
★ TAKE YOUR ★ GROUND

WEEK 2 GROUP GUIDE | MESSAGE BY CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, let's go around the circle and answer this question:

What is your favorite TV show and why do you believe it is better than anything else on TV?

SHARE

Welcome to our series, "Take Your Ground."

We have all experienced the power of our thoughts. Our thoughts have the ability to take over our entire being, our mood, and inform our actions. Take falling in love, for instance. Remember what it was like to think of nothing else but the one your heart had fallen for? Every spare moment was thinking about how to spend more time with them or the last time you were together, and the reasons why you are absolutely captivated with that person. It's overwhelming! Our thoughts don't only exist by themselves, but rather they have the ability to dictate our emotions as well.

Living in relationship with the Lord is far from predictable, safe, or easy. He is the God of this universe, and he includes us in his grandiose plans for this earth. Since Adam and Eve disobeyed the Lord in the Garden of Eden, humanity has been at war with itself. We must now constantly fight the desire to be in charge of our own lives instead of cultivating our hearts to respond to what he may be calling us to do.

We have all had those crossroads. The Lord has called us to move forward, to move in obedience, and we freeze in fear and doubt. The irony is, we so badly want to hear from the Lord that we will spend hours in prayer asking for direction, and when we finally receive it; we often resist or become fearful of what we don't understand. Yet, we must choose to focus and believe on what is set before us. We are meant to live glorious (full of glory) lives full of the destiny that the Lord placed within us before we were born. We are loved by too powerful of a God to not enlist in the life he desperately wants for us.

When you make that step toward God, when you surrender your life to him in sweet relationship, you are committing to live a life of constant intentionality. Being a Christian is not a stagnant honor. It is one that requires us to continually pursue and fight for continued closeness to the Lord, so that we may walk in the plans he has for us.

Every one of us has a story that is waiting for us. Whether you have not made the decision to follow Christ yet, or you have been following Christ for 30 years; God's story for you never ceases.

This week Chad continued in the book of Joshua and talked about the importance of the order of things in the Kingdom of God. One of those truths is that in the Kingdom, consecration always precedes victory. Essentially, God tells his children that He will always do the heavy lifting, but we have a part to play in consecrating ourselves.

Now let's read Joshua 3:1-5

The word “consecration” is ‘Qadash’ in Hebrew and means to be set apart for a divine purpose. In the Old Testament, consecration meant the nation would bathe and clean their clothes along with avoiding any relations that night. In the New Testament, we still understand this concept of consecration; however, because of what Jesus has done on the cross once and for all, we fight FROM victory, not FOR victory. It is a different order; we already have the victory because of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus, we are washed and clean, clothed with Christ.

Read Hebrews 10:14, Ephesians 5:25-27a, and Galatians 3:26-27

What has made us “perfect forever” according to Hebrews?

Even though we are perfect forever, we are still in a process of being made holy. God is daily making us more and more into the likeness of Christ. How can you explain the idea of being perfect in Christ, yet becoming more and more like him daily?

According to Galatians, we who believe have put on Christ-like new clothes. Why do you think this imagery is so important for the believer to be reminded of?

GROW

As New Testament believers, we are already washed, clean, and stand victoriously with Christ. So what is our part to play in walking out that victory? We still get to participate as God's children in setting ourselves apart. We don't consecrate ourselves or set ourselves apart out of begrudging duty, but out of love and the opportunity we have to follow Jesus in every aspect of our life. We GET to be a part of the process; it is an amazing privilege!

Let's read Ephesians 4:17-24

M. Anders, in *Galatians-Colossians Vol. 8*, helps us understand two important concepts; the putting off of the old self and putting on of the new self:

To put off the old self can mean merely to accept Christ as in Colossians 3:9, where it is treated as an accomplished fact. It can mean that, once you have become a Christian, you are to leave behind the attitudes, habits, values, and actions that you had before being born again—similar to taking off an old work coat and putting on a new coat to go out for the evening. This is more in keeping with the context, since Paul goes on in verses 25–32 to describe the specifics of a changing lifestyle.

The earthly desires, or lusts, which we have are **deceitful**. They promise one thing but deliver another. Therefore, we are to be smarter than our earthly desires, recognize their deceitfulness, and as a result, turn from them.

4:23. In contrast, we are **to be made new in the attitude of our minds**. How? You are what you think. You move in the direction of what you put into your mind and what you allow your mind to dwell on. So if you are not what you want to be, then you must begin to think differently. If you are to think differently, you must put into your mind that which you want to become. If you do, the Holy

Spirit will use it to change you to become what you want to be. If you don't, you will never be what you want to be. It all depends on what you put into your mind. This is what it means to be made new in the attitude of your mind.

4:24. Finally, we are **to put on the new self**. This means, we are to allow the new self to govern our activities. We are to begin living the lifestyle that corresponds to who we have become in Christ. This new holy self shows we are maturing, growing in unity with the body, and doing our part of the body's work.

What comes to mind when you hear the phrase, "hardened hearts" against God?

Why do you think people with hardened hearts are hopelessly confused according to scripture?

Putting on the new self is simply defined as 'living the lifestyle that corresponds to who we have become in Christ.' What do you think this looks like on a daily basis?

MOVE

This weekend, Chad challenged us to participate in consecrating our lives to God by just putting off the old self. We are no longer defined by our past if we are in Christ Jesus; we have a completely new and unchangeable identity in Christ. We just need to live like it now and "knock it off" when it comes to those sins that are slowly destroying our lives. If we want to walk in victory, we need to put on that new self and say no to the old self.

As we end the life group today, we suggest separating into groups of only men and only women. Each person should be encouraged to talk about an area below that you know you need to change in order to walk in victory and set yourself apart for what God has for you:

I need to stop talking like that (negatively about yourself or others)

I need to stop looking at that junk (pornography, consumerism, coveting, etc.)

I need to stop watching this

I need to stop putting that in my body (drugs, alcohol, prescription pills, eating unhealthily, overeating, etc.)

I need to stop hanging around a particular group of people

I need to stop going there

I need to stop spending my money on that

I need to stop doing this

I need to stop thinking about that

I need to stop worrying about

PRAY

Let's take some time and pray for one another. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

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.

Romans 12:2