



THE Wellbeing JOURNEY

GUESTS' NOTES

AN INTRODUCTION TO WELLBEING

Welcome to The Wellbeing Journey. We begin this journey together by looking at what we mean by wellbeing and the different areas of our lives this affects.

Each week there will be time to get to know each other, have some input from a variety of speakers and then discuss all that we have heard and how we might apply this.

Joanna and Simon start the series thinking about what they want to get out of it. Joanna also meets Dr Roger Bretherton, Principal Lecturer for Enterprise in the School of Psychology at the University of Lincoln, and Dave Smith, author of 'God's Plan For Your Wellbeing', the book that accompanies this series.



Starter Questions

- Introduce yourselves.
- Try Joanna's ice-breaker questions:
 - What's your favourite drink?
 - What do you sing in the shower?
- When you think of the word "wellbeing" what immediately comes to mind?
- What would you like to get out of this series on wellbeing?



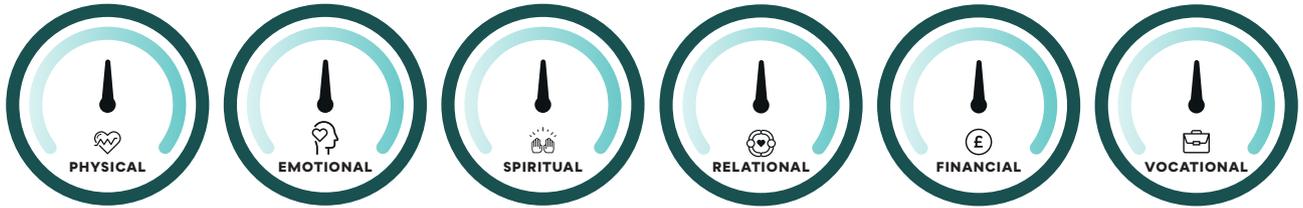
WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. Why has "wellbeing" become such an important subject?
2. What have you done in the past to improve your wellbeing?
3. How might our wellbeing affect those around us?

4. How much have you considered that God is involved in your wellbeing in the areas outlined? (See areas outlined on the 6 dials.)
5. What appeals to you about the word “shalom”?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

Look at the six dials

1. Take a moment to mark on the dials, or record somewhere on your mobile or other device, how you think you are doing in each area. (Red-Amber-Green).
2. Which area of wellbeing is your strongest?
3. Aim to think about each of the areas and its dial on different days this week and reflect on where you would like the dial to be.
4. Remember Roger Bretherton’s advice. Focus on one area at a time. Which area do you plan to focus on?
5. What stands out for you from Dave Smith’s story?



FINAL THOUGHT

Reflect on the dials together and share an area where you would love to see improvement.

WEEK TWO

A Wellbeing Mindset

INTRODUCTION

This week we will be thinking about how our mindset affects our wellbeing. The human mind is wonderful and complex; the way that we think can be as unique as we are. But there are some guiding principles that we are going to look at today that will help to ensure that the way we think (our mindset) is contributing to our overall wellbeing.

In this session Joanna meets Andy Croft, senior pastor at Soul Survivor Church in Watford, and psychologist Dr Kate Middleton, a director of the Mind and Soul Foundation, who has a particular interest in the way our emotions affect us.



Starter Questions

- Would you describe yourself as a “glass half empty” or “glass half full” person?
- What do you understand about the word “mindset”?



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Discussion Questions

1. When you meet someone for the first time, how do you like to introduce yourself? What themes do we use to define ourselves?
2. Can you think of a time when confidence in your own identity has been challenged? How did you overcome the challenge?
3. Studies by researcher Carol Dweck revealed that there are two opposing mindsets. With a fixed mindset, people believe their qualities are fixed traits and therefore cannot change. Alternatively, with a growth mindset, people have an underlying belief that their learning and intelligence can grow with time and experience. Do you tend to have a growth mindset or a fixed mindset? When do you think you got stuck?
4. In your lifetime, who has inspired you to grow?
5. How often do you reflect on your life? (Often, sometimes, never?)



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

Discuss together in twos and threes online in breakout groups or in the room.

