

“The 4:8 Principle”
Defending **July 10/11, 2010**

Guard your heart above all else; for it determines the course of your life.
Proverbs 4:23, NLT

What gets impressed in our hearts gets expressed in our lives.

We DEFEND our Joy by:

1. Feeding our Minds with the RIGHT NUTRITION.

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity. Romans 12:2, Phillips

1st 15 minutes: What is the **TRUTH HERE** for me that God wants me to see?
Last 15 minutes: How did God bring that **TRUTH TO LIFE** for me today?

2. Stop the Joy SUCKERS!

- A. Exposure Joy Suckers: The influence of the world. Luke 21:34-35
- B. Accumulation Joy Suckers: Worry and fear.

*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.*
Philippians 4:8, NIV

- C. Association Joy Suckers: Friends in low places.

Don't be fooled...bad company corrupts good character. 1 Corinthians 15:33, NLT

3. Living Out of the OVERFLOW.

Gratitude is the cornerstone for a life of joy.
Gratitude is a feeling, a capacity, and a choice.

Be happy [in your faith] and rejoice and be glad-hearted continually (always); Be unceasing in prayer [praying perseveringly]; Thank [God] in everything [no matter what the circumstances may be, be thankful and give thanks], for this is the will of God for you [who are] in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17, Amplified Bible

Morning Star Church
Devotional Guide
The 4:8 Principle, Defending
July 12-16, 2010

Message Synopsis: Pastor Ike concluded *The 4:8 Principle* series by encouraging us to learn how to defend our joy. Defending requires us to develop an intentional plan to secure our thought-life and deal with life experiences that seek to *rob our joy*. Finally, he challenged us to develop a mentality of living out of the overflow of gratitude.

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Day 1 Guarding Your Joy

Proverbs 4:20-23; Isaiah 26:3; Romans 8:5-9a; Galatians 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 9:6

1. Pastor Ike taught us that *what gets impressed in our heart gets expressed in our lives*. In other words, our behavioral choices are a “mirror of our mental and emotional life.” In what ways are your current circumstances like a mirror of your mental and emotional life?
2. From the Scriptures you read today, what truth did you discover about being the gatekeeper of your thought-life?

Day 2 Filtering Your Mind

Romans 12:2; Psalm 119:30-40; 2 Corinthians 10:5

1. Just like a computer needs anti-virus protection to be as effective as it can be, our mind needs a filter that captures thoughts and translates them into God’s Truth for our good. For the Christ-follower, God’s Word is that firewall. Respond to this statement: *Whatever you dwell on becomes the prominent thought in your mind.*
2. Pastor Ike talked about applying the Bible to our lives—as the firewall of God’s truth—to the *first 15 minutes* and the *last 15 minutes* of each day. Based on the Scriptures you read today, how would practicing these two principles “transform” your thought life?

Day 3 Dealing with Joy Suckers #1

Luke 21:34-35; Colossians 3:1-5; Philippians 4:6-8

1. The first “joy sucker” is **exposure to the world** around us: the velocity, the materialism, and the media influences that seek to pull us away from God. Read Luke 21:34-35 and Colossians 3:1-5. What insight did you gain about the world’s influence on us?
2. The second “joy sucker” is **accumulation of worry and fear**. Often our worries may be small, but as they accumulate, they fill our minds and can stop us from moving forward on our spiritual journey. Read Philippians 4:6-8. What seven thought areas does Paul suggest we linger upon? How could an understanding of each of these areas affect your spiritual growth?

Day 4 Dealing with Joy Suckers #2

Psalm 1:1; 1 Corinthians 15:33

1. The final “joy sucker” is our **association with people**. The Scriptures warn about the reality that we gradually take on the habits, attitudes, convictions, world view, and mannerisms of the people we habitually spend time with. If that is true of you? Are you being influenced to live for God by your friends?
2. How can you be an influence to others without being corrupted by their lifestyle?

Day 5 Living Out of the Overflow

Psalm 100; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

1. Gratitude is the cornerstone for a life of joy in the Christ-follower. Gratitude is a feeling, a capacity, and a choice. How closely to the Scriptural examples of gratitude you read today does your life emulate? What things are you grateful for today?
2. What gratitude blockage do you need for God to remove from your life?

Morning Star Church
Small Group Discussion Guide
4:8 Principle, Defending Your Joy
July 12-16, 2010

Group Icebreaker

One of our research team members, Don Mosier, reminded us of an *Andy Griffith Show* episode in which Barney Fife tells Andy about a girlfriend he had as a young boy. He said, *"I love grape snow cones. Every time I saw this girl she would take my snow cones, bite the end of it off, and suck out all the grape. Then she would hand me the flavorless cone back."* Have your people share their experiences with circumstances, situations, or people (no names) who *suck out the grape* in their lives.

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. Guard your heart above all else; for it determines the course of your life. Proverbs 4:20-23, NLT

1. Pastor Ike talked about the importance of guarding what goes into our minds. He said, "What gets impressed in our hearts gets expressed in our lives." How have your group members found that truth to be accurate?
2. We learned that the Word of God is the *firewall* for protecting the mind of the Christ-follower (Psalm 19:7-10). Ike showed us the exercise he called, *"First 15 Minutes and Last 15 Minutes"* to apply the Word of God in our lives. What other helpful techniques or practices have you used to apply the Bible as a firewall to your mind?
3. Have someone read John 15:5-11. Ask your group to discuss the things Jesus intends for us to follow that result in *overflowing joy* in our lives.
4. Pastor Ike said gratitude is the cornerstone for living a life of joy. Ask someone to read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17. Have your group take a few minutes and create a list of the top five things, people, and blessings in their life right now that they are grateful for right now . . . and why. Share the lists in your group.

Prayer Requests