

Small Group Leader's Guide

Series: The Struggle Is Real

Sermon Title: Part 2 – When Your Mind Won't Shut Off

Date: October 11, 2026

Key Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9

1. Welcome & Snacks (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** Create a warm, inviting atmosphere and give group members time to settle in and catch up.
- **Leader Tip:** Greet everyone as they arrive. Have refreshments set out and encourage people to chat casually before officially beginning.

2. Icebreaker (10 minutes)

- **Goal:** Help members relax, open up, and get comfortable sharing in the group.
- **Icebreaker Activity:** *"Brain Chatter"*
 - Ask group members to share one minor or funny thought that got stuck in their head this past week (e.g., a catchy song, a task list they couldn't stop thinking about, or an overthought interaction).

3. Message Recap and Key Scriptures (10 minutes)

Key Scripture: Philippians 4:4-9

- **Rejoice & Pray:** Rejoice in the Lord always and present your requests to God with thanksgiving.
- **Peace That Guards:** God's peace, which surpasses understanding, will guard your hearts and minds.
- **Fix Your Thoughts:** Focus your mind on whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, or praiseworthy.

Main Teaching Highlights

- **The Battlefield of the Mind:** We face an everyday battle in our thoughts. Trying to fight off negative thoughts constantly isn't where victory lies—true victory comes when we actively replace bad mindsets with God's truth.
- **Gratitude Over Stress:** Gratitude and anxiety cannot occupy the same space. Developing daily thanksgiving changes our focus from fear to expectancy.

- **Action & Faith:** Waiting on God requires our participation. When we step out and do what we are capable of, God takes care of what we cannot do.
- **Truth in Love:** True love aims for a person's long-term growth and spiritual victory rather than temporary comfort, even if speaking the truth is uncomfortable.
- **Belonging & Identity:** Identity is rooted in God's love and supported by the church community. Isolation is a key tactic of the enemy, but community brings strength.

4. Discussion Questions (10 minutes)

1. **Focusing on Godly Thoughts:** Philippians 4 commands us to fix our thoughts on noble and praiseworthy things. What are some practical ways you can catch and redirect negative thought patterns during a busy day?
2. **Replacing "I should be further along by now":** Why is it comforting to realize that progress matters more than perfection? How does knowing God has you where you are right now change your perspective?
3. **Replacing "Something bad is going to happen":** How does intentional daily gratitude displace stress and change our expectations of how God will show up?
4. **Learning from David and Goliath:** David faced Goliath expecting God to bring victory rather than dwelling on fear like the rest of the army. How can we apply that same faith-filled expectation to our personal struggles?
5. **Replacing "I just want everyone to be happy":** Why can the desire to keep everyone happy lead to compromise? How do we balance speaking truth in love while keeping long-term spiritual growth in mind?
6. **Replacing "I thought God would have done something by now":** What is the difference between passively waiting on God and actively participating while waiting on Him?
7. **Replacing "Nobody likes me":** How does being secure in our identity in God protect us from feelings of isolation or rejection?
8. **Engaging in Community:** Why does the enemy try to make us feel isolated even when surrounded by supportive people, and how can we actively lean into our church community this week?

5. Fellowship & Further Discussion (30 minutes)

- **Goal:** Allow time for deeper conversation, personal application, and building stronger relationships.
- **Group Dynamic:**
 - Break into smaller groups of 2–3 if preferred so everyone gets a chance to share deeper personal experiences.
 - Reflect together on which of the five mindsets/replacement thoughts hit closest to home this week.
 - Share real-life examples where choosing gratitude or speaking truth in love made a noticeable difference.

6. Prayer Time (Flexible)

- **Goal:** Bring personal struggles, thought patterns, and gratitude directly to God in prayer.

Prayer Focus & Structure

1. **Praise & Gratitude:** Begin by thanking God for His constant presence, peace, and love.
2. **Mindset Alignment:** Pray for strength to capture negative thoughts and replace them with scriptural truths.
3. **Community & Truth:** Ask God for courage to speak truth with grace and for unity within the church community.
4. **Open Requests:** Invite group members to share specific personal prayer requests or areas where they need God's peace to guard their hearts and minds.