

session 9 study guide

gigo (garbage in, garbage out)

message

What are you filling yourself up with? As the saying goes, “Garbage in, garbage out.” If you fill your mind and body with garbage, you shouldn’t be surprised when garbage comes out through your words, actions, outlooks and attitudes. The Bible says, “A man reaps what he sows” (Galatians 6:7). So what are you sowing in your mind? In your heart? In your life?

The world is constantly bombarding us with messages—many of which are not constructive. For most of us, a conscious effort is needed to discern whether or not we are consuming sounds, images and experiences that are beneficial for us. And we all—Christians new and old—can benefit from being reminded to look at what we are filling our minds with.

At the end of the book of Philippians, Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi, Paul wrote about this very topic and urged the Philippians to keep focusing their lives on those things that would bring glory to God. Read the following passage in Philippians 4:4-9. As you read, consider the following questions: (1) What advice does Paul give to the Christians in Philippi? (2) What is the result of thinking about “such things” (verse 8)?

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such

things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

dig

1. What are some of the pieces of advice Paul gives to the Philippians in verses 4-6?

2. Is it easy for you to “not be anxious about anything” but to “present your requests to God” (verse 6)? How do you deal with difficult times?

3. Read Philippians 4:8 again. Do you think that you currently live this verse out in your life? Why or why not?

4. If we think about things that are pure, true and admirable, what will occur?

5. God is clear: Your mind matters to Him, and you have to be proactive in keeping your mind pure and staying. How do you do this? You keep away from negative influences, and you constantly renew your mind. Read Proverbs 13:20 and 14:7. What are some common negative influences?

6. Why are people drawn to negative influences, even when they know that those influences are bad for them?

7. Read Romans 12:2 and Colossians 3:1-4. How can we constantly renew our mind?

8. What does “set your minds on things above” mean?

apply

1. Do you think that it is important to consider the things that you see, hear and read?

2. How can your choices in what you read, watch and listen to impact your faith? Your attitude? Your actions?

3. Think about good things. For each phrase, list one example of something you could read, hear, see or do that possesses this quality.

Whatever is true . . .

Whatever is noble . . .

Whatever is right . . .

Whatever is pure . . .

Whatever is lovely . . .

Whatever is admirable . . .

Whatever is excellent or praiseworthy . . .

4. Why is it so hard to fill our minds with things that are pleasing to God?

5. How does the message of Philippians 4:8 match with . . .

the music that you listen to?

the TV shows and movies that you watch?

the books or magazines that you read?

the online sites that you visit?

6. Read through the following scenarios, and then write what you would say to each person.

Scenario 1: *Your 12-year-old brother, Seth, has recently started listening to certain kinds of rap music with lyrics that condone drug and alcohol use, excuse violence against other people and portray women in a derogatory manner. What would you say to him?*

Scenario 2: *Your mom is addicted to watching The Real Housewives of Orange County. She closely follows all the drama and participates in a number of blogs about the show. You often hear her comment about what nice clothes, cars and jewelry all the women have. What would you say to her?*

Scenario 3: *Your best friend is consumed with celebrity gossip and constantly surfs websites and blogs to hear the latest news, see the newest fashions and follow the star trends. You've noticed that she's been complaining that she's fat, even though she is in great shape, and has said some underage stars who have been in the news for their misbehavior "really aren't that bad." What would you say to her?*

reflect

1. Why does God want our minds to be pure?

2. What can you do to purify your mind?

3. Look again at the starter activity. Is there one area where you struggle the most to please God with your decisions?

4. Think of some examples of people you know or celebrities you've heard about who live out the "garbage in, garbage out" lifestyle. Without using names, describe them below.

5. Spend a few minutes in individual prayer for an awareness of negative influences in your life. Write out a short prayer asking God's protection over your mind.

meditation



Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

HEBREWS 12:1-2