

Small Group Guide: “New Year, New You”

Opening Question: What is one thing you've tried to change about yourself in the past that was harder than you expected? What made it so difficult?

Opening Prayer: *Dear Lord, thank you for gathering us here today. We are grateful for the opportunity to look deeper into Your Word and explore how we can see personal change in our lives through Your guidance. Open our hearts and minds to your wisdom and to encourage each other in this journey of transformation. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.*

KEY SERMON POINTS

Main Idea

This message addresses why personal change is so difficult and provides three biblical requirements for lasting transformation:

1. Learn the truth about you and Jesus - Change begins with discovering truth about ourselves and who Christ is.
2. Make different choices - We must actively work out our salvation through the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. Develop a new way of thinking - Transformation happens through the renewing of our minds.

Pastor Dan emphasized that behind every self-defeating behavior is a lie we believe, and change is possible through God's power working in us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Understanding the Problem

1. Pastor Dan mentioned four reasons change is difficult: We're comfortable where we are, We fear the unknown, We're masking deeper problems, and Satan works to distract and discourage us.
 - Which of these resonates most with you? Why?
2. The sermon stated: "Behind every self-defeating behavior in your life is a lie that you believe." Can you identify a self-defeating behavior in your life? What lie might be behind it?
3. The pastor said, "The biggest liar in your life is you." How do we rationalize, justify, or make excuses for behaviors we know need to change?

Learning Truth

4. **Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.** How does Scripture function as teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in our lives? Can you share an example of when God's Word corrected your path?
5. The sermon emphasized discovering truth about ourselves AND about Jesus. Why is it important to discover both? What happens if we only focus on one?
6. What role does daily Bible reading play in personal transformation? What barriers keep you from consistent time in God's Word?

Making Different Choices

7. **Read Philippians 2:12-13.** What is the difference between "working FOR salvation" and "working OUT salvation"? Why is this distinction important?
8. Pastor Dan used the gym analogy - we don't invent muscles, we develop what's already there. How does this apply to spiritual growth? What has God already placed in you that needs development?

9. "God gives you the desire and the power to change." Have you experienced God giving you supernatural power to change something you couldn't change on your own? Share your story if you are comfortable.

Renewing Your Mind

10. **Read Romans 12:1-2.** Pastor Dan shared this diagram:
THOUGHTS → FEELINGS → ACTIONS
Why do most people try to change their actions instead of their thoughts? Why doesn't that work?
11. Metanoia (repentance) means "a mental U-turn" or "to change your mind."
What is one area where God is calling you to a mental U-turn - to think differently about something?
12. The two tools for renewing our minds are God's Word and prayer.
How are you currently using these tools? What would it look like to use them more intentionally in 2026?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS (Choose 1 or 2 that apply to you.)

1. **Write it down:** Take a card or paper and write down the one big thing God laid on your heart. Put it somewhere you'll see it daily.
2. **Identify the lie:** Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal what lie you're believing that's behind the behavior you want to change.
3. **Find the truth:** Search Scripture for truth that counters the lie. Write it down and memorize it.
4. **Start a Bible reading plan:** If you don't have one, choose a plan this week. (Check your church website, YouVersion app, or other resources)
5. **Set up daily devotions:** Decide when and where you'll meet with God daily. Schedule it like an appointment.

MEMORY VERSE for the Week:

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:2, NIV)

Closing Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for this discussion today. We ask for your continued guidance and strength as we strive to make changes in our lives that align with Your will. Help us to hold onto Your truth and to lean on the Holy Spirit for power and direction. May we encourage and support one other in this journey, always seeking to glorify You. In Your precious name, we pray. Amen.