

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Greet each other—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Week in review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Opening prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

Message Summary

Week 3 of the "new" series dealt with defaults and the beliefs and behaviors that all of us repeat without really even thinking about it. Pastor Paul dealt with the following four questions about defaults:

1. **What is a default?** "A particular setting or value for a variable that is assigned automatically by an operating system and remains in effect unless canceled or overridden by the operator" or "a situation or condition that is obtained in the absence of active intervention." Basically, a default is what we do normally without thinking.
2. **What is our default?** Men have 2 kinds of defaults – beliefs and behaviors – and the second follows the first. The Bible is clear that apart from Jesus, our beliefs are centered on ourselves (Numbers 13:33 shows how the men saw the world through their own beliefs about how small they were) and our behaviors are self-centered, too. Galatians 5:19-21 offers a brutal list of default behaviors that we're destined to repeat without even having to think about it.
3. **Can our default be changed?** Basically, we're stuck if our default can't be changed, and according to the definition of default, that's only possible if there is an "active intervention" by the operator to "cancel or override" the old settings. 1 Corinthians 6:11 explains how Jesus actively intervened by washing us, sanctifying us, and justifying us. The old default – according to Colossians 2:14 – has been cancelled. Our old default led to death (Proverbs 14:12 and 16:25) but Jesus has provided a new way (John 14:6) which opens the door to a new default.

4. **How do we protect the new default?** *Before Jesus intervened, we had no choice but to follow the old default, but now we have been given the power to choose to live according to a new default, and the way we protect it is by going to war. 2 Corinthians 10:5 reveals that the fight takes place in our mind by tearing down and taking captive (both require effort and action) thoughts that don't line up with the truth of Jesus. Ironically, the thoughts that we tear down are often true thoughts about our past that Satan tries to remind us of.*

We should not be surprised that our first thoughts are often the old default. We also shouldn't be surprised when they are often accurate thoughts about what we've been or done. Remember that Satan's greatest tool against Christians isn't a lie, but rather true statements about their past. Our best weapon against Satan? The first sentence of 1 Corinthians 6:11: "And that is what some of you were."

When our beliefs or behaviors begin to reflect the old default, it is imperative that we wage the war in the battlefield of the mind and fill it with God's words. The best strategy we have is to constantly fill our minds with the words of Scripture.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Perhaps no teaching that we've done at The Gathering to this point relies so much on the understanding of a process. 1 Corinthians 6:11 says that we "were" under the old default, and so often we expect the change from old to new to be quick and complete. What are the pros and cons of going through that process in community with others?
- Read Romans 7:15-20 and discuss the struggle that Paul describes.
- What is the conclusion that Paul makes in Romans 7:21 about evil? How does it compare to what God said in Genesis 4:7?
- We can choose, as some believers do, to live in a helpless mentality against the old default, or we can do what Paul did in Romans 7:24-25. What was his response to the constant presence of evil?
- If you have experienced the salvation of God by being rescued from the old default ("this body of death" as Paul calls it), take a minute and thank Him as a group for His rescue!
- According to Romans 5:18, what did justification give us?
- When Jesus gave us a new default, He justified us, or made it "just as if I'd" never sinned. How can knowing this truth – and having the life mentioned in the verse above – help you as you wage war for a new default?

PRAY!

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.