

Talking through the message during the week helps you turn what God is saying to you into action steps. These talking points, questions and scriptures are designed to help you take the next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out the questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group.

- What do you tend to daydream about most often? Why?

**With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 4:23-27 and 2 Corinthians 10:4-5.** These passages discuss the importance of guarding our thoughts from impurities.

- Which types of toxic thoughts do you experience most often: negative, fearful, discontented or critical? Give examples of your toxic thoughts.
- How do your toxic thoughts negatively impact your life and relationships?
- What are some of the causes of the toxic thoughts in your life?

**Read Jeremiah 12:3, Philippians 4:7-8, Romans 12:2, Philippians 2:5 and Hebrews 3:1.**

These verses stress how important it is to renew our minds from toxic thoughts and focus our thoughts on what is pleasing to God.

- Why is it often easier to think toxic thoughts than it is to focus our minds on truth?
- In what ways do you renew your mind and focus your thoughts on God's truth?
- How different is your life when you focus your thoughts on what is true and good rather than on toxic things? Explain.
- What are some specific toxic thoughts that you need to change? What are some ways you can begin to make that change?

## NEXT STEPS

Here are some specific things you can do this week to help you replace toxic thoughts with God's truth:

Take time this week to renew your mind and focus your thoughts on God and things that are true. You can do this by asking God to renew your mind and remove all toxic thoughts from your life. Reading God's Word is also a great way to replace toxic thoughts with truth. You can start by reading some of your favorite passages, or you can begin a YouVersion Bible reading plan at <http://www.youversion.com/reading-plans/all>.

Make a list of the toxic thoughts that most often consume you. Next to each thought, write down one of God's truths that replaces that toxic thought. For example, if your toxic thought is "I can't handle this situation", change it to "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me," from Philippians 4:13 NKJV.

### Talk It Over with God:

- Confess the toxic thoughts you struggle with. Ask God to free you from these thoughts.
- Ask God to renew your mind. Commit to focus your thoughts on Him.
- Ask God to help you endure any trying circumstances that may be causing you to have toxic thoughts.
- Focus your thoughts only on God. Shut out all toxic thoughts. Think instead about His goodness and strength.
- Ask God to help you maintain a healthy thought life that is pleasing to Him.

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- Share one of your guilty pleasures. Movies? Music? Magazines? Is this a good or bad influence in your life? Explain.

**With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 25:26 and 3 John 1:11.**

These verses show us that when we allow toxic influences in our lives, it pollutes our lives.

- What are some of the toxic influences you currently have in your life? How have you seen these influences pollute your life?
- How have you seen toxic influences in your life impact your relationship with God and others?
- Why is it so difficult to filter out toxic influences in today's society?

**Read 1 Corinthians 5:6-7 and Romans 12:2.**

These passages remind us not to engage in toxic behavior because a little poison can go a long way.

- Describe a toxic influence that you have had in your life that started out as something small, but grew into something larger.
- What standards are you using to filter out toxic influences in your life? How well do think your standards match God's?
- What are some things you can do to completely remove the toxic influences from your life?

**Read 1 Corinthians 6:12, Psalm 24:3-4 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22.**

We are encouraged to avoid evil in these verses and instead aim for purity in our lives.

- What are some of the positive influences in your life? How do these influences impact your life?
- What things do you need to focus on that will help you draw closer to Christ?

## NEXT STEPS

Here are some specific things you can do this week to help you filter out toxic influences in your life:

Examine the toxic influences that are making the most impact in your life and commit to doing whatever is necessary to remove them. You may need to take such actions as placing filters on your internet usage, turning off certain television channels, removing certain kinds of music, or avoiding certain environments that bring toxic influences into your life.

Instead of allowing toxic influences into your life, take time this week to focus on the positive influences in your life. Focus on such things as finding joy through your family and improving your relationship with them. Focus on your relationship with God by spending more time in prayer and in the reading of His word.

### Talk It Over with God:

- Confess to God the toxic influences that are impacting your life. Ask God to help you remove these influences.
- Pray and ask God to help you filter out any toxic influences you may encounter in the future.
- Pray for those you know who are struggling with toxic influences in their lives. Ask God to deliver them.
- Pray that God will help you focus on the positive influences in your life such as your family and relationship with Him.
- Commit to God that you will reach to draw closer to Him each and every day.
- Ask God to uncover toxic influences in your life that you aren't able to see in yourself.

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- Who are some of the most positive influences in your life? How have these people impacted you?

