

Why are we here?

1. To affirm whether you are called to be married or not.

2. To allow the Holy Spirit to reveal what needs to change or be adjusted in your life so that you have the greatest success at marriage or remarriage.

3. To heal from the past, confront your fears and concerns of the present and future.

4. To learn more about yourself and the Lord’s best for you versus your best.

5. To build an accountable group of friends all on the same journey.

Prayer Structure

1. Form groups of no more than 4 people

2. Discuss your answers as a group, allowing everyone to share; take notes to use during the prayer portion

3. Pray out loud *options*

• You can read each other answers you wrote down in the form of prayer

• You can pray for each other in whatever direction

• Everyone can pray for themselves

• One person can pray for everyone

Pray for a Mate guidelines:

• Be on time to end on time.

• Respect privacy and/or boundaries

• If your group finishes praying early, please remain quiet until everyone is done.



Negative Thoughts

* **ICEBREAKER**: Find someone you don’t know well and share about a time that you  struggled with negative thoughts. [10 minutes]
* **BIG BOARD**: Write on a big board or have folks share out loud their answers. [10 minutes]
* **BIG GROUP DISCUSSION/Devotion on the Topic of:** Negative Thoughts  [10 minutes]

* **SMALL GROUP 1: What are some of your negative thoughts?**[10 minutes]

**Read/Discuss:** Our  thoughts can impact our beliefs about ourselves. Think about circus animals, like elephants, who are raised in this environment--while small, they are chained to a post and they soon come to realize that they cannot break the chain. However, as they grow in size and strength to adulthood, they could easily snap the chain, but because of their early conditioning and thought processes, they remain chained, not realizing how their thoughts are keeping them held prisoner!

Think about how this analogy can apply to our negative thoughts. All of us have experienced negative thoughts, at one time or another--they can range from insecurity or lack of confidence, guilt, unforgiveness,  worry, etc. Are you being held prisoner by negative thoughts? What negative thoughts are you experiencing? Do you tell yourself that you are not as good as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in the blank)? Are you critical of yourself---if only I were smarter, funnier, in better shape physically, etc.??? Do you harbor resentful thoughts about someone, are you easily offended? If you are not comfortable discussing your own negative thoughts, can you share about a close friend or family member who has been struggling with negative thoughts? Satan uses these negative thoughts to create strongholds in our minds , to make us feel isolated and defeated. To feel hopeless. Remember, Satan is a liar, he can’t speak truth. He wants to destroy your faith, your witness, your joy, your job, your happiness, and your health, your relationships with family and friends.

**Read these scriptures and discuss:**

**John 8:44(b)**: *He [the devil] was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a falsehood, he speaks what is natural to him, for he is a liar and the father of lies and of all that is false* (taken from the Amplified Version).

**John 10:10**: *The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have and enjoy life, and have it in abundance* {to the full, till it overflows} (taken from the Amplified Version).

**Proverbs 23:7**: *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he* (taken from the New King James Version).

**Q: How do these scriptures relate to negative thoughts?**

[Pray using the guidelines][15 minutes]

**Group Prayer Time**

Pray for each other’s struggles with negative thoughts.

* **SMALL GROUP 2:  What are ways that negative thoughts can be unhealthy, especially in dating relationships?**[10 minutes]

**Read/Discuss:** What are ways that negative thoughts can be unhealthy?  Playing negative self talk tapes over and over in our minds can result in sleep problems, anxiety or depression, and other health ailments. How can negative thoughts impact our relationships? How can they impact our dating relationships? Marriages?

**Read and discuss each of the following scriptures  and apply them to what you’ve gleaned from this prayer time already:**

**2 Corinthians 10:5:** *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ* (taken from the King James Version). What does it mean to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?

**1 Peter 5:8-9:** *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world* (taken from the King James Version).

**Ephesians 6:11-12:** *Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places* (from the New American Standard Version).

[Pray using the guidelines][15 minutes]

Group Prayer Time

Pray for each other, for relationships that are being impacted by negative thought patterns.

* **SMALL GROUP 3: How can we combat negative thoughts?**[10 minutes]

**Read/Discuss:**  How can we stop Satan’s attempts by his use of negative thoughts to steal our peace, cause confusion and anger, and encourage wrong relationships in our life?

Here are some ways to stand firm against these attacks:

* Prayer
* Time in the Word
* Encouragement and support from other believers

What are some other ways? How can you change those negative self talk tapes that play over and over?

**Read and discuss these scriptures:**

**Galatians 6:9:** *And let us not lose heart and grow weary and faint in acting nobly and doing right, for in due time and at the appointed season we shall reap, if we do not loosen and relax our courage and faint* (taken from the Amplified Version).

**1 Peter 5:10:** *After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you* (taken from the New American Standard version)*.*

**Psalm 1:2-3**: *But his delight and desire are in the law of the Lord, and on His law (the precepts, the instructions, the teachings of God) he habitually meditates (ponders and studies) by day and by night. And he shall be like a tree firmly planted  [and tended] by the streams of water, ready to bring forth its fruit in its season; its leaf also shall not fade or wither; and everything he does shall prosper [and come to maturity]* (taken from the Amplified Version).

[Pray using the guidelines][15 minutes]

Group Prayer Time

Pray for God’s help in fighting negative thoughts and for opportunities to share with others who may be experiencing negative thoughts.

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