

IMITATE

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



THE MINDSET OF CHRIST

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the Imitate: Mindset of Christ video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read Ephesians 4:17-32

Invitation

In this passage Paul writes to the Ephesian Christians and contrasts their former life and mindset in the world with their new life and mindset in Christ. Verses 20-24 talk about the way and truth of Christ and the fact that, as disciples of Jesus, we have been given new minds and a new self that are like God in righteousness and holiness. Consider this text and Jesus' life, then discuss what it looks like for us to take on the mindset of Christ, who relied on the Father and emptied himself for the sake of others.

How do we change our mindset to be more like Christ?
Do you have a testimony of how God has changed your mindset to be more like Christ?

Read Romans 12:9-21. This is Paul's summary of the Sermon on the Mount and the charter for what the Kingdom mindset should look like for Jesus' followers. Discuss this text. What comes easy for you? What do you struggle with in this passage? What steps can we take to live this out in the church and the world? What would the results be if we did this?

The Holy Spirit fills us and empowers us as Christians. Ephesians 4:30 tells us not to grieve the Spirit. Look at

THE MINDSET OF CHRIST

Ephesians 4:25-32 again. In this context what does it look like to grieve the Spirit? What does it look like to be filled with the Spirit?

Challenge

Changing our mindset is a hard task. We need to rely on the Holy Spirit in us to change us. Our mindset will positively or negatively affect our actions. Considering the list of mindsets in Ephesians 4 and Romans 12, what is one mindset that you will commit to working on in your life so that you can more closely imitate Christ? Take a moment to review the text and pray about what step you will take to imitate the mindset of Christ.

I will _____

* Please share your “I will” statement with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner and throughout the week(s) check in with each other on these “I will” statements. Encourage and pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in this challenge.

WAY OF CHRIST: PRAYER

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the Imitate the Way of Christ: Prayer video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read Luke 18:1-8, 11:1-13; Matthew 6:9-13

Invitation

Why should we pray? What does it do to us and/or God?

How should we view God regarding prayer? Is God like the unjust judge or different? Does He need to be badgered or bothered to answer us?

How is your prayer life? Do you pray daily? What has helped you be consistent? What have been roadblocks to consistent prayer?

The disciples ask Jesus to teach them to pray. Has anyone ever taught you to pray? If so, how? What are some different methods of prayer?

Look at the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2-4 and Matthew 6:9-13. What do you notice about the way Jesus teaches His disciples to pray and how does this form us as disciples? How can you implement this kind of prayer into your daily life?

Faith is sometimes seen as a "transactional currency" to get God to answer your requests: If you have enough you will get what you ask for. What does Luke 11:9-13 say about that idea?

WAY OF CHRIST:PRAYER

Do you have a testimony of answered prayer you can share with the group? Was it answered according to the way you asked it or did you realize later that God answered it in a way you didn't expect Him to?

Challenge

Praying corporately and individually is an important part of life together. How will you make prayer a regular part of your small group meetings? Maybe start with praying the Lord's prayer together as a group and then expand on it in your own words (the italic sections):

- Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name
 - o *Thank God for who He is*
- Your Kingdom come; Your Will be done on earth as it is in heaven
 - o *Pray for God's love, justice, and mercy to become a reality everywhere and declare your allegiance to His kingdom above all others.*
- Give us this day our daily bread
 - o *Pray for provision for yourself and others.*
- Forgive us our trespasses
 - o *Ask forgiveness for your sins, mistakes, wrongs, and the systemic ones you may be a part of.*
- As we forgive those who have trespassed against us
 - o *Pray to forgive others who have sinned against us*
- Lead us not into temptation
 - o *Ask for God to guide you. Pray for discernment of His will in the decisions you make today.*
- Deliver us from evil
 - o *Ask God to set you and others free from evil, mistakes, indifference, etc.*
- For Yours is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever, amen

WAY OF CHRIST:PRAYER

Prayer is an essential part of forming us into Christ's image, helping us hear God's voice, and aligning us with God's will. What steps will you take to make prayer a regular spiritual rhythm in your life?

I will _____

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Next Steps:

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WAY OF CHRIST: WORSHIP

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last “challenge”.

Watch the Imitate the Way of Christ: Worship video on Mt. Zion’s YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read Ephesians 5:18-20

Invitation

Worship is not only the lifestyle of a disciple. It is also certain acts of devotion that form us in our imitation of Jesus. Singing in praise, thanksgiving, and adoration is an important spiritual rhythm. Jesus began the Lord’s Prayer with adoration (Our Father who is in heaven hallowed be Your name). What is the purpose of worship and adoration?

Worship can be done personally and corporately. Why are both important?

What is the difference between psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs? Ephesians 5:18-20 says be filled with the Spirit singing to the Lord and giving thanks for all things. Have you experienced this?

What if I don’t like singing or can’t sing? Does God call us to be experts at something in order to do it?