1. When you completed the dials last week, which of the subjects did you find most difficult to be honest with yourself about?
2. Look at the '8 Tips on How to Live a Stress-Free Life'. Which tip seems most relevant for you right now? Pick one to focus on over the next few weeks.
3. Take back control: At the start of the Covid-19 pandemic psychologist Dr Henry Cloud explained that, as human beings, we struggle with feelings of insecurity when we feel that we are not in control of events. His suggestion was to make two lists: one concerning things that we can't control; the other, things we can control. We can then choose not to take responsibility for the first list and to act on the second list. Discuss how these lists could help improve your mindset in the coming week.



FINAL THOUGHT

Take a few moments to express your gratitude for the life you have and the good things you enjoy.

WEEK THREE

Physical Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

In this session we are looking at our physical wellbeing. As integrated beings, how we care for our physical wellbeing impacts upon other areas of health. As we watch the film, you might want to jot down any new thoughts that come to you.

In this session Joanna meets Steve Uppal, who leads All Nations Church Wolverhampton, Dr Nkiru Oluwatosin, a medical doctor working with the National Health Service in England, and Jamie Jones-Buchanan, a sports chaplain and former rugby league player for Leeds Rhinos.



Starter Questions

- When you think about physical wellbeing, what picture immediately comes to mind?
- Reflect on your last week. How important is your physical wellbeing for you right now?



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. Think of a time when you felt in great shape physically. How did this make you feel?
2. What challenges do you think we face through the areas of diet, sleep and exercise?
3. What do you think motivates people to make a positive change?
4. What extremes in these areas can cause us to move into an unhealthy place? (e.g. gym obsession, eating too little, caffeine addiction etc.) Why might this happen?
5. Simon describes our bodies as 'a gift'. If you believe in God what do you think he thinks about the human body? If you're not sure about God, what do you think the Christian God thinks about our physical wellbeing?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

In twos and threes, share as much as you feel able to.

1. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into three sections: Diet, Sleep and Exercise. Add into each section: I am pleased with myself when I
As my next step to greater physical wellbeing, I commit to
2. Jamie Jones-Buchanan recommends making yourself accountable. Discuss what works best for you – an app, a diary, reminders from a friend...
3. It's important to review what we've learned and to decide on next steps. Take a moment to consider what step you could take to see an improvement in the following areas:
 - **Diet:** Are there any changes you need to make concerning your current eating or drinking habits? (This could involve when you eat, what you eat and any supplements you need to take.)
 - **Sleep:** Are there any practical steps that you need to take to help you sleep better?
 - **Exercise:** What one change could you make to help you start or improve your exercise regime?
4. Try to set a realistic goal, share it with others and then get started. Don't be discouraged if you fail. Keep going – it will be worth it!



FINAL THOUGHT

Are there areas that you find more challenging than others?

WEEK FOUR

Emotional Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Today we are looking at the subject of emotional health with input from psychologist Dr Roger Bretherton, Principal Lecturer for Enterprise in the School of Psychology at the University of Lincoln; Will van der Hart, Associate Vicar at St Dionis Parsons Green in London, and a director of the Mind and Soul Foundation; and Dr Rosemary Gomes, a clinical psychologist in both an NHS role and independent practice.



Starter Questions

- What do you like to do to refuel when you are under pressure? Where do you like to go?
- Which statement do you think your closest friends would say best describes you: heart on your sleeve OR a closed book? Why?



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the statement “emotions aren’t relevant”?
2. How often do you take note of how you feel? How might such awareness help us?
3. Reflecting on what the experts have said in this week’s film, how does faith, hope and love affect our wellbeing?
4. How do you respond when you face challenging times?
5. What do you do to recharge?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

1. Make a list of 10 things you love to do. Which three could you add to your diary in the next six weeks?
2. How do your emotions affect others? The Bible talks about the ‘fruit’ of God’s presence in our lives: ‘love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control’ (Galatians 5:22–23, ESV). How could you help

others experience more positive emotions?

3. What has touched your emotions in the past week making you happy, sad, or angry for example? How did you express those emotions? In the coming week, aim to take note of the things that provoke an emotional response in you?
4. How can you express gratitude? 'Gratitude practices' can range from gratitude letters, to gratitude visits, to writing down each night three things that went well and thinking about why they went well. What will you plan to do in the next week to express gratitude?
5. In his book 'God's Plan For Your Wellbeing' Dave Smith outlines five steps in 'The Prayer of Awareness' (the 'Prayer of Examen' – available in the resources for this session). This prayer developed by the sixteenth-century saint Ignatius of Loyola, is often prayed at the end of each day as a way to become more self-aware. What steps can you take to become more aware of your emotions and to grow through life's challenges?



