



Opening Prayer: Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to help group members honestly examine areas where the enemy may be choking out God's Word in their lives.

Icebreaker: Have you ever experienced a situation where a current or tide (literal or metaphorical) pulled you away from where you wanted to be?

Key Takeaways:

1. There is a spiritual current in this world constantly trying to pull us away from God. If we aren't actively moving toward God, we'll drift away.
2. Thorns = demonic spiritual attacks that exploit our fleshly desires in three main areas: worldly cares, deceitfulness of riches, and desires for other things.
3. We must "drive out" spiritual enemies (bitterness, unforgiveness, pride, lust, fear) or they will trouble us ("poke us") wherever we go.
4. Cast your cares—and leave them there. Don't take back what you've given to God.
5. Money is deceitful. It promises what only God can provide.
6. Seek God first, not things. When we passionately pursue God, He provides what we truly need and drives out unhealthy desires.

Discussion Questions:

1. Who can quote the verse they memorized last week?
2. Identify your thorns: Which of the three thorns (cares, riches, desires) most threatens to choke out God's Word in your life right now? (Matthew 6:19-34)
3. Where have you excused sin as "just how you are"? What steps can you take to drive out those enemies? (Ephesians 4:22-24, **Colossians 3:5-10**)

4. The Casting Exercise: Write down your specific cares on paper. Pray over them, symbolically "cast" them (place them in a box, tear them up, throw them in a fireplace, etc.), and commit to leaving them with God. (1 Peter 5:6-7, Psalm 55:22)
5. How can we assess what our financial priorities are? What are practical ways to shift those? (2 Corinthians 8:1-5, 9:6-11)
6. Read Matthew 6:33. How would our lives look differently if we truly believed and practiced this verse?

Practical Applications:

1. Accountability: Pair up with another group member this week. Share one specific area where you need to "drive out" a spiritual enemy. Come up with specific steps you can each take. Pray for each other and check in mid-week.
2. Financial Heart Check: Review your spending and giving patterns. Are they reflecting that you're seeking first God's kingdom? What one change could you make?
3. Memorize: Matthew 6:33 and speak it out loud each morning.
4. When someone says "take care," remind yourself: "I don't take care, I cast care."
5. The Seeking Challenge: For one week, start each day by seeking God FIRST before checking your phone, news, or to-do list. Journal about the difference it makes. (Psalm 5:3, Isaiah 50:4-5) Be prepared to share about this next week.

Closing Prayer: Father, help us to remove the thorns choking out Your Word in our lives. Teach us to cast our cares and leave them with You. Protect us from trusting in riches, and create in us a passionate desire for You above all else.