

Life Group Leader's Guide

For the week of October 30, 2016

Quick Review

This week, Mark discussed how we can control our emotions, especially when it comes to things like fear and depression. What is one key truth you pulled out of his message?

My Story

1. Describe the happiest moment of your childhood. What made it so special?
2. If you feel comfortable, share with your group about a time you felt like you were losing control of your emotions.

Digging Deeper

- Learning to control our emotions can be a real struggle. It's so much easier just to let them control us. But exercising self-control can be extremely beneficial. Have one of your group members read Proverbs 16:32 and 25:28.
 - Why do you think Solomon equates self-control with the walls of a city in this verse? What are the benefits of self-control? What might it protect us from?

In Proverbs 19:32, Solomon says it is better to have self-control, than conquer a city. Then, in Proverbs 25:28, he paints a picture of self-control as the walls of a city.

To make this discussion a little more fun and memorable, consider taking some time to have group members (who feel comfortable sharing) tell about what mental picture comes to their mind when they think of self-control. What about other common emotions such as anger, fear, or depression?

- Failure to control our emotions – especially anger – can quickly result in a lack of control over what we say. Read James 1:19-27 and answer the following questions:
 - What reasoning does this verse give us for the necessity of controlling anger? What might being slow to anger have to do with humbly accepting the word God has planted in our hearts?
 - How could failing to bridle your tongue render your religion worthless? Have you ever seen or experienced this? What did it look like?

If you are interested in taking this conversation a little farther, go ahead and dig into James 3:5-12. Here you can lead a robust discussion on the power of the tongue. If you choose to take this route, consider the following questions to spur on discussion: What are the two opposite things that James says come from the tongue? Why might the tongue be compared to a fire? Even though these verses make it clear that we are unable to completely tame the tongue, what are some ways that we can do our best not to let it get out of control?

- Emotions in and of themselves are often a beautiful thing, but the Bible has a lot to say about how and why we are to control them. Have someone read each of the following verses and then answer them as a group:
 - Ephesians 4:26-27
 - Is it okay to be angry? How does the Bible say we should handle anger when it comes? In what ways might handling your anger this way benefit you personally, as well as the state of your relationships?
 - 1 Timothy 3:1-3
 - Why is it important for leaders of the church to be self-controlled? Why do you think Paul takes the time to make a clear mention of this trait to Timothy?
 - Read Galatians 5:17-25
 - What is the opposite of a life led by the Spirit? How do the fruit of the Spirit combat the desires of the flesh? How do you interpret the importance of self-control from these verses? In what ways should self-control manifest itself in the Christian life?

Within this topic, it may also be beneficial to discuss sexual desires/emotions present within the stories of David and Bathsheba or Amnon and Tamar. If you think there may be individuals in your group who are unfamiliar with either of these stories, you can find them in the following locations:

David and Bathsheba: 2 Samuel 11

Amnon and Tamar: 2 Samuel 13

If you choose to cover one or both of these topics, consider utilizing the following questions:

- Discuss the pain David's decision to seduce Bathsheba ultimately caused. Were the wounds short or long-term? In what ways do wounds caused from a lack of emotional control impact us differently from other wounds?
- Many times we think of self-control as something that has to occur "in the moment". However, a lack of control of emotions over time can end up leading to poor decisions that are premeditated. In Amnon's case, what could he have done to quench his desires, control his emotions, and make the right decision? What reasoning might he give for choosing not to do these things?

Taking It Home

1. What emotion do you struggle most to control? What are some strategies you have learned today that you can apply this week?
2. In what ways can controlling your emotions help you strengthen your testimony this week?

Pray together.

- Take time to follow up on previous requests and discussions.
- Ask for new requests.
- Pray specifically for the Holy Spirit to help each of your group members to have better self-control this week when it comes to emotions.