

PART 3: LIVING FREELY

Our feelings are always real, but they're not always reliable. Whether we realize it or not, we're all being formed, either drifting toward what's familiar or being deliberately transformed by the renewing of our minds. The thoughts we repeat most shape who we become, and that means real change is possible.

CONNECT

If you could instantly break one habit or instantly form a new one, what would it be?

LEARN

You will watch a shortened version of a message from this series to set up your group discussion. Watch the full message sometime this week as a reminder of what you talked about today.

APPLY

After sharing what stood out from the video, discuss the following questions as a group:

1. In the video, Joel said, "Your feelings are not facts." Can you think of a time you felt something deeply that turned out not to be true? How do you tell the difference between what you feel and what's real?

2. Read Romans 12:1–2:

   Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

   - Joel explained that mercy means judicial leniency: being let off for something you deserve to be punished for. How does looking at your life "in view of God's mercy" change the way you see yourself and others?
   - Joel pointed out that we will be formed either way: conformed or transformed. What are some of the strongest forces trying to conform you right now?

3. In the video, Joel said, "Repeated thoughts are what change the physical matter and the shape of your brain." What's a message you've had on repeat that doesn't line up with what God says is true? What truth could you start rehearsing instead?

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4. Joel carried a 3x5 card, where he'd written a lie and the truth that counteracts it, for 90 days before he realized something had changed. Why do you think lasting change in our thoughts takes so long? What helps you keep going when change feels slow?

WRAP UP

Over the past three weeks, we've seen how the stories we tell ourselves, the emotions we neglect, and the thoughts we repeat shape the way we live. We're all being formed. We can drift and be conformed, or we can be deliberate and be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This week, do what Joel did: on a 3x5 card, write down a lie you've been believing and the truth that counteracts it. Carry it with you, and pull it out every time that old message shows up. As a group, consider checking in with each other in a few weeks to share what you've noticed.

PRAY

Pray together as a group and thank God for his mercy and for making it possible for you to live differently. Ask him to reveal the lies you've been believing, replace them with his truth, and transform you by the renewing of your mind.

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