

The Mind and the Spirit

Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. Are you more “left-brained” or “right-brained”? Explain.
2. What is one unexpected thing that has happened in your life so far in 2018?

Read the following passage: Read Romans 8:1-17.

In this passage Paul explains the good news that we can be both forgiven and transformed. The Law of Moses may clarify God’s will for our lives, but it doesn’t give us the power to fulfill it. In our “fleshly” human existence inherited from our ancestors we are prisoners to the power of sin. But Jesus’ substitutionary death frees us from the condemnation we deserve, and the transforming work of God’s Spirit empowers us to live in a new way. The Spirit of God gives us new minds and new lives.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Modern psychology has provided a great deal of helpful insight into human behavior and functioning, and we can achieve some level of personal transformation by applying this insight to our lives. Why are we in need of a transformation that goes beyond this level of self improvement?
2. According to Romans 8:1-3, what was the law powerless to do and why? Explain how we can be delivered from the penalty and power of sin?
3. Read John 3:1-10. What does it mean to be born again? Why do we need to be born again? How does this relate to Romans 8:1-8?
4. What does it mean to have our minds set on what the flesh desires? (See Romans 8:5.) Read Galatians 5:19-21. What are some “acts of the flesh” that are particularly prominent in our cultural context? Are there any acts of the flesh that you regularly find yourself being lured into?
5. Discuss the following (simplified) categorization: “Traditional religious systems emphasize transforming oneself in order to be accepted by a deity or to achieve enlightenment. Modern culture downplays the need for any personal transformation. The Gospel announces that God transforms those who come to Him in humble faith.” Explain what is meant by each statement. Do you find yourself slipping into either a traditional or a modern mindset?
6. How do we know if some desire or feeling we are experiencing is “fleshly” or from God’s Spirit? Is Christianity all about suppressing desire? Explain.
7. Our culture puts a lot of emphasis on being true to oneself, following what you feel, and forming an identity based on inward desires and emotions. Why is this

problematic?

8. Read Romans 8:14-17. Describe the relevance of this passage to 1) Recognizing the Spirit's voice in our lives, and 2) living with a genuine assurance of salvation.
9. Are you confident that you have been born again? Explain.
10. How would you like to see the Spirit of God work in your life?

Pray