

## **SESSION 4**

### **GUARDING YOUR GROUP**

As well as coaching, you are there to help protect your men in the process of their recovery. The enemy doesn't like what we are doing, so he will try to disrupt any way he can. During small group check-in times, it will be important to:

1) Read or have someone **read the GUIDELINES sheet every week** to remind your team of the basic principles of the group, e.g., confidentiality, honesty, be encouraging, self-monitor your sharing time, etc.

2) **Manage the flow of the discussion** and keep the focus on their personal recovery. Keep each man from blaming others for his sin. Men love to point the finger at their wives. Keep them on task by redirecting them. For example, you could ask them, "What is God showing you through your circumstances." It is ok to cut a man off that continually goes down a rabbit hole. Keep them from drifting! Example: "Hey, Jim, sorry for interrupting, but for time sake I want to keep us on track and focus on what God is teaching you about..."

3. **Be aware of the length of time each man is sharing**. Some men will eat up the small group time every week sharing all their problems. There is a time to let them share a little longer, especially when they are new to the group. After several times and much prayer, it may be necessary to address certain issues. Take a guy off to the side after group and have a talk with him to save him from embarrassment and hurt feelings. Example: Tell him you want him to know he is loved and accepted no matter what but for the health of all the men in the group and to be considerate of other men's time, it is important to self-monitor by staying on topic. Tell him you love his heart and his courage to share so freely.

Remember, most men that come to us are so broken they need to be handled gently for awhile.

#### **4. When to cut a man off quickly!!**

1) **Don't ever** let a man share specific names of streets where they met a woman, websites, strip club names, dating or social media sites, how a woman was specifically dressed or how she looked, etc. All sharing needs to be kept general. Example: I met a women from the internet.... I picked up prostitutes on the street... This women was extremely tempting for me...

2) **Don't ever** let a man brag about the vast number of women he has been with or how much women desire him. He is bragging about his sin and and this is not appropriate to share in a support group.

5. **We are a directive group**, and we allow cross talk. This is not how a typical support group functions. We want to see men to receive a brother speaking into their life without feeling attacked. We want to see men help and encourage other men without feeling like they are a project needing to be fixed. Here are a few cautions:

1) Make sure the **"teachers" in the group** don't start lecturing or just slapping a scripture on a situation, especially when they have little sobriety. Teach them to try to ask questions before they give input.

2) **Teach them to give input from personal experience.** **Example:** “Hey, Jim, I hear you say each week you're looking at porn on your phone when you're in the bathroom. I understand that because I struggled with that, too. I found I had to get accountability software on my phone, so I wouldn't go there. I also found it helpful to stop taking my phone into the bathroom with me. Maybe that could work for you? What do you think?” USING “I” AT THE BEGINNING OF THE SENTENCE will help soften what they're saying. It will be better received and will help men to feel like others are not trying to fix them but simply sharing what they've learned in their recovery.

3) **Don't let one man dominate!** You will find some guys have an opinion on everything and love to share their knowledge. You will need to take the guy aside and tell him you appreciate his involvement in the group but would like to see more of a balanced participation and cross talk amongst the group.

(PS: This maybe what this man is facing in his recovery challenges at home as well. His wife may feel like her opinion is always wrong, she feels devalued, her husband is a an opinionated know-it-all who constantly lectures the family. She may feel he is same old guy even if he has sexual sobriety because he is still controlling, constantly teaching, and lecturing. (Listen to how this man describes his marriage)

4) **Teach men to ask questions** before they give input. This way the man receiving the input understands you are trying to understand his situation. He will feel cared for and not lectured to! He has experienced enough of that in his life. **We want him to feel loved and accepted.**

## **MORE: TEACHING MEN TO ASK QUESTIONS AND LISTEN DURING CHECK-IN TIMES**

- 1) **Ask if feedback is acceptable.** If so, speak from personal experience only.
- 2) **Avoid lecturing.** Ask questions that lead to deeper, more intimate conversations that help you get to know the real man.
- 3) **Speak from a position of vulnerability.** Keep in mind what worked for you doesn't necessarily work for all men.
- 4) **Beware of the new guy to the group that has no sobriety** and is giving advice to others on how to find freedom. If they have not experienced at least 30 days of sobriety, it may be best for them to remain quiet until they can speak from personal experience.
- 5) **Teach men to listen** intently being slow to speak, quick to listen, and to pray before they respond. Encourage them to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit instead of their feelings.