



Untangling Forgiveness in a Community of *Kindness*

Cultivate Book Study

Week 3 Study Guide: Chapters 5, 6 & 7
Melody Workman – Your Story | Your Journey: Winning the Mind Game

This week we learn about the power of our mind in our journey toward becoming women who forgive.

Read this week's chapters, then watch our teaching video. Use this study guide – either in a group or on your own – to reflect, respond and pray as you cultivate forgiveness into your life. Your goal is not to get through the content, but to get the content through you! Be REAL, invite God to speak into your life and respond to Him as you study.

Reading Reflection

How were you instructed, encouraged or challenged by this week's reading? Reflect on a word, statement or idea that got your attention. How can you cultivate that truth into your life?

Quick Study

If time only allows for quick study this week, linger here: As you consider both the thoughts you think toward yourself and others, where are you vulnerable to the enemy's whispers – the lies and confusion he creates in your mind? What is a strategy – a tool, weapon or truth – you will use to guard your mind when those attacks come?

Video Notes

Fill in the blanks following the on-screen prompts:

1. The thoughts you are _____ determine the story you are _____, and the _____ you are believing determines the _____ you are living.
2. God wants you to have a _____ strategy against the greatest _____ you will ever face.
3. We are going to _____ our mind.
4. Every thought we have is a _____ we make.
5. We are going to _____ our thoughts.
6. When your thoughts begin to _____, the enemy begins to _____.
7. Too many of us have decided to _____ at the Word, rather than to _____ on it.
8. God gives us the _____ to give forgiveness.

Key Verses

“As someone thinks within himself, so he is.” Proverbs 23:7 NASB

“We are demolishing arguments and ideas, every high-and-mighty philosophy that pits itself against the knowledge of the one true God. We are taking prisoners of every thought, every emotion, and subduing them into obedience to the Anointed One.” 2 Corinthians 10:5 VOICE

“Be careful what you think because your thoughts run your life.” Proverbs 4:23 NCV

“Finally, believers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable and worthy of respect, whatever is right and confirmed by God's word, whatever is pure and wholesome, whatever is lovely and brings peace, whatever is admirable and of good repute; if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think continually on these things.” Philippians 4:8 AMP

Reflect & Discuss

1. Lysa TerKeurst says “the things marking us from yesterday are still part of the making of us today.” As you consider your past experiences, how have they shaped your thoughts on forgiveness?
2. Attacks on our mind are a real thing. In what patterns of thought [e.g., fear, doubt, worry, insecurity] are you most vulnerable to the enemy’s attack?
3. Melody cautioned us that “when our thoughts begin to wander, the enemy begins to whisper.” Guarding our minds from those wandering thoughts is not passive, but an active, intentional, protective process. How can you begin that work today? Be specific, “I want to stop _____ and instead _____.”
4. Our social media and technology culture provides instant access to Christian influence and opinions. Does that lead you to glance at God’s word or to graze on it? What needs to change in your approach – whether that’s who, what or how – so that you stop snacking and start seeking?
5. Philippians 4:8 tells us to confirm what we think [ideas, opinions, perceptions] by comparing it to the truth of God’s word. How do you need to cultivate this practice into your life SO THAT you are not just hearing God’s word, but living it out?

Cultivate Forgiveness

Melody challenged us that if we don’t win the mind game, we will not get to authentic forgiveness. While becoming a woman who forgives is vital to our spiritual growth, being a woman who believes she is forgiven is where our journey toward cultivating forgiveness begins.

Do you have any thoughts [this might feel like an inner committee] that keep you from believing God’s forgiveness is available and accessible to you? What do those thoughts say?

Read Philippians 4:8. How do your thoughts about your forgiveness align with God’s word? Are they pure and right? Do they bring you peace? If not, how can you begin to guide your thoughts – taking the lies prisoner (2 Corinthians 2:5) and pursuing freedom in truth – SO THAT you can receive God’s forgiveness?

“If we become more self-aware of how we are processing our thoughts and perceptions and redirect those in more life-giving ways, then inside every loss, a more wise, empathetic, understanding, discerning, compassionate person of strength and humility has the potential to arise within us.” Lysa TerKeurst

When we value God’s forgiveness personally, we grow spiritually and willingly offer forgiveness to others. As we’ve learned, forgiving others is often a response of obedience – surrendering our thoughts and emotions (2 Corinthians 2:5) to follow God’s truth.

What thoughts and/or story [what you tell yourself and others] stand in the way of you offering authentic forgiveness to others? Be REAL – are those perceptions more a reflection of your character or of your offender?

How do your thoughts about forgiving others align with God’s word? Are they honorable and admirable? Are they based in truth and kindness? How are you encouraged or challenged in your willingness to give forgiveness the way God calls you to?

Pray, inviting God to search your heart and mind. Ask Him to give you the courage to guard your mind, guide your thoughts and build a life that tells a story of the power of forgiveness.

Dig Deeper

Choose any of these dig deeper opportunities to cultivate more of God’s word into your life.

- Read Micah 7:18-19: What do these verses reveal to you about God’s heart to forgive? What does God delight in showing us? According to verse 19, is there a limit to His compassion?
- Read Ephesians 6:12: According to these verses, who is our real enemy? Why is this important to remember as you practice forgiving your enemies – real or perceived?
- Choose any of the key verses from this week’s study and look it up in a few different translations to gain understanding and perspective. Biblegateway.com is a great resource for this!