

Think It Over: This section is about turning what God is saying to you into your next best action steps. These talking points, questions, and scriptures are designed to help you take your own next step. If you are leading a group through this guide, don't feel like you have to answer every question. Pick out those questions that will stir up conversation and action among your group.

Quick review: As you review the message guide, what are some take-aways that really touched your heart? Why do you think they registered with you?

Diving in:

- Have you ever had an experience you were excited about, only to have it ruined by a bad view? For example, you might have been stuck behind someone taller than you at a concert or had clouds obstructing your view during a fireworks display. What experience of suffering have you faced that you are grateful for how it helped you grow, although you wouldn't want to endure it again?
- Read 1 Peter 4:1-11. How do you think suffering can help us become more like Jesus? Do you see suffering as a snare or a springboard? In other words, is it a hindrance to your faith or a tool that brings you closer to God?
- Paul and Peter have strong words throughout the New Testament about being sober-minded. Read 1 Peter 1:13-14, Ephesians 5:16-19, and 1 Thessalonians 5:6-8. Why do you think they put so much emphasis on this?
- We know that "love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8). It's powerful when someone forgives us just because they love us. Have you had an experience like that? How did it impact you?
- What areas of your life have drastically changed since being led by the Holy Spirit and God's transformative work in you? If you can't think of any, does anything come to mind now that needs to change?

Your Next Best Step: Jesus calls us to suffer joyfully, love radically, and obey Him completely. Which of these do you struggle with most, and how can you grow in that area? Choose a verse from 1 Peter 4:1-11 that you need most this week and find a way to remember it (write it on a sticky note, write it on your hand, set a reminder on your phone, text it to a friend, etc.). Share the verse you chose with the group and how you will keep it at the front of your mind this week.

Changing Your Mind: Choose one of the verses listed in the Message Guide and commit it to heart.

If you missed a message, go to senecacommunitychurch.com/messages.



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¹Since Jesus went through everything you're going through and more, learn to think like him. Think of your sufferings as a weaning from that old sinful habit of always expecting to get your own way. ²Then you'll be able to live out your days free to pursue what God wants instead of being tyrannized by what you want. ³You've already put in your time in that God-ignorant way of life, partying night after night, a drunken and profligate life. Now it's time to be done with it for good. ⁴Of course, your old friends don't understand why you don't join in with the old gang anymore. But you don't have to give an account to them. ⁵They're the ones who will be called on the carpet—and before God himself. ⁶Listen to the Message. It was preached to those believers who are now dead, and yet even though they died (just as all people must), they will still get in on the life that God has given in Jesus. ⁷Everything in the world is about to be wrapped up, so take nothing for granted. Stay wide-awake in prayer. ⁸Most of all, love each other as if your life depended on it. Love makes up for practically anything. ⁹Be quick to give a meal to the hungry, a bed to the homeless—cheerfully. ¹⁰Be generous with the different things God gave you, passing them around so all get in on it: ¹¹if words, let it be God's words; if help, let it be God's hearty help. That way, God's bright presence will be evident in everything through Jesus, and he'll get all the credit as the One mighty in everything—encores to the end of time. Oh, yes!

1 Peter 4:1–11 MSG

☞ How I Live: (1-6)

- If I don't view suffering as a part of my Christian life, then I will eventually blame God or myself when I am suffering.

²⁴Then Jesus said to his followers, "If any of you want to be my follower, you must stop thinking about yourself and what you want. You must be willing to carry the Cross that is given to you for following me.

Matthew 16:24 ERV (read 25-27)

➤ We will never know God's will while serving our will.

¹What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? ²By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?
Romans 6:1–2 NIV

⁶Could it be any clearer? Our old way of life was nailed to the cross with Christ, a decisive end to that sin-miserable life—no longer at sin's every beck and call... ²⁰As long as you did what you felt like doing, ignoring God, you didn't have to bother with right thinking or right living, or right anything for that matter. ²¹But do you call that a free life? What did you get out of it? Nothing you're proud of now. Where did it get you? A dead end. ²³Work hard for sin your whole life and your pension is death. But God's gift is real life, eternal life, delivered by Jesus, our Master. ¹⁶So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary. ¹⁷But I need something more... ²⁴I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question? ²⁵The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.
Romans 6: 6–7, 20–21, 23; 7:16-17, 24–25 MSG (read Romans 6-8)

PS: Wouldn't it be foolish to expect God to bless my will?

➤ How I Pray: (7)

¹⁶...The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with. James 5:16 MSG (read James 5:13-20)

➤ Sin will always separate us from the work of the Spirit.

➤ How I Love: (8-10)

➤ I have to daily remember...

¹⁶"This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life. ¹⁷God didn't go to all the trouble of sending his Son merely to point an accusing finger, telling the world how bad it was. He came to help, to put the world right again.
John 3:16–17 MSG

↗ ...how much God loves me.

↗ ...how much God loves the person far from Him.

↗ ...how I'm commanded to love others.

¹⁹...I have voluntarily become a servant to any and all in order to reach a wide range of people.
1 Corinthians 9:19 MSG

➤ How I Serve: (11)

¹⁴He told his servants to take care of his things while he was gone.
Matthew 25:14 ERV

➤ Am I stewarding God's gifts for His purposes,
or living my life with my stuff, just keeping
Him in mind?

PS: We really can't give anything to God; it is already His.

¹⁰God designed us to feel remorse, distress that drives us to him. It turns us around. God wants people to change their lives. It gets us back in the way of salvation. We never regret that kind of pain. But those who let distress drive them away from God are full of regrets, end up on a deathbed of regrets.
2 Corinthians 7:10 ERV, MSG, NLT, DFS

Bottom Line:

No change, no chance at _____?

Often Dave uses concepts and ideas from a variety of resources when developing a message. If you have any questions regarding these sources, please don't hesitate to contact Dave at daves@senecacommunitychurch.com.

We take great care to make sure all of the content in a message is in line with what we believe at SCC, but when a public figure is used in a video illustration, we do not stand behind or with their past comments, actions, or personal beliefs. Answers to any questions about where SCC stands on Theology or Teaching can be found online in our Statement of Faith (senecacommunitychurch.com/about/what-we-believe), which aligns with our Bible based, Christ-following, Evangelical church positions.

To help you turn what God is saying to you into action steps,
consider using the "Think It Over" section on the back.