**With your Bible or YouVersion, read 1 Corinthians 15:33-34 and 2 Timothy 2:14-19.**

These verses encourage us to stay away from toxic relationships that can corrupt us.

- In what ways have toxic relationships polluted your life and your relationship with God?
- "Bad company corrupts good character." Describe a time when you experienced this warning in your own life. What did you learn from this experience?
- What types of toxic relationships do you have more of in your life? Chronically negative, controllers, tempters, or some other category? Explain.
- In what ways are you the "toxic company" in your relationships? Which toxic behaviors do you tend to exhibit the most in your relationships?

**Read Matthew 16:21-23 and Genesis 39:1-12.**

These passages model how to set healthy boundaries in toxic relationships and how to cut them off when they become too extreme.

- What types of healthy boundaries do you need to establish in your relationships? How will you go about setting these boundaries?
- Why do you think we tend to have more toxic relationships in our lives instead of healthy ones?
- In what types of circumstances do you feel it would be necessary to end a toxic relationship?
- What are some things you can do to build healthier relationships in your life?

## NEXT STEPS

Here are some specific things you can do this week to help you deal with toxic relationship and build healthy ones:

We all have toxic relationships that need to be dealt with. Pick at least one of your most toxic relationships and establish some healthy boundaries that will protect you from that toxic influence or even become a godly influence to that person. Take time to discuss these boundaries with that person and pray that God will use this time as an opportunity for you to minister to them.

Take time this week to work on further developing your most healthy relationships. You might consider doing something nice for them to show your appreciation of their friendship. Pray for them and ask God to continue to make this relationship something that is your greatest spiritual asset and pleasing to Him.

### Talk It Over with God:

- Thank God for the healthy relationships in your life. Commit to God to work on deepening these relationships.
- Confess to God any toxic behaviors you are exhibiting in your relationships. Ask God to help you remove that sin from your life.
- Pray and ask God to guide you toward the best way to deal with the toxic relationships in your life.
- Commit to God that you will strive to become the greatest spiritual asset in the lives of your friends and family.
- Pray for those you know who are blind to a toxic relationship that is really leading them away from God's best. Pray that God will guide them in dealing with that relationship.

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- While you were growing up, did you hear more positive or negative words spoken to you? How did these words impact your life?

**With your Bible or YouVersion, read Proverbs 12:11-23, 18:21, 15:1-4, and James 3:3-12.**

These verses describe how powerful our words are and show both the positive and negative impact they can have.

- How are toxic words infecting your life currently?
- What type of words do you tend to speak most—toxic or life-giving? Explain.
- Describe a time when you were encouraged and uplifted by the power of positive, live-giving words.

**Read Proverbs 4:20-23 and Ephesians 4:22-32.**

These verses encourage to guard our hearts against toxic words and to speak life-giving words to others.

- You may not be able to stop toxic words from being spoken to you, but how can you guard your heart against toxic words?
- Who do you need start speaking more life-giving words to? How will you go about doing it?
- Why do you think we tend to speak more toxic words than live-giving words even when we don't intend to?

**Read Mark 11:20-25 and Matthew 12:34-37.**

Jesus shows us in these verses the importance of speaking life-giving words to ourselves and our situation.

- In which situations that you are currently enduring do you need to stop speaking toxic words to yourself?
- Why do you think it is so important for us to speak life-giving words to ourselves and our situation?

## NEXT STEPS

Here are some specific things you can do this week to help you speak life-giving words into your own life and the lives of others:

Probably at least one person in your life has been hearing toxic words from you. That person may be a family member, friend, co-worker or teammate. Commit this week to changing your toxic words into life-giving words. Make contact with that person and intentionally speak life-giving words to them. Consider apologizing to that person to begin the process of changing your words.

Many times the most toxic words we hear come from ourselves. Change your own toxic words into life-giving ones by writing down your most toxic comments to yourself. Next to each toxic comment, write down a life-giving statement that you can change it to. For example, if your toxic words are, "You'll never amount to anything," change it to, "God has great plans for me."

### Talk It Over with God:

- Commit to God that you will strive to use life-giving words in all of your relationships.
- Pray and ask God to help you remove toxic words from your thoughts and mind so that you won't speak them.
- Pray and ask God to help guard your heart from toxic words that are being spoken to you currently.
- Thank God in prayer for those that speak life-giving words to you and are a constant encouragement to you.
- Pray and ask God to deliver you from the pain toxic words have caused you pain throughout your life.

