



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTROLLING YOUR ENVIRONMENT

Prayer Focus: Ask the Lord to help every participant carefully monitor their personal lives, giving them wisdom to know what associations and practices are appropriate in each season.

FELLOWSHIP AND WELCOME (10–15 MINUTES)

Welcome everyone as they walk in. Be sure to identify any new members who were not at the previous session, and be sure that they receive the appropriate materials—workbook and book.

Encourage everyone to congregate in the meeting place. If it is a classroom setting, make an announcement that it is time to sit down and begin the session. If it is a small group, ensure everyone makes their way to the designated meeting space.

OPENING PRAYER

WORSHIP (15–20 MINUTES)

Feel free to shorten the worship time at the beginning of the session, as the activation exercise will consist of a worship segment.

PRAYER/MINISTRY TIME (5–15 MINUTES)

VIDEO/TEACHING (20 MINUTES)

SCRIPTURE

Then He said to them, “Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given”
(MARK 4:24).

SUMMARY

Jesus’ cautionary statement in Mark 4 reminds us that *how* we hear is very important. We determine *how* we hear from people, media, and other avenues by intentionally controlling our environment. If we are going through difficult circumstances or we are in the middle of very fragile personal struggles, there is wisdom that we need to use when considering the messages (and messengers) that we are exposing ourselves to. The very things that may not impact us at all in one season could be life-draining and strength-depleting in another. This is why it is so important for us to control our environments—it is absolutely fundamental to strengthening ourselves in the Lord!

In this session, Pastor Bill offers some very practical advice on how we should control what/who we are exposed to. This is not a call to separatism—isolating ourselves from everyone else and becoming spiritual islands. The world needs the Kingdom solutions we carry. Rather, this is an invitation to wisdom. In the journey of life, there will be seasons where we cannot *closely* associate with certain people, or watch certain media, or be in certain places, or expose ourselves to certain atmospheres. In order to supernaturally change the atmosphere around us, it is essential to pay close attention to the unique seasons where we need to especially guard our personal environment. Our measure of Kingdom effectiveness *to the world* has everything to do with how we steward our private, interior lives.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (25–30 MINUTES)

1. Why it is important *how* we hear? Describe the difference between *what* you hear and *how* you hear.
2. Describe why it's important to discern what is acceptable for one season and what is not acceptable for another (certain associations with people, TV shows, places, media, etc.). **Ask some participants to share testimonies of how they took certain seasons of life and restricted certain interactions. Have them explain why this was beneficial to them.**

3. How can your environment/atmosphere impact your strength?
4. Why is it so important to discern what company/close fellowship you should keep with certain people?
5. How do people attract people of like values? Discuss how this can work for the positive and the negative.
6. Why it is so important about who you choose to *closely* share your life with?
7. Discuss how fellowship brings strength to our lives. **Have participants share testimonies of how their fellowship with others was actually key to bringing them into breakthrough/a place of strength.**

ACTIVATION: EVALUATE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

This is an exercise for each participant to engage *individually*.

1. Prayerfully consider your current season of life. What are some specific areas you need strength in?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal areas that He wants to adjust. Specifically, ask Him about *people, places, media*, and other *activities* you are presently involved with that might need to be limited/restricted in this season...*for your benefit!*

Week 7



VIDEO LISTENING GUIDE

It's not unbelief to recognize a fragile season; it's wisdom.

Values attract like values—good or bad.

Steps to Controlling Your Environment

1. Evaluate what contributes to your life.
2. Be careful of the standard of what you are willing to entertain and listen to.
3. Carefully select who you are willing to closely share your life with.
4. Recognize seasons in your life when it's wisdom to restrict certain activities and associations.
5. Fellowship is a source of strength.
6. Fellowship is the exchange of life.