Read 1 Chron 16:8-36

The text uses the word “proclaim” in v23, which literally means “to evangelize.” Why is it important to daily evangelize ourselves, other believers, and the nations through song? What about God is being “evangelized” in 1 Chron 16:8-36?

WAY OF CHRIST: WORSHIP

How do you express yourself in worship? There are 7 Hebrew words for our 1 word “praise.” Each Hebrew word has an action connected to it such as bowing, raising your hands, dancing, praising with an instrument, shouting, and dancing. Is it important to be expressive, or is it okay to be “the frozen chosen”?

Consider Michal’s response to David and the worship in 1 Sam 6:16,20-23. David participated and Michal was critically examining it. What was David’s focus in worship versus Michal’s?

Challenge

Worship is a way to enthrone God on our praise (Psalm 22:3). It helps us take ourselves off the throne of our life and let God have His rightful place as Lord. Putting ourselves in a place of humility and surrender is essential for allowing God to work in our hearts and form us into the people He’s created us to be. How will you implement worship into your spiritual rhythms so that you can be formed deeper in your discipleship? Take a moment to pray about what step you will take to imitate the Way of Christ in worship.

I will _____

* Please share your “I will” statement with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner and throughout the week(s) check in with each other on these “I will” statements. Encourage and pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in this challenge.

WAY OF CHRIST: BIBLE STUDY

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last “challenge.”

Watch the Imitate the Way of Christ: Bible Study video on Mt. Zion’s YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read Psalm 1

Invitation

The psalmist attributes his ability to be planted and produce good fruit, while avoiding the wicked, to his meditation on the law of the Lord. Do you meditate on God’s word? How does one meditate on scripture?

What does scripture study look like in your life? Do you use any tools to help you study? What is the importance of personal and communal study of scripture?

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. Paul says the scriptures can make us wise for salvation. Salvation is more than going to heaven, but as Paul puts it in Romans 8:29, the goal is about being conformed to the image of Christ. Look at what Paul says in 2 Tim 3:16-17 about what scripture is useful for. How do these things help us imitate Christ?

Read Matthew 4:1-11. Jesus quotes scripture to overcome the temptations of the devil. Discuss the importance of memorizing scripture. Look at how Jesus used scripture in this passage. The purpose of scripture is not just knowing it, but applying it. How do we bridge the gap between head and heart when it comes to studying the Bible?

WAY OF CHRIST: BIBLE STUDY

Challenge

2 Peter 3:15-16 says, “Our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.” What can we do to be taught and stable in our study? Studying scripture should be more than checking a religious box or accumulating knowledge. 2 Timothy 2:15 says that we should be “approved workers” who know how to correctly handle the word of truth. In its context, “correct handling” is shown by our behavior and character. Our study should result in transformation that looks like Jesus. What steps will you take to study God’s word more deeply and be transformed? Take a moment to pray about what step you will take to imitate the Way of Christ in Bible study.

I will _____

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For further study, watch the Bible Project videos on how to read the Bible:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/how-to-read-the-bible/>

WAY OF CHRIST: FIRST FRUITS

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the First Fruits Video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-11

Invitation

At times the church has connected the concept of giving to simply be about 10% of your income. Yet the idea of first fruits in the Bible is not just about money or a certain percentage of income, but about an entire life lived for God — your first and your best. Our mindset should be that everything is on loan from God, and we are stewards of God's portfolio. We give because God gave (John 3:16). The mindset of generosity should be a mark of the church. Talk about ways we can be givers of our time, talent, and treasure.

How can you give the best of your time to the Lord? What controls your time? What can you give up?

God has given us each a gift(s) that should bless the body and that should be a witness of His grace to the world. What are your talents? Do you use them for you or for the Lord? What can you do to grow in your gifts and use them to bless Christ's body? How do you serve in the body of Christ?

God loves a cheerful giver. Discuss what a disciple's attitude should be in giving.

Sometimes money is the hardest thing to give and yet we know the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. What can you do to be more generous with your finances?

WAY OF CHRIST: FIRST FRUITS

Read Acts 2:43-44 and Acts 4:34-35. What can you do to contribute to the needs of the body of Christ and your small group?

Challenge

Jesus says, “where your treasure is there your heart will be also” (Matt 6:21). What do you treasure? Examine your time, talents, and treasures. List one thing you will commit to for EACH of these 3 categories in order to foster a rhythm of first fruits living and giving in your life. Take a moment to pray about steps you will take to imitate the way of Christ in first fruits.

I will _____

- Time
- Talents
- Treasure

* Please share your “I will” statement for each of these areas with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner and throughout the week(s) check in with each other on these “I will” statements. Encourage and pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in this challenge.

WAY OF CHRIST: REST & SOLITUDE

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the Rest and Solitude Video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read 1 Kings 19:1-18

Invitation

Elijah had just had a showdown on Mt. Carmel with the 450 prophets of Baal, and now Jezebel was trying to kill him. After traveling 100 miles to Beersheba, he was exhausted and fearful of what the future might hold.