FINAL THOUGHT

Which emotions might we struggle to accept? Why might this be?

WEEK FIVE

Spiritual Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Today we are looking at spiritual wellbeing from a Christian perspective. In any culture, spiritual wellbeing is associated with certain practices based upon the brand of spirituality being followed. In UK culture, many may follow certain practices without knowing the spiritual roots of those practices. This session focuses unapologetically upon the practices associated with Christian spirituality and wellbeing.

Our guests in today's session include with Miriam Swanson, who worked with students in the UK and Europe for the best part of a decade then recently moved to Florida, where she is now helping churches reach college students in the US; Pete Greig, a best-selling author, pastor and instigator of the 24-7 Prayer movement which has reached more than half the nations on earth; Pastor Agu Irukwu, senior pastor of Jesus House and UK leader of the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) – the world's fastest growing Christian denomination; and Kerry, who tells how Jesus has transformed her life.



Starter Questions

- What practices does society associate with spirituality?
- Which strong traditions are part of the UK's Christian heritage?



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. Take a minute to think about where your spiritual dial is currently. How are you doing?
2. Miriam Swanson talks about experiencing peace in a cathedral. When and where have you been aware of the spiritual realm? Was it a good or bad experience?
3. Do you think of God as a Father with the door always open or do you have another picture you could share with the group?
4. Pastor Agu describes how he organises his life so he hears from God. Have you ever consciously connected with God? List the practices that can help us to

hear from God and connect with him?

5. Living on a houseboat forces Pete Greig to slow down. How do you slow down, and how do you cope with silence and solitude?
6. How do you respond to Kerry 's personal story about how her life has changed since she became a Christian?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

1. Split into groups of two or three. Looking at your lists of what helps people connect with God, choose one of these practices that you can do more of or do for the first time this week? If this is new to you, ask the others in your group how they do this or ask your group leader.
2. What gets in the way of hearing from God and being aware of his presence?
3. Kerry says her experience of God has changed her life. How does our spiritual wellbeing affect other areas of our wellbeing?
4. What do you think of the statement 'Christian prayer is a two-way conversation'?



FINAL THOUGHT

What are you taking away from today's session?

Why not be silent for a few moments together or as the group leader plays an appropriate piece of music to help you listen to God. Ask God to speak to you as you listen for him.

WEEK SIX

Relational Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

This session is all about relational wellbeing. We were designed for relationship. The poet John Donne gave expression to this truth when he wrote 'No man is an island'. Today we are going to explore the importance of relationships to our wellbeing.

Our guests in this session are Rachel Jordan-Wolf, executive director of HOPE Together; Paul McGee, a conference speaker, seminar presenter and best-selling author - many of his readers know him as the Sumo Guy; and Kate Wharton, Vicar of St Bartholomew's Church in Roby, Liverpool, Assistant National Leader of New Wine, and a member of the Church of England's General Synod. She is the author of 'Single Minded: Being single and whole and living life to the full'.



Starter Questions

- Are you someone who prefers a few close friends or a wide social network?
- When you are under pressure, what is your natural tendency - to be left alone or to crave company?



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. When you're in trouble, who are you going to call?
2. Who do you love being with? Who energises you? Discuss what kind of relationships replenish you?
3. Paul McGee quips: 'The grass is always greener when it's watered.' How can we invest in our relationships?
4. Looking at the seven categories Dr John Townsend lists in 'People Fuel', what types of relationships do you have?
5. Rachel Jordan-Wolf describes the Church as a family. How does belonging to a church contribute to relational wellbeing?
6. How can forgiveness and reconciliation have an impact on our wellbeing?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

1. Not all our relationships are or should be on the same level. Cultural anthropologist Edward Hall suggests that we have four levels of relationships: an intimate space reserved for close friends and family; a personal space used for conversations with friends, associates and group discussions; a social space reserved for strangers, newly formed groups and acquaintance; a public space used for speeches, lectures and theatre. Divide a piece of paper into four sections. Then, thinking of your family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, add their names to the most appropriate area: intimate, personal, social, public.
2. Do you have people in every area? Reflect how much time you spend with the different groups? Which relationships do you need to invest in?
3. What changes might you need to make in terms of the time you invest in relationships, your willingness to be vulnerable and the boundaries you set?
4. Paul McGee and Kate Wharton talk about the importance of forgiveness. Is there a person or people you need to forgive?
5. What steps will you take in the next week to invest in your relationships, or seek forgiveness and reconciliation?



