) and the assumption you have.





WEEK 4: GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Take some time to catch up and connect as a group. Pray to transition into discussion.

Growing Connected

1. Thinking back on last week's tool of identifying "commandments," did anyone have significant realizations this week? If so, have 2-3 people share.
2. This meeting we are talking about "mind reading" - our tendency to jump to conclusions and assume we know people's motives and intentions. Turn to someone next to you and share a story of a time someone made an assumption or jumped to a conclusion about you.

Bible Study

The book of Proverbs is filled with practical wisdom about holy restraint and not jumping to conclusions before we have all the facts. Read Proverbs 18:2, 13, 15, 17.

1. Based on the first three proverbs listed above, what are the differences between a fool and a wise person with a discerning heart?
2. Can you briefly share a specific situation when what you were thinking or feeling about someone was untrue, or you misinterpreted the behavior of another person without checking it out? What did you end up believing incorrectly until you heard the whole story? (Proverbs 18:17)





WEEK 4: TOOL OF THE WEEK

Checking Assumptions

The purpose: To clarify what another person is thinking instead of making assumptions.

When we realize that we have assumed something about another person's thoughts, feelings or intentions, we can discover the truth by asking the person directly.

For this activity, you will need a partner. We asked you in this week's Pre-Group Reading to think about a person in your life who you have an assumption about. For this activity, your partner will sit in for that person.

1. Tell your partner about your example situation
2. Turn to your partner and ask:
 - May I have permission to read your mind? Or
 - Can I check out an assumption I have with you?
3. After the person answers 'yes,' say:
 - "I think that you think ... is that correct?" or
 - "I am wondering ... is that correct?"

Try the exercise twice. Once have the respondent answer in the affirmative: "yes, that is correct." The other time have the respondent answer in the negative: "no, that isn't what I think/feel/expect."

Conclusion

God calls us to "walk in the light." When we realize we have made an assumption, we can use this tool to check that assumption and maintain our walk in the truth.

