



CONQUERERS

# **Feed Your Brain** **Supporting Mental Wellness Through Nutrition**

## **DISCUSSION GUIDE**



# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Conquerors! These sessions have been specifically designed to educate on mental wellness topics while at the same time fostering peer support through authentic sharing. Peer support is a Biblical concept:

## 2 CORINTHIANS 1: 3-4

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.”**

God’s word has been telling us all along what has been “discovered” and shown as very effective in mental health care in the last few decades. That is that being vulnerable, reaching out, and sharing life’s burdens is a HUGE part of mental wellness.

## CONQUERORS SESSIONS ARE DESIGNED FOR GROUP USE!

While educating oneself is always good, to experience the full benefits of these educational videos it is recommended they be viewed with others and the questions discussed in a group.

### ***What size of group?***

Anything from two or three people getting together in a private home to a larger session at your church will work. One note: when using the material with a group of ten or more, breaking into smaller groups of around 5-6 participants for the discussion time will enhance individual participation.

### ***What if I can’t join or organize a group?***

If you can’t get together with others in person, consider using some sort of social media platform (Google Hangouts, for example) or Zoom to view together and then discuss. If you have no other option than viewing alone, please still take the time to stop the video at the end of Parts I and II. Reflect on the discussion questions and jot down your answers. Keep in mind that learning that happens through active exploration and discovery (for example searching for an answer on Google) is often more powerful than which occurs passively (a simple reading of answers or viewing a video).

### ***Preparation***

There really isn’t a great deal of prep required. Once you have your group and an agreed upon time, download and print out enough copies of the discussion guide so each participant will have a copy. Optional: discuss if your group would like to have refreshments during the break time, and organize those details.

### Overview of a session

The sessions are designed to be two hours long. Here's an example of the timing of a session starting at 7 pm.

7:00 – 7:05	Greetings, choosing group leader, prayer
7:05 – 7:35	Video PART I
7:35 – 7:55	Discussion PART I
7:55 – 8:05	BREAK TIME
8:05 – 8:30	Video PART II
8:30 – 8:50	Discussion PART II
8:50 – 9:00	Video PART III

*\*Please note that these times are approximate. Actual video segments may be a little shorter or a little longer than the times indicated above.*

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### **Small group leaders:**

We recommend that one person be chosen as a small group leader. The main responsibilities of the group leader are to keep an eye on the time, make sure the discussion stays on track, and to observe that everyone has the opportunity to share.

The leader is in no way expected to do extra preparation or 'know all the answers'.

### **Managing time:**

The materials have already been used in numerous in-person sessions. While the time allowances suggested are considered appropriate for the number of questions, there is always variability in how long people want to discuss various questions. Keep in mind that there is a balance between exploring a particular question more deeply versus covering all of them. Obtain the input of all the participants and trust the Holy Spirit to guide you in where to spend your time.

## SPECIFIC TIPS FOR DISCUSSION TIME

- Share experiences that directly relate to the topic of the session, using "I" language (see Group guidelines for description and example).
- It's recommended that you take notes during the session (space has been left for this in the Discussion Guide pages). Jotting down a list of suggestions or helpful hints from others who are dealing with similar challenges can be a great resource to refer to later.
- Strive to develop openness in yourself. Various perspectives, ideas and approaches may be brought up with respect to whatever the topic is. Keep in mind that there is usually no one absolute "right" approach. The goal is share ideas and be open to trying different things. Appreciate the wisdom that is in the room.
- We're aiming for progress, not perfection! The goal is that at the end of the session everyone has a specific action step of their own in mind on how to move forward.

- Think in term of baby steps! Consistent small steps are typically much more effective in the long run than attempting a huge and sudden change in behaviour.

## WRAPPING UP A SESSION

### *Consider this:*

How will you USE what you've learned? What one action step will you start with NOW? In case you're wondering, now means today! (Okay, it could be tomorrow if you're doing Conquerors as an evening session.) But not next week, "one day", or "when I have the time".

It can be very helpful at the end of a Conquerors session to go around and have participants share what they have chosen for their action step. If you feel led to do so, you may even want to form check-in buddies within the group, or create a follow-up session, where everyone shares their progress and you can brainstorm to problem-solve challenges that come up.

Remember,

*We can achieve mental wellness together!*



# GROUP GUIDELINES

The following points are recommended to read and agree to the first time a group meets together for a Conquerors session. Mental health issues are, for many, very difficult to talk about. The aim of having guidelines is to ensure an environment where everyone can feel safe and comfortable to share.

1. ***Respect confidentiality!*** What is said in small group stays in the small group. Do not repeat any kind of identifying information to others!
2. ***Please turn off or silence your cell phones during group time.***  
Respect everyone else's efforts to focus.
3. ***While participating in discussions, aim to speak from your own experience.***  
This means using 'I' language rather than 'you' language. Hearing 'you' language can bring up negative emotions and defensiveness. Here's an example:
  - **'You' language:** (to be avoided)  
"If you want your anxiety to improve, you should be more consistent in your devotional time."
  - **'I' language:** (the goal)  
"I've found that when I'm intentional about having regular devotional time I struggle less with anxiety."
4. ***While truth does at times need to be addressed, please do so with grace and compassion.*** When in doubt, err on the side of grace. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
5. ***The question you think you're supposed to know the answer to (but don't!) is the very question you should ask.***
6. ***Speak even if your voice shakes.***





# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## Feed Your Brain: Supporting Mental Wellness Through Nutrition

### PART I

1. Did any of the dietary myths surprise you? If so, why?
2. We've learned that the vast majority of cereals and other convenient breakfast choices (from "healthy" muffins to breakfast sandwiches) are not very nutritious. What might be better options? Discuss any tips or tricks you have on how to have a healthy breakfast despite a busy schedule.
3. Where have you gotten dietary advice from in the past? Are there any sources you know of and would recommend that give holistic nutritional advice?

## PART II

4. What are some different names for sugar that you know of?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Improving your awareness of WHY you want to eat is very important. What are things you could do to improve your awareness?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. In review, here is the simple 7-word guide on nutrition: Eat food, mainly plants, not too much. (Remember, food means “real” food, as God made it.)

Keeping this in mind, what are things in your diet you’d like to reduce or eliminate?  
Discuss strategies on how to improve.

# CONQUERORS – RESOURCES

## Feed Your Brain: Supporting Mental Wellness Through Nutrition

### BOOKS:

**The Daniel Plan** (Chapter 4: Food)

Authors Rick Warren D. Min., Daniel Amen M.D., Mark Hyman M.D.

*Notes: This writing of this book was spearheaded by Pastor Rick Warren, and in general is written from a faith-based perspective. The other two authors are medical doctors, who while giving sound, scientific-based advice, do not identify themselves as believers.*

**Maximized Living Nutrition Plans:** The Solution to the Dangers of Modern Nutrition

Authors: Kimberly Roberto and Dr. Ben Lerner

*Notes: Not a specifically faith-based book. Magda likes the whole-health approach to nutrition, as well as the option of a “Basic Plan” versus and “Advanced Plan” which allows you to choose a lower carb diet that is more moderate versus one that is more strict.*

### WEBSITES:

[Danielplan.com/food](http://Danielplan.com/food)

Look for the FOOD: LIBRARY at the bottom of the page. This gives great references such as a Good Foods List so you know what to stock your pantry with, Cooking Videos, Holiday Tips and more.