Series: God’s Gym
“Bible Reading: Cleansing of the Word”

January 17, 2016

Start by Reviewing the Relational Guidelines for Life Groups:

Confidentiality: What’s said in the group stays in the group.
Listen: Let’s value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond or what you are going to say next.
Pause: Allow a pause in conversation after someone shares to give the person sharing a chance to finish and give the group an opportunity to consider what was shared before responding.
Silence: It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for someone to share and for members in the group to process the topic or question being considered.
No Cross Talk: Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
No Fixing: We are not here to fix each other. Jesus does that. Give encouragement, speak truth, and point to Jesus. Don’t try to fix each other.
No Rescuing: When people are sharing something deeply personal, there can be a tendency to make them feel better about themselves or the situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause them to stop sharing. Resist the temptation to rescue people.
Sharing: Be sensitive about the amount of time you share.
Use “I” statements: It’s easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “they,” “the church,” “us,” “we,” etc.
Household Rules: We appreciate those who open their home up to Life Groups and out of respect for them, we need to…(take shoes off, clean up, replace furniture, leave by 8 pm, etc – personalize these for your group).

Then Remind Everyone of the Purpose of your Life Group:

The purpose of our group is:
1) To DO LIFE TOGETHER; to commit to be together in the joyful and difficult moments of life
2) TO GATHER with others who will disciple us, encourage us and help us to mature in Christ
3) For each of us TO MATURE in our relationship with God
4) to be here FOR OTHERS; to encourage them, to help disciple them
5) to INVITE OTHERS to share in our community, which means our group will branch at some point. When that time comes, if you would like to lead or host a group, let the leader know.
Warm-Up
When in your life have you been most committed to exercising?

Begin by reading this the passage to frame this series: “Exercise daily in God—no spiritual flabbiness, please! Workouts in the gymnasium are useful, but a disciplined life in God is far more so, making you fit both today and forever. You can count on this. Take it to heart. This is why we’ve thrown ourselves into this venture so totally. We’re banking on the living God, Savior of all men and women, especially believers.” (1 Tim 4:8-9 from the Message)

Have someone open in prayer, particularly concerning the challenge of this passage.

Head (Knowledge)
(Either story or read) Romans 12:2. What stands out to you in the passage? Why?
What does it mean to no longer conform to this world?
What does it mean to be transformed by God? How is this different than just changing our outward behavior?
What role do our minds play in our spiritual transformation? Why must God cleanse them?
Read Hebrews 4:12 and Jeremiah 23:29. How does God’s Word transform us?
What the difference between reading the Scriptures for information and transformation?

Heart (Transformation)
Have you experienced the difference between reading for information and transformation in your life?
Pastor Mark showed a picture of a boat being rowed in two directions at the same time. Do you ever feel this way spiritually, being pulled by your voice and God’s? How does it feel?
Have each person name one area where they struggle most with competing desires (for what God wants and what you want)?

Hands (Mission)
Are you willing to experiment with reading the Scriptures for transformation? (Or, if you’re group is meeting later in the week...Did you experiment with Psalm 23?)
What’s keeping you from engaging Scripture like Pastor Mark described? (Or, was it challenging?)
What do you expect might happen? (Or, how did it go?) [Remember, transformation is a marathon, not a sprint]