



START OVER

Small Group Guide: Start Over - Week 3

Series: Start Over

Main Scripture: Luke 14:25-27, Mark 8:34-35, Philippians 3:13-14

Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question: What's one New Year's resolution you've made in the past that was all about self-improvement? Did it stick? Why or why not?

Key Takeaways

- 1. Beyond Self-Improvement to Self-Denial**
 - Starting over isn't just about improving ourselves; it's about denying ourselves to follow Jesus
 - The essence of discipleship is self-denial, not self-improvement
 - 2. Two Critical Questions**
 - What needs to be done around me?
 - What do I need to do about it?
 - 3. The Paradox of Life**
 - Whoever devotes themselves to themselves will have nothing but themselves to show for themselves
 - If you devote yourself to more than yourself, you'll have something more than yourself to show for yourself
 - 4. The Cost of Following Jesus**
 - Following Jesus requires making Him the ultimate authority in our lives
 - We must be willing to say "no" to ourselves so we can say "yes" to something bigger
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **Read Luke 14:25-27.** When Jesus talks about "hating" family and even our own life, what is He really asking of us? How does this differ from emotional hatred?
2. The sermon stated, "You may never do anything that changes the world, but you can change somebody's world." How does this perspective shift the way we think about impact and purpose?

Personal Reflection

4. If you're honest with yourself, what percentage of your daily decisions are made with "What's in it for me?" as the primary consideration? How does this align with Jesus's call to self-denial?
5. When you think about your life right now, is it primarily focused on self-preservation or self-sacrifice? What evidence supports your answer?

Going Deeper

7. **Read Mark 8:34-35.** What does it practically look like to "lose your life" for Jesus and the gospel in your current season of life?
8. The sermon asked, "What needs to be done around me?" Take a moment to honestly assess: What needs do you see in your family, workplace, neighborhood, or church that you've been ignoring?
9. How do you reconcile the call to self-denial with the legitimate need for self-care, boundaries, and personal responsibility?

Application

10. The speaker said, "You cannot give yourself away and be empty." Have you experienced this paradox in your own life? Share a time when serving others actually filled you up rather than depleted you.
11. What is one specific area where God is calling you to say "no" to yourself so you can say "yes" to something bigger? What's holding you back?
12. If you were to shift your "start over" goals from self-improvement to kingdom impact, what would change about your plans for this year?



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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to commit to this week:

Option 1: The "No to Me, Yes to Others" Challenge

- Identify one daily habit or routine that's all about you
- Replace it with something that serves or blesses someone else
- Journal about the experience

Option 2: The Assessment Exercise

- Set aside 30 minutes this week for honest reflection
- Write down answers to: "What needs to be done around me?" and "What do I need to do about it?"
- Share your insights with one trusted friend or accountability partner

Option 3: The Surrender Prayer

- Each morning this week, pray: "God, before You tell me what You want, my answer is YES"
- Keep a log of how this posture changes your day
- Note any opportunities for kingdom impact that arise

Option 4: The Impact Inventory

- Make a list of the people in your immediate circles (family, work, neighbors, church)
 - Beside each name, write one specific way you could change their world this month
 - Pick one and take action this week
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Prayer Focus

Pray together for:

- Courage to deny ourselves and truly follow Jesus
- Eyes to see the needs around us that we've been missing
- Wisdom to know what God is specifically calling us to do
- Freedom from the trap of living only for ourselves
- A fresh vision for the abundant life Jesus offers through self-sacrifice

Personal Prayer Requests: (Allow time for group members to share and pray for one another)

Looking Ahead

Before Next Week:

- Continue reading through the Gospel accounts of Jesus's teachings on discipleship
 - Journal about one area where you're choosing self-denial over self-improvement
 - Come prepared to share how God is challenging you to start over in a bigger way
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Leader Note: This topic can be convicting. Create a safe space for honesty while also encouraging action. The goal isn't guilt but transformation. Remind the group that self-denial isn't about self-hatred—it's about discovering the abundant life Jesus promises when we say yes to Him.