



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Uphill Habits – Thinking Higher

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January 14, 2018

Main Idea – Nagging feelings and thoughts might indicate we have unconsciously allowed Satan to plant negative ideas in our heads. We are not to allow negative thinking, and negative ideas, to coexist with the love and faith God has placed in us. We must intentionally speak truth into our hearts and minds - followed by meaningful action - to replace the false ideas.

Internal smoke alarms

- Most of us have smoke alarms in our homes that beep when the batteries need changing.
- In the same way, we have internal smoke alarms in our brains that give off small “beeps” – or intuitive feelings of concern - that indicate something in our lives is wrong and needs to be fixed.
- When we experience such internal feelings of unrest, we must ask ourselves where the alarm is coming from.
- It could be we have unconsciously allowed Satan to plant a negative, or untrue, idea in our minds.
- We need God’s help to identify the false idea we have unconsciously adopted.
Psalm 139: 23 – Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.
- If we don’t take care of this situation, the negative idea will take authority over all our thoughts. We cannot allow a wrong idea to undermine the authority God has given us in life.

Cohabitation with the enemy

- We cannot be happy, or effectively used by God, if we allow ourselves to live with negative thoughts or wrong ideas. It’s hard to defeat an enemy if it has an outpost in our head.
- Clues you may be co-habiting with the enemy
 - Feelings of anxiety
 - Irritableness
 - Anger
 - Depression
 - A tendency to over-react to things
 - Apathy

- Such things are not normal. They may be warning signs that something is not right in our lives. We cannot allow these feelings to remain in our lives as if everything is okay.

Limiting Beliefs

- Limiting Beliefs are beliefs that in some way constrain us. When we believe these things, we do not think, do, or say the things we should be doing.
- We cannot defeat these beliefs and feelings by just ignoring them, or simply wanting them to go away. They must be replaced by true ideas.
- We must change our thought patterns by intentionally thinking differently and taking sure, opposing actions and steps.
- We must eliminate small thoughts before they produce fruit.
- **2 Corinthians 10: 3-5 – For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.**

Take action

- The Gospels tell a story of an ill woman who took action to receive healing by simply touching Jesus' clothing. She took an action that followed from her faith.
- **Matthew 9: 20-22 – Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.**
- It is unlikely she would have been healed if she had remained inactive in her faith. She was healed when she took an action.
- Faith is not just a feeling; it involves follow-through. **James 2: 17 – In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.**
- Exercise your faith, not your feelings.
- In Scripture, when Jesus complimented someone, he was usually responding to something he or she had done – an action taken.
- Each of us might ask ourselves, "What action can I take to show God I am focusing on Him, and not false ideas?"
- In this season of fasting at the start of a calendar year, pray God will reveal to you any limiting thoughts that are inhibiting your effectiveness and happiness.
- Then, take an action to affirm the good thing God has shown you. Don't allow the enemy any foothold in your mind.

The Hebrew year 5778

- The calendar year 2018 is the Hebrew year 5778.
- The symbol for eight (and also the eighth letter in the Hebrew alphabet) is called “chet.”
- Chet breaks cycles of 7. It is the next thing beyond 7.
- If seven is a number that represents perfection, eight is what follows – or happens after - having experienced God’s miraculous grace.
- Chet (8) represents
 - new beginnings
 - elevation
 - connections and divisions (a gateway)
 - superabundance
- God is opening up an opportunity for us to step up to the next higher place in our lives by not co-habiting with negative ideas.
- We must take the next upward step in life – going from seven to eight – as we continually move toward a Heavenly perspective of things.
- **Isaiah 55: 8-9 – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”**
- One way to understand the year 5778 is: “Behold the beautiful kingdom, seeing the superabundant next level, miraculous, cycle-breaking, new beginning.”

Reflective Questions for Uphill Habits: Thinking Higher

1. Can you recall a time when you had an uneasy feeling about something in the back of your mind? Could this have been an example of your internal smoke alarm saying something was wrong and needed to be corrected?
2. At such times, why is it necessary to ask God to seek out the problem instead of trying to reason it ourselves?
3. Once God has identified the problem, why must we take a decisive action instead of simply trying to “think away” the problem?
4. What do you need to do to “cross a bridge” in the Hebrew year 5778 to a higher level of understanding?