

Study Series: Joyful Surrender

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 Lesson Title: “The Discipline of the Mind” (pp. 119-131)

Session 9

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The main point of this lesson is: The discipline of the mind is essential for the believer’s life.

Focus on this goal: To help adults practice the discipline of their minds

Key Bible Passage: Romans 12:1-2

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

To introduce this session, ask: What does it mean to discipline your mind? Why is a disciplined mind essential for the believer’s life?

After a brief time of response, call on a volunteer to read Matthew 22:37. State that we are called to love God with all of our minds.

Observe that this session will focus on what it means to discipline our minds as Christ’s disciples.

Step 2. Renewed Thinking

**Organize** the class into two groups. **Assign** one group Romans 12:2 and the other group Colossians 3:2. **Instruct** groups to restate their Scripture in their own words, explaining how obeying the Scripture can be transformative for the believer’s life and highlighting challenges to obeying the Scripture. After a brief time for each group to focus on their assigned Scripture, **invite** them to report.

**State** that so many distractions cause our minds to wander aimlessly so that we are not disciplining our minds the way God desires. **Ask:** *Do we have more or fewer distractions today than our Christian forebears? How might those distractions differ across the years?*

**Follow up by asking:** *How might our distractions differ from someone living in a Third World country or a war-torn country?*

**Invite** learners to share their distractions and solutions to ridding those distractions from their lives (Day One, activity 1, p. 120).

Step 3. Renewed Sense of Reality

**State** that reality television shows are popular today, but for many of us the “reality” portrayed is not even close to reality. **Ask:** *If you were the star in your own reality television show, what would that reality show reveal about you?*

**Challenge** learners to discuss how they explained the author’s statement about a transformed mind transforming a believer’s vision of reality (Day Two, activity 1, p. 121).

**Call on** a volunteer to read 1 John 1:8. **Discuss** how being realistic about our own sin directs us to the reality of Jesus. **Talk** about how reality shows often glamorize sin, which leads to a false sense of reality. **Ask** how our personal “reality shows” can highlight holiness rather than sin.

Step 4. Renewed Sense of Possibilities

**Challenge** learners to share personal situations that were “impossible” humanly speaking, but that God turned around to make them possible. **Discuss** how a renewed mind—a mind focused on God—helped turn those situations around.

**State** that a mind that is not renewed, not focused on God, can focus on wrong feelings and wrong thoughts, which often lead to wrong actions. **Ask:** *How can one errant thought lead to a sin that might change the trajectory of our lives? How can one thought from a mind focused on God change the trajectory of our lives in a way that will honor God?*

**Read** Romans 12:2 from the Jerusalem version of the Bible (p. 123). In the groups assembled earlier, **ask** learners to think of a scenario where wrong feelings and thoughts led to wrong actions and to describe how refocusing the mind on God could have prevented the wrong actions.

**Call on** a volunteer to read Philippians 4:8. **Ask:** *How can thinking such things help keep our mind focused on God?* (Day Three, activity 2, p. 124)

Step 5. Renewed Awareness of Spiritual Forces

**Ask** learners to give examples of how evil forces are at work in the world. **Acknowledge** that keeping up with world events can be disheartening. **Ask:** *How does the fact that God is sovereign and will ultimately be victorious guide you to pray about and respond to these horrors?*

**State** that believers, whose minds are renewed, are called to speak truth to such horrific and sinful situations. **Challenge** learners to discuss their answers to sharing unpopular truth and lessons learned (Day Four, activity 2, p. 126).

Step 6. Renewed Obedience

**Draw attention** to the eight “sophistries” used as substitutes for clear thinking (p. 127). **Invite** learners to discuss their “go-to sophistry” and practical ways to avoid that human response and instead focus on obedient love of God (Day Five, activity 2, p. 128).

**Ask** learners to share personal experiences that affirmed the author’s statement (p. 127), “If we take each question, doctrine, problem straight into the presence of Christ, who *is* the Way, the Truth, and the Life, and ask, ‘Which way to the Kingdom of Heaven?’ the answer will be there.”

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Close by saying** that sometimes Christians focus on loving God with all their hearts and souls, but relegate loving Him with all their minds to the backseat. **State** that God desires to renew our minds so that our lives can glorify Him.

**Pray** that learners will refocus their minds on God daily and ask Him to renew their minds.

