

SMALL GROUPS

Key Sermon Points

Main Idea

Real change isn't behavior modification—it's spiritual transformation. It's not "God, then me" or "God, not me," but "God through me."

Core Scripture

Romans 7:15, 19, 24 & 1 Corinthians 15:9-10

- Paul's struggle: wanting to do right but doing wrong
- The solution: God's grace working through us

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. The Three Mindsets: The sermon outlined three approaches to change:
 - God, then me (God saves, then it's all up to me)
 - God, not me (God does everything, I do nothing)
 - God through me (God's power working through my effort)
2. Which mindset have you most often operated under? How has that worked out for you?

3. The Sailboat Illustration: Pastor shared the image of a sailboat designed to catch wind, not be powered by rowing. How does this picture help you understand the difference between willpower and Spirit-power?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 15:10 together. How did Paul balance his hard work with God's grace? What does "yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me" mean practically?

Going Deeper

4. Spiritual Why: The sermon emphasized adding a "spiritual why" to our goals.
 - Share an area where you want to see change in your life
 - What has been your "why" for wanting this change?
 - What could be a deeper, spiritual "why" for this same change?
5. The Heart Issue: Pastor Mack said, "If you change your behavior but don't change your heart, the behavior will come back."
 - Why is heart change more lasting than behavior change?
 - Can you think of a time when you experienced genuine heart change versus just trying harder?
6. God's Grace: The statement was made: "The grace that saves you is also the grace that changes you."
 - How does this truth change the way you approach your struggles?
 - Where have you been relying on your own strength instead of God's grace?

Personal Application

7. Zechariah 4:6 says, "Not by might, not by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty."
 - What does it look like practically to depend on the Holy Spirit's power in your daily life?
 - How can you position yourself to "catch the wind" of the Spirit this week?

8. Declaration: "I am disciplined. Christ in me is stronger than the wrong desires in me."
 - Why is it important to declare truth over ourselves?
 - What truth do you need to declare over your specific area of struggle?

Practical Action Steps

This Week's Challenge: Define Your Spiritual Why

Individual Exercise (Can be done in group or as homework):

1. Identify the Change: What is one specific area where you want to see transformation?
2. Your Current Why: Why do you want this to change? (Be honest—even if it's shallow)
3. Your Spiritual Why:
 - How does this change honor God?
 - How does it align with God's purpose for your life?
 - What spiritual truth or biblical principle connects to this area?
4. Examples from the sermon:
 - Phone time → "God is love, and I want to love people, not screens"
 - Finances → "Everything comes from God; I want to steward His resources wisely"
 - Physical health → "My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit"
5. Your Spiritual How: What spiritual resource is available to you?
 - Prayer
 - Scripture memorization
 - Accountability
 - Holy Spirit's power (fruit of the Spirit)
 - Community support

Group Accountability

- Share your "spiritual why" with at least one other person in the group

- Exchange contact information for check-ins during the week
- Commit to praying for each other's specific areas of desired change

Key Takeaways

- ✓ Real change is spiritual transformation, not behavior modification
- ✓ Change happens through God's power working through us, not by our effort alone
- ✓ We need both a spiritual "why" (God's purpose) and a spiritual "how" (God's power)
- ✓ The same grace that saved us is the grace that changes us
- ✓ We were designed to be powered by the Spirit, not by willpower alone

Closing Prayer

Prayer Focus Areas:

- Confession of areas where we've been trying in our own strength
- Invitation for the Holy Spirit to empower us
- Specific prayer for each person's area of desired change
- Thanksgiving for God's grace that saves AND changes

Suggested Prayer: "Lord, we confess that we've been trying to change in our own strength. We've been rowing when we were designed to sail. Fill us with Your Holy Spirit. Let Your grace work through us. Help us to see Your purpose in our desire to change, and empower us with Your strength. We can't do this alone, but we trust that You can do it through us. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Looking Ahead

This is Week 1 of the "Breaking the Cycle" series. Over the next few weeks, we'll continue building on these foundations. Come prepared next week to share:

- How defining your spiritual "why" changed your perspective
- Any victories or struggles you experienced
- What you're learning about depending on God's grace

Additional Resources

Recommended Scripture Reading This Week:

- Romans 7:14-25 (Paul's struggle with sin)
- Romans 8:1-17 (Life in the Spirit)
- Galatians 5:16-26 (Walking by the Spirit)
- 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (God's power in weakness)

Reflection Question for Daily Devotions: "Where am I trying to row today when God wants me to raise my sails?"

Remember: You're not alone in this journey. God's grace is sufficient, and His power works best in our weakness. Let's trust Him together!