

12 SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

TO GROW IN JESUS CHRIST

LIFE GROUP CURRICULUM 2026

JULY • AUGUST • SEPTEMBER



OVERVIEW

SOLITUDE

Mark 1:35

WEEK 1	July 5	Unplug
WEEK 2	July 12	Silence
WEEK 3	July 19	Stepping Out
WEEK 4	July 26	Connection

SERVANTHOOD

Mark 10:45

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CONFESSION

1 John 1:8-9

WEEK 1	Sept 6	Sin
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WEEK 3	Sept 20	Share
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SOLITUDE

Mark 1:35

And rising very early in the morning,
while it was still dark, he departed and
went out to a desolate place, and there
he prayed.

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 1

July 5–11

Focus: *Unplug*

Solitude begins by stepping away from the noise and pace of everyday life.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20–30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10–15min)

- What is something you regularly do to recharge when life feels overwhelming?
- What is one distraction you find hardest to put down?

Go Deeper
(5–10 min)

- Why do you think God often speaks to people after they step away from the noise and busyness of life?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Psalms 46:10

Mark 1:35

Luke 5:15–16

Isaiah 30:15

Matthew 6:6

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 1

July 5–11

Written

Devotional:

I admit to warring with solitude every day. My house is full of chaos with three children and dance, jujitsu, life groups, appointments, and now the neverending barrage of summer camps. I also want to be intentional about my kids seeing me with my Bible, immersing myself in the word of God to model that behavior for them. But even tonight I was asked for dessert, if a cup was handwashed, and what our plans are for Friday, and then a friend called to ask about recommendations for vacation and another to ask if it's okay to list me as her kids' emergency contact. I'm not sure that I can tell you who was King of Israel or Judeah during what time and if they walked with the Lord after how the evening went.

Solitude is defined by intentional detachment from social stimulation. It's not loneliness, it's peacefulness. When we spend time in solitude with the Word and with our Lord, He gives us that peacefulness.

I have been learning about the pilgrim practice for meditation and has been so instrumental in my understanding of meditation. Jeremiah Burroughs, a preacher from the 1600s, wrote that, "A man who walks with God loves to be withdrawn from the world." In Genesis 24:63 we see Issac going out to the field to meditate. As he is out in the field, spending time with the Lord in solitude, he looks up to see Rebekah approaching. It is the first time he sees his intended wife. He was blessed.

It is hard to unplug, stepping away from our families and that tiny computer that's always in our hands, but it will strengthen our time with God and the Lord will reward us when we do.

Discussion
Questions
(15–20 min)

- What is the biggest obstacle that keeps you from unplugging and spending time alone with God?
- What practical change could you make this week (phone, schedule, media, commitments, etc.) to create even 15 minutes of intentional solitude?

Practical
Application

- What specific distraction (phone, TV, social media, work, busyness, etc.) will you intentionally unplug from this week so you can spend more focused time with God?

Closing Prayer
(1–10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 2

July 12-18

Focus: *Silence*

Solitude creates space to quiet our hearts and listen for God's voice.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- When was the last time you experienced complete quiet?
- Do you generally enjoy silence or avoid it?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- What makes silence uncomfortable for many people, including Christians?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Psalms 62:1

1 Kings 19:11-13

Psalms 131:1-2

Ecclesiastes 5:1-2

Habakkuk 2:20

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 2

July 12-18

Written

Devotional:

I love starting devotionals with quotes. I couldn't decide which of these three to use, so I'll put them all here:

"Silence is God's first language; everything else is a poor translation."