FINAL THOUGHT

Pause and look at the names of the people you have written down. If you are happy to do so, pray for them thanking God that they are in your life.

WEEK SEVEN

Financial Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Financial wellbeing has been described as ‘a sense of security and feeling as though you have enough money to meet your needs’. Today we are going to look at some guiding principles from a Christian standpoint that help us to experience a sense of security concerning our finances.

In this session we meet Roy Crowne, president of HOPE Together; John Kirkby who founded Christians Against Poverty (CAP) and Alan and Julie, who became debt-free with CAP’s help; as well as Irene Oppong, who talks about being generous. Irene is a software engineer and works in Investment Banking. She is also church warden at Christ Church Spitalfields in London.



Starter Questions

- What subjects in life do you not enjoy talking about? Give a few examples.
- What experiences in life can affect our finances? When have you experienced changes in your life that had an impact on your financial position?



WATCH THIS WEEK’S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. Think about your current financial situation. What three words come to mind?
2. Consider these three words: spending-giving-saving. John Kirkby says ‘How you use your money reflects who you are.’ Are there any changes you would like to make in the next season?
3. How does the way we think about money affect our wellbeing?
4. What do you think of the idea that God is the provider and wants you to be financially healthy?
5. Which of the stories in this session’s film did you find most inspiring and why?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

In twos and threes discuss whether there is a next step you need to take to improve your financial wellbeing. Are you able to share whether you're better at spending, giving or saving?

1. How do you approach your finances? Do you have a budget? Do you think about the impact of your spending today on your resources for the future?
2. Have you ever experienced God's provision in your life, either day to day or in supernatural moments that you would be willing to share?
3. When have you experienced generosity from others? Are there times when you have been able to be generous to others? How did it make you feel?



FINAL THOUGHT

What can you say thank you for? If you pray, stop and thank God for his financial provision. Are there specific people that you could thank this week for giving to you? Could you message or write to them this week?

Is there someone, or a charity that you would like to give to this week? Make a decision to do this if you are able to do so?

WEEK EIGHT

Vocational Wellbeing

INTRODUCTION

Today we are considering vocational wellbeing. The Bible tells us God has prepared good works in advance for us to do (Ephesians 2:10). So, whether you are in paid employment or engage your energies in other ways, this subject is equally applicable. We were designed as purposeful human beings.

In this session we have input from Dr Dave Smith, author of 'God's Plan For Your Wellbeing' and originator of this series, and Jill Garrett, executive director of Tentpeg Consulting.



Starter Questions

- How do you answer the question 'What do you do?'
- What do you think God thinks about how you use your time and energy?



WATCH THIS WEEK'S VIDEO



Discussion Questions

1. What does Monday morning feel like to you?
2. Describe an occasion when you felt 'I was made for this'. What energises you?
3. When have you lost motivation, what was happening and how did you turn this around? How do we keep motivated in what we do?
4. What do you do when your attitude isn't right about work?
5. Who do you invest in? How could you/do you contribute to the wellbeing of others?



ACTIVITIES/TOOLS

1. How do you measure your success? Imagine looking back on this next year, how would you hope to have spent your time?
2. How do you celebrate the successes of others? How could you do this in the next month?
3. Complete the 'six dials' for wellbeing again and then compare them to the initial six dials on week one of this series. What has changed for you?

4. In what areas do you need to make further steps? How might you do this and who will you do this with?
5. If you have never decided to follow God with your whole life and would like to, your group leader can help you to do this and take next steps, or if you would like to explore following God they can recommend how you could do this.



FINAL THOUGHT

Pray together as you end your group time. Pray for your work and any opportunities and challenges you face.