



Week Two

Opening Praying

God, thank you for creating this group. Help us to connect with you and each other today; we want to hear from you.

Talk It Over

This week's talk is all about us trying to force others to change and us engaging in our own change game. When we consistently focus on getting others to change we can become exhausted before realizing that is an impossible process. People don't change for other people. We soon realize that the only person we can change is...ourselves.

- Is change something that excites you or something you dread? Tell us why.
- If you look back over the past five years, what is one change you can view in a positive or fun light? (Examples: birth of a child, addition of a family pet, positive job change, new friendship, etc.)

Read 2 Peter 3:9

One of the problems with trying to change others is it's exhausting. It's exhausting for the people who are trying to change the other person and it's exhausting for the person trying to be changed. The reality at hand here is it's impossible. Ultimately, we change when we personally make a decision to change.

- When a relational conflict arises, do you tend to try and get the other person to change or do you question how you might change to resolve the conflict?
- Share a time where you tried to force someone else to change.
- Share a story where you made an intentional choice to change.

Read Romans 14:1 (NIV)

Meeting people and accepting them where they are at is an extremely difficult thing to do. In our humanness we have strong opinions and understandings of what works best when it comes to relational behavior. In this verse we are being reminded that we all have baggage and that baggage has played a role in forming our way of interacting with each other. Meeting someone with gentleness and kindness allows those wounds to be safely expressed creating space for forgiveness and healing.

- Would you say you are good at accepting people as they are or is this a struggle for you? Explain your reasoning.
- Learning to accept ourselves is the best way to accept others. Do you have compassion for yourself? Do you speak kindly to yourself? How is the content of your inner dialogue or the tapes that run through your mind regarding life?
- Is there something that you need to forgive yourself for? Do you need to let go or forgive someone else for hurting you?

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Read Lamentations 3:40 (NIV)

Inviting God into our own change game graciously equips us to bring forth God's love, kindness, grace, and purpose in deeper ways to the relationships in our life — marriages, friendships, as parents, and as co-workers. As we bring ourselves out of hiding before God, and encounter his love in our mess, it enables us to see that others are lovable, worthy of respect, grace, compassion, and forgiveness in their mess too.

- What is the next step of change you feel led to after hearing this week's talk?
- What is one small thing you can do or practice each day that leads towards making that change a reality?

Forgiveness Disclaimer: Don't forget forgiveness doesn't mean a relationship or behavior is safe or healthy. Forgiveness doesn't equate to trust either. Forgiveness is to cancel a debt and stop feeling angry or resentful toward someone.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for relentlessly seeking after my heart. Continue to help me choose surrender when I am hurt and look for ways to journey with you. Help me to see myself clearly and bring change to the areas of my life that continue to need transformation and healing.