DEFINING IMPERATIVES 1
Change the Way You Think

GOD'S WAY

There's a way that LEADS to life, but we tend to do it our OWN way, IGNORE God's & wonder WHY we get into a MESS.

Why do you think we so easily fall into the habit of doing things our own way? Can you share an example, if you're comfortable, of a time when following God's way made a difference?

The BIG IDEA

The New Testament is full of 'Defining Imperatives' → INSTRUCTIONS that spell out the KEY DECISIONS that constitute GOD'S WAY.
Maturity & fruitfulness come from EMBRACING & FOLLOWING these defining imperatives.

What difference does it make to see these 'defining imperatives' as directions towards a fulfilled & fruitful life, rather than simply rules to obey?
What patterns of thinking do you see in the world around us that can undermine the life God wants for us?

Today's DEFINING IMPERATIVE = Romans 12:2

* A transformed LIFE begins with a transformed MIND.
* Thinking CONFORMED to the WORLD tends to result in lives characterised by its PATTERNS of BONDAGE& DEFEAT.
* We need to UNLEARN distorted thinking patterns & RELEARN God's truth.

GOSPEL GRAMMAR

DIs are not IMPOSSIBLE standards imposed by a GRUMPY God who demands SUBSERVIENCE & leaves us to sink or swim.

* His GRACE & RESURRECTION POWER make obedience POSSIBLE (2 Pet 1:3-4).
* Without the indicative of grace, the imperative quickly becomes STRIVING & SWEATING.
* Grace EMPOWERS us to do what His Word DEMANDS.

How does knowing that God supplies the grace and power we need change the way we respond to His commands?
Without the assurance of God's grace, obedience can become striving & sweating. Where might Christians be tempted to rely on their own effort rather than God's enabling? What helps us move from self-effort to dependence on Him?

The MECHANICS: How exactly do I do it?

1. **MEDITATE** the **Word** (**Josh 1:6-9)**
   * As the Word TAKES ROOT, it begins to SHAPE how you think (John 8:32, Eph 5:26, John 15:3, 17:17, Rom 10:17, 1 Jn 2:14, Pr 4:20-22)
2. **FILTER your thoughts (2 Cor 10:5)**
   * Filtering determines what gets AIRTIME in our thought life (Pr 4:23)
3. **FIX your mind on TRUTH (Phil 4:8, Col 3:1-2)**
   * STOP feeding LIES; START relentlessly feeding TRUTH.
   * Only GIVE AIRTIME to the good, godly, holy, true

Which of these three processes comes most naturally to you and which do you find most challenging? Why?
What could you do practically this week to give God's Word more opportunity to shape your thinking and to challenge thoughts that don't line up with His truth?

WHAT 'Wrong Thinking?'

1. **The Lie: I CAN'T = Mindset of INADEQUACY**
   The Truth … What does Word say? = Phil 4:13, 2 Cor 3:5
   The Renewed Mind = I don't have to RELY on my OWN strength … God can EQUIP me for what He CALLS me to do
   The Response = Stop DISQUALIFYING yourself … Trust HIS strength & take the NEXT step
2. **The Lie: It's TOO BIG = Mindset of IMPOSSIBILITY**
   The Truth … WHAT does Word say? = Luke 1:37, Zech 4:6
   The Renewed Mind = The problem may be BIGGER than ME; but it isn't BIGGER than GOD.
   The Response = TRUST … OBEY … Take the NEXT STEP.

I CAN'T – When are you most likely to feel inadequate or disqualify yourself?
What truth from God's Word could help you take the next step?
IT'S TOO BIG – Is there a challenge or act of obedience that feels too big for you at the moment? What might it look like to trust God, obey Him and take the next step?

The FRUIT

It all starts with what you do with that THOUGHT-SEED.
New thought-patterns lead to a FREE, VICTORIOUS, FRUITFUL life.
Renewed thoughts SHAPE your FUTURE as you CHOOSE God's way
(Gal 5:22-23, Prov 23:7, Prov 4:23).

How can a repeated thought gradually influence our words, actions, habits and character?
What is one lie or unhelpful thought-pattern you need to stop feeding, and what truth from God's Word could you deliberately begin feeding instead?