Are there times in your life where you have felt exhausted, overwhelmed, and fearful of the future? Maybe you do right now. Share some of those moments with your group.

Elijah traveled another day's journey into the wilderness. He sat down under a bush, wanting to die, and fell asleep. What was God's response to take care of him? Why do you think this is significant?

Read verse 10 again. What was Elijah's complaint to God? God spoke truth to his anxieties in a still, small voice. What was God's response to him in verse 15-18?

Challenge

Read Luke 10:38-42. Jesus came to the house of Martha and Mary to teach and answer people's questions. What was the difference between Martha's and Mary's response to this?

WAY OF CHRIST: REST & SOLITUDE

In *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*, John Mark Comer writes, “Could it be that Dallas Willard was right? That an overbusy, digitally distracted life of speed is the greatest threat to spiritual life that we face in the modern world? I can’t help but wonder if Jesus would say to our entire generation what he said to Martha: ‘You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed -- indeed only one.’”

What comes to mind when you read this quote?

How do we balance the things that we HAVE to do with all of the extras we may add to our lives?

Luke 5:16 says, “But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Jesus always had things vying for His time and attention, yet he found time to get away to a quiet place to pray. Are there ways you can simplify your life to make sure you have space in your day/week to have rest and solitude?

Take a moment to pray and write down what you will do to take the next step towards building consistent rest and solitude into your life.

I will _____

* Please share your I Will statement with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner, and throughout the week check in with each other on these I will statements. Encourage and

WAY OF CHRIST: REST & SOLITUDE

pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in your commitment to the Way of Christ: Rest and Solitude.

For further study, read the book “The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry” by John Mark Comer.

WAY OF CHRIST: FASTING

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the Fasting Video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read Matthew 9:14-17

Invitation

What were some of the reasons that people fasted in scripture?

What do you think the motivation for fasting may have been for John's disciples? What about for the Pharisees? What does Jesus say should be the main reason to fast?

Read Galatians 5:16-25. What is the flesh and what does it mean to live by it?

What does it mean to live by the Spirit?

What role does fasting play in this internal struggle between the flesh and the Spirit? Do you see this example in the life of Jesus?

Challenge (For the challenge portion, break up into gender-based groups.)

When Jesus was fasting in the wilderness, He overcame many of the temptations that could have kept Him from fulfilling His purpose.

In the same sense, we have a purpose to fulfill in Christ. What is that purpose?

WAY OF CHRIST: FASTING

If you were led into the wilderness to pray and fast, what would be the things that the enemy would tempt you with that God wants you to overcome?

Jesus had a consistent lifestyle of prayer and fasting to continually put the flesh into submission. Do you have a consistent rhythm of fasting in your life? If yes, what does that look like? If not, why do you think that may be?

Take a moment to pray and write down what you will do to take the next step towards building a healthy rhythm of fasting into your life.

I will _____

* Please share your I Will statement with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner and throughout the week, check in with each other on these “I will” statements. Encourage and pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in your commitment to the Way of Christ: Fasting.

WAY OF CHRIST: CONFESSION

Check in – share your successes and/or struggles with the last challenge.

Watch the Confession Video on Mt. Zion's YouTube channel (Commit, Imitate, Replicate playlist) or on the website.

Read 2 Chronicles 7:13-14; 1 John 1:9; Acts 3:19-20; James 5:16-17

Invitation

What role does pride have in sin?

Why do you think humility is listed first in 2 Chronicles 7:14?

Do you think a person can make a true confession without humility? Why or why not? What is repentance, and what role does it play in confession?

God's goal for our lives is for us to know Him and imitate Jesus in the world around us. Why is confession an important part of this process?

What does God promise to do when we confess our sins to Him?

Read James 5:16. If God forgives us when we repent and ask for forgiveness, why do we need to confess to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

Read 1 Peter 5:8-9. The devil is referred to as a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. When lions hunt, they don't try to take out the whole herd, they single out one animal and try to get it away from the herd. If we only share our

WAY OF CHRIST: CONFESSION

struggles with God but no one else, how does that make us an easy target for the enemy?

Challenge (For the challenge portion, if possible, break up into gender-based groups.)

James 5 says that when we confess our sins to each other and pray for one another, that we will be healed. Is there a time in your past that you had to confess something difficult, but you found healing from it?

Two of the reasons for confessing your struggles to your brothers and sisters are encouragement and accountability. Take some time in your groups and share areas for which you need accountability and encouragement.

Take time to pray for each individual and help encourage them in some practical ways to grow based on what they shared in the group. Your I Will statement should reflect some of these steps.

I will _____

* Please share your I will statement with your small group.

Next Steps:

Choose a prayer partner and throughout the week, check in with each other on these I will statements. Encourage and pray for one another. At your next small group gathering, share your successes and struggles in your commitment to The Way of Christ: Confession.