— Thomas Keating

"We need to find God, and He cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence." — Mother Teresa

"In silence and solitude we learn when to speak and when to refrain from speaking." — Richard Foster

Just let those soak in. Our scripture, of course, is Jesus going to a solitary place in Mark 1:35. We learn a few verses later that this was at a time when everyone was looking for him! Further context shows us that this moment of solitude for Jesus takes place amidst a grueling demand for healings and people care. So, why does Jesus seek silence? Is it to simply unplug and settle down from the demands of the world, or is that the place where He can more clearly hear from the Father? Maybe a little of both, but I would submit that the latter is the key. Hearing from God is an absolutely essential component of walking with Him, and enduring the rigors of life (as we all do!). I believe the encouragement of scripture (and some of our greatest Christian minds) to you, then, is to seek silence, not for the sake of silence or clearing your head alone, but in order to more clearly encounter the living God. Elijah found that God was in the "still small voice" in his moments of trial (1Kings 19:11-13). May we do likewise.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- What are the biggest sources of noise, distraction, or busyness in your life right now? How might they be affecting your ability to hear from God?
- Jesus intentionally sought solitude even when people needed Him and demanded His attention. What does His example teach you about the importance of spending time alone with the Father?
- What specific step could you take this week to create space for silence and solitude so that you can listen more attentively to God?

Practical

Application

- What would it look like for you to build five minutes of intentional silence into your daily rhythm this week?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 3

July 19-25

Focus: *Stepping Out*

Solitude requires intentionally creating time and space to meet with God.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- Where is a place you feel especially close to God?
- What helps you slow down when life becomes hectic?
- What is one distraction you find hardest to put down?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Naomi writes that solitude reveals the noise already inside us. What do the thoughts that surface during quiet moments reveal about your heart?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Mark 1:35

Psalms 16:11

Psalms 24:1

Romans 5:8

John 15:4-5

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 3

July 19-25

Written

Devotional:

Guest Contributor

Naomi Haile

I went to the lake with Mark 1:35 on my mind. Jesus withdrew from the crowds, the demands, and the noise to be with the Father. I understood the need for solitude, and I wanted to do the same. The more I thought about it, the more I realized that solitude is not optional for a healthy soul. God created us for a relationship with Him. He demonstrated that love by sending His Son to die for us so that we could be reconciled to Him (Romans 5:8). He is always present with us, yet in the busyness of life we often fail to notice His presence. Solitude is one of God's gifts to help us slow down, draw near, and experience the One who has been with us all along. Perhaps that is why Jesus modeled it so often. But as I lay by the water and closed my eyes, what I heard first was not the birds, the breeze, or the water. It was my own mind. The children. The meetings. The emails. The decisions. The responsibilities. The endless list of things that felt urgent. I had removed myself from the noise around me, but the noise within me had followed. That is when I realized something. Solitude does not create the inner noise. It reveals it. The thoughts were not random. They were showing me what I was carrying. Not just tasks, but burdens. Things I believed somehow depended on me. Then this truth settled in my heart: God is at the top of everything. Then there is me. Then there are the things He has entrusted to me. But when I reverse that order, stewardship begins to feel like ownership. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it." My life, my time, my mission all belong to Him. I am not the owner, but the steward. As I remembered this, my soul began to quiet. Nothing around me changed, but something within me did. The responsibilities were still there, but they felt lighter.

Jesus did not enter solitude to escape His mission. He entered solitude to enjoy the Father's presence and return strengthened for the mission. Psalm 16:11 says, "In Your presence there is fullness of joy." True solitude is not merely the absence of noise. It is the presence of God. And in His presence, the soul finally finds rest.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- What thoughts or burdens rise to the surface when you try to be still before God?
- Where might stewardship in your life have started to feel like ownership?
- What practical step can you take this week to slow down and intentionally experience God's presence?

Practical

Application

- What burden or responsibility do you need to consciously place back into God's hands this week?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 4

July 26-31

Focus: *Connection*

Solitude deepens our awareness of God's presence and opens our hearts to Him.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr - 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- Have you ever received an important piece of direction or wisdom when you least expected it?
- Where do you go when you need clarity?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Looking at Elijah and Jesus, what seems to be the connection between solitude and hearing God's direction?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

1 Kings 19:11-13
Psalm 27:8
Jeremiah 29:13
James 4:8
John 10:27

[SOLITUDE]

WEEK 4