

Session #7: It's time to take back YOUR life!

Welcome, Opening Prayer & Review Homework: 15 minutes

How did you score on the busy assessment?

- ***Discuss as a group.***

Busyness is of the enemy and he wants to rob you of peace and make you think it's OK to love a life of stress. That stress doesn't end with YOU either, for it gets translated into every relationship you have. God cares more about your relationships than He does about your tasks and your ability to ***"multi task!"***

Couple's Breakout: 30 minutes

- ***Do you take pride in your busyness and your ability to multitask?***

The reality is that NO ONE does it well! God didn't build us to multitask. Research shows that multitasking is actually counterproductive! In fact busyness blinds us and dictates our schedule, so we don't slow down enough to think about each task. Oftentimes, being busy multitasking fills a need to accomplish tasks in order to feel worthy. We seem to have an insatiable desire to always be one step ahead of where we are. It could be a coping mechanism to keep ourselves from thinking or feeling things we don't want to acknowledge, or an attempt to live up to the expectations of others.

- ***Discuss as a group.***

If you identify yourself as someone who's constantly "busy," sit down and ask yourself:

- ***In all of your busyness, are you living the life that God wants you to live?***
- ***Does your busyness fulfill you, or are you trying to live up to the goals and expectations of what others want for you?***

The bottom line is that how you spend your time is a *reflection of your priorities*. God has already defined what should be the most important thing in your life, so now is the time to make time for God and the loving relationships that He has given you to cherish! Don't think Jesus can't sympathize with your busyness.

- ***Make some practical a measurable commitments to one another about "breaking the busy cycle!"***

If you REALLY want to grow in your relationship with God, YOU NEED TO MAKE TIME to do so. You will benefit. Your spouse will benefit. Your children will benefit for generations to come. The ripple effect of YOUR DECISION to break the busy cycle will reach far beyond your wildest dreams.

- ***Discuss as a group and then pray for each other for God to give you what's needed to make some hard choices!***

Group Discussion: Personal Values Exercise Homework Review &

Closing Prayer: 15 minutes

HOMWORK: Personal Values Exercise:

5-Step Process

Step 1. Determine your top values:

Use the list, on the next page, of common personal values to help you get started.

Step 2. Prioritize your top values:

Jim Collins, author of “Good to Great” said: “If you have more than 3 priorities, you have no priorities.”

Step 3. Reaffirm your values:

Check your top-priority values, and make sure that they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

Step 4. Answer defining questions:

Now it's time to answer some specific questions about your values in order to start “operationalizing” those values into an action plan.

Step 5. Operationalize your values:

Operationalizing our values means that we have to live-out our values in our behaviors and skills in a way others can see them and experience them.

Step 1. Determine your top values, based on your experiences of fulfillment:

Use the following list of common personal values to help you get started. Start by circling the top 10 values you feel drive you. Don't overthink it at this point. After you pick your top 10, narrow them down to 5. Walk away from this exercise for a few hours and then come back to it and aim to land on your 3 top values.

Step 2. Review your lists and prioritize your top values:

This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself. It's also the most important step, because, when making a decision, you'll have to choose between solutions that may satisfy different values. This is when you must know which value is more important to you. Jim Collins, author of "Good to Great" said: ***"If you have more than 3 priorities, you have no priorities."*** Using that comment, let's keep our combined top values down to the Final Three. This step is probably the most difficult, because you'll have to look deep inside yourself. It also is the most important step, because when making decisions, you must know which value is most important to you.

Acceptance	Faith	Parenting
Accountability	Family	Patriotism
Achievement	Financial Stability	Patience
Adaptability	Forgiveness	Peace
Adventure	Freedom	Perseverance
Altruism	Fun	Power
Ambition	Generosity	Pride
Authenticity	Giving Back	Recognition
Balance	Gratitude	Relaxation
Beauty	Growth	Reliability
Being the Best	Harmony	Respect
Belonging	Health	Responsibility
Career	Helpfulness	Risk-Taking
Caring	Home	Safety
Challenge	Honesty	Security
Collaboration	Hope	Service
Commitment	Humility	Silence
Community	Humor	Simplicity
Compassion	Imagination	Stillness
Competency	Inclusion	Spirituality
Competitiveness	Independence	Stewardship
Confidence	Integrity	Success
Connection	Initiative	Teamwork
Contentment	Intelligence	Thrift
Contribution	Intuition	Time
Cooperation	Joy	Tradition
Courage	Justice	Travel
Creativity	Kindness	Trust
Curiosity	Knowledge	Truth
Dignity	Leadership	Understanding
Diversity	Legacy	Uniqueness
Efficiency	Learning	Usefulness
Encouragement	Leisure	Vision
Enthusiasm	Love	Vulnerability
Ethics	Loyalty	Wealth
Excellence	Making a Difference	Wellbeing
Fairness	Nature	Wholeheartedness
	Openness	Wisdom
	Optimism	
	Order	
	Organization	

- Write down your top values, not in any particular order.
- Look at the first two values and ask yourself, "If I could satisfy only one of these, which would I choose?" It might help to visualize a situation in which you would have to make that choice. For example, if you compare the values of service and stability, imagine that you must decide whether to sell your house and move to another country to do valuable foreign aid work, or keep your house and volunteer to do charity work closer to home.
- Keep working through the list, by comparing each value with each other value, until your list is in the correct order.

My TOP Priorities:

Step 3. Reaffirm your values:

Check your top-priority values, and make sure that they fit with your life and your vision for yourself.

- *Do these values make you feel good about yourself?*
- *Are you proud of your top three values?*
- *Would you be comfortable and proud to tell your values to people you respect and admire?*
- *Do these values represent things you would support, even if your choice isn't popular?*

When you consider your values in decision making, you can be sure to keep your sense of integrity and what you know is right, and approach decisions with confidence and clarity. You'll also know that what you're doing is best for your current and future happiness and satisfaction.

Making value-based choices may not always be easy. However, making a choice that you know is right is a lot less difficult in the long run.

Step 4. Answer defining questions:

- *What values will help you find your way in the dark?*

- *Which one creates a direct path to your purpose?*

- *What value helps me to come alive in a new way?*

As you consider your top 3, ask yourself:

- *Do these define me?*

- *Are these representing who I am at my best?*

- *Do they make my eyes smile?*

- *Can these be used as a filter by which to make hard decisions?*

Step 5. Operationalizing your values:

Operationalizing our values means that we have to live-out our values in our behaviors and skills in a way others can see them and experience them. Making them real and actionable promotes trust and supports our relational desires.

So, take each value you have identified and define 2 actions to make it come alive:

My **first** value is: _____

To make my value an action, *I need to:*

My **second** value is: _____

To make my value an action, *I need to:*

My **third** value is: _____

To make my value an action, *I need to:*
