Small Group Guide: Renewal; A Focus on Spiritual Wellness

Based on Colossians 3:9-14, 1 Cor. 9:24-27

How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help your group move into a deeper review of the video and the scripture it is based on. Take time to read the scriptures at the beginning of your group discussion. Work through the sections at a pace that fits your group. Not every question needs to be answered -- choose the ones that spark a deeper understanding for your group.

Overview

This session focuses on conducting a mid-year spiritual inventory, renewing our minds through Scripture, and staying disciplined in our pursuit of a closer relationship with God. Drawing from Colossians 3 and 1 Corinthians 9, we are challenged to run with purpose, not aimlessly, and to keep the ultimate prize in view as we evaluate where we are and where we are headed.

Key Takeaways

- A regular spiritual inventory keeps us honest about our growth and prevents small problems from festering into larger ones.
- Renewal of the mind is an active, ongoing process, not a one-time event. It requires intentional engagement with Scripture, prayer, and community.
- Paul's image of the disciplined athlete in 1 Corinthians 9 reminds us that spiritual growth demands the same focus and commitment we give to physical or professional pursuits.
- We are not simply running away from old habits and sin. We are running toward God, toward a prize that is eternal and far more significant than anything this world offers.
- Community, whether in small groups, recovery settings, or Bible study, is one of God's primary tools for our growth. Sometimes you show up to give and leave having received exactly what you needed.

Scripture References

- Colossians 3:9-14 describes putting off the old self and putting on the new self, which is continually being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its Creator.
- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 uses the image of a runner and a boxer to illustrate the discipline required to pursue the eternal prize, with Paul emphasizing that he brings his body under control rather than being mastered by it.

Discussion Questions

1. At the beginning of this fall session, you were encouraged to set spiritual goals. Without judgment, how have those goals gone? What has helped you stay on track, and what has gotten in the way?
2. Step 10 of the Life Recovery program calls for taking a personal inventory and promptly admitting when we are wrong. Why do you think promptness matters? What happens when we let things sit unaddressed?
3. Step 11 focuses on seeking through prayer and meditation to improve conscious contact with God, asking only for knowledge of his will and the power to carry it out. What does this kind of prayer look like practically in your daily life? How is it different from the way you might normally pray?
4. Colossians 3 describes being renewed in knowledge in the image of the Creator. When you think about your own Bible reading or study, how has returning to familiar passages revealed something new or timely for your current season of life? Can you share a specific example?
5. The discussion drew a contrast between running away from something and running toward something, using Paul as an example of a man who left an old life behind but was not aimlessly fleeing. He was running toward God. What does it look like in your own life to run toward something rather than simply away from something?
6. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 9 that he disciplines his body and brings it under control so that he himself will not be disqualified after preaching to others. What areas of your life feel most like they are controlling you rather than you controlling them? How does that affect your spiritual life?
7. The conversation touched on how much time and energy people devote to physical training, sports, careers, or hobbies, and how that same intensity is

rarely applied to spiritual growth. What would it look like for you personally to treat your spiritual life with that level of seriousness and intentionality?

9. Have you ever shown up to a group or study expecting to contribute and instead found that you were the one who received something you needed? What does that experience tell us about the value of the Church?
10. The group mentioned that hearing someone else's story in a recovery or small group setting can prevent you from going down a similar path. Has someone else's experience ever redirected you or helped you avoid a mistake? How did that happen?

Practical Applications

- **Take your inventory this week.** Set aside 15 to 20 minutes before the end of this week to honestly assess the spiritual goals you set at the beginning of this session. Write down what has gone well, what has stalled, and one specific adjustment you can make before the new year.
- **Address something promptly.** If there is a conversation you have been avoiding, a wrong you have not yet admitted, or a relationship with some tension in it, take a step toward resolving it this week. Do not let it carry into a new season.
- **Reframe your motivation.** The next time you are tempted to abandon a spiritual discipline or give in to a distraction, pause and ask yourself: am I running toward God right now, or am I drifting? Redirect your focus toward the prize rather than away from the problem.
- **Pray specifically.** Model your prayer this week after the language of Step 11: ask God not just for what you want, but for knowledge of his will and the power to carry it out. Journal what comes to mind as you pray that way.
- **Consider the Life Recovery Group.** If you or someone you know is working through habits, patterns, or struggles that are bigger than you can handle, reach out to Ben Ellis or Joe Brumfield to learn more about getting connected with a group.

Closing Prayer Focus

Pray together as a group for the following:

- That each person would finish this year with renewed focus and honest self-reflection.
- That God would give each member clarity on the goals he has for them, not just the goals they have set for themselves.
- That the discipline of running toward God would become a daily habit rather than a seasonal one.
- For those in the group who are in the middle of difficult conversations or personal struggles, that they would have courage to address things promptly and not let them fester.