

WARM UP

The Bible tells us to cast down imaginations and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God.

We are to be renewed in our minds.

How do we win this battle?

**READ** Hebrews 12:5-11, John 15:1-8**BACKGROUND**

God wants us to take the long term view in our spiritual, family and career lives. Too often we see the trials and challenges we are going through today as 100% negative. However on many occasions they are in fact excellent opportunities for God to grow us and bring us closer to Him.

Hebrews 12:11 says that God sometimes disciplines us and challenges us over the short term, making us more Christ-like over the long term.

John 15 also talks about pruning back every branch that does bear fruit "so that it will be even more fruitful". While at times this pruning may seem hard to bear, it is only through this process that we will become more fruitful!

QUESTIONS

- 1 What are some situations you have faced in the past that have been real areas of struggle and challenge?
- 2 What are some common areas in your group that you have struggled with as Christian men in the past? For example career, family, financial etc.

3 How did God use these struggles and challenges to make you more Christ-like?

4 Are there any challenges or struggles anyone in your group is facing today?

What is God saying to me?

LET'S PRAY**REAL LIFE STORIES OF GOD'S POWER**

I met Bill Subritzky at church in Kerikeri. I am a Hepatitis C positive patient and he's delivered me from that and I'm healed; I've not got it anymore. I've also been healed of demonic things that have been inside of me. He took it all away from me, so praise God!
Regan

CONSIDER THIS

God's stretching and pruning comes in a wide variety of ways. We or a family member may develop a sickness. We may lose our job and means of supporting ourselves and our family. We may find sadness in a relationship that has ended or experience some personal loss.

However, what initially might seem to be a sad or negative event can genuinely help us grow as Christian men if it causes us to rely more on God and allows us to rethink our priorities. Such difficult experiences can make us more fruitful and more like our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Remember, sometimes God wants us to lose short-term, to win big long-term!

