

WEEK 1: USING EXTREME LANGUAGE

ABOUT THIS SERIES

Sometimes, the stories we tell ourselves are filled with joy and hope. Other times, the stories we tell ourselves are filled with negative words that, in turn, create a negative story. In this series, your group will learn how to take “every thought captive” and make it a positive and faith-filled thought that Jesus wants for you.

ITEMS NEEDED

☐ Bibles

CHECKLIST BEFORE YOUR GROUP ARRIVES

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for your group | <input type="checkbox"/> Read through the Discussion Guide | <input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments (optional) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clean meeting area | <input type="checkbox"/> Clean bathroom | <input type="checkbox"/> Crack front door |

OPENING (5 MIN)

After a general welcome, say: Icebreaker time! This one will take a bit of honesty—

WHAT’S THE LAST GREAT BOOK YOU’VE READ?

After a brief discussion, say: Whether or not you’re a reader, we are all storytellers. As we live our lives, we tell ourselves stories about ourselves and the world around us. Some of the stories might be good, but some of the stories might be filled with negativity. And the problem is, words have power to shape our future. Today we’re going to learn to take control of the words we use as we begin our series *Storyteller*.

We’ll talk about all of that in a minute, but first, let’s pray.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MIN)

Host, lead the group in prayer.

THE POWER OF WORDS (5-7 MIN)

After a prayer, say: Research and science is learning that much of our life is the result of the language we use. God made our brains to be influenced in remarkable ways by the words we use and the words we hear.

Let’s take a moment to read four passages about the power of words and reflect on them.

LET’S READ THE FOLLOWING VERSES ALOUD AND THEN ANSWER—WHAT DOES THIS VERSE SAY ABOUT THE POWER OF WORDS?

PROVERBS 18:21

PROVERBS 16:24

MATTHEW 15:18

PSALM 141:3

EXTREME LANGUAGE (5-7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: Verses like these highlight the importance of choosing the right words when we tell stories to others or ourselves.

On Sunday we talked about one of the most common problem areas in our language is using extreme language.

Someone hurts us, “They ALWAYS do that! They’re the WORST!”

We fail at something, “I’ll NEVER learn this.”

Someone stereotypes us “NOTHING will ever change.”

One reason we talk with extremes is storytelling lends itself to the dramatic. Absolutes are a way to keep the listener engaged. But, like we’ve heard, extreme language has power to shape our thoughts, actions, and eventually, our lives. We start believing that “we can’t”, or “they never”, or “it always”.

WHEN DO YOU TEND TO USE EXTREME LANGUAGE LIKE THIS AT HOME OR WITH FRIENDS?

HOW ABOUT WORK OR SCHOOL?

FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE (5-7 MIN)

After a discussion, say: On Sunday we talked about how Jesus takes us to the other extreme, from the negative to the positive, from impossible to the possible.

CAN SOMEONE READ MATTHEW 9:23 ALOUD FOR US?

Let’s apply this idea of faith to our negative extreme language and find some alternatives to the phrases people use. I’ll give a phrase, you tell me an alternative, positive, faith-filled way to say it.

THEY ALWAYS DO THAT

THIS IS THE WORST

I’LL NEVER LEARN

NOTHING WILL CHANGE

NOBODY CARES

EVERYTHING IS RUINED

GOSPEL REMINDER (1 MIN)

After a discussion, say: If you’ll notice, much of the language of what’s possible turns our eyes to Jesus. It’s not about what we do, but about what God can do. When we look at the cross and the empty tomb, we see what it ultimately means that all things are possible with God!

CLOSING PRAYER (5 – 7 MIN)

ARE THERE ANY OTHER PRAYER REQUESTS TODAY?

Host, after taking prayer requests, close the group in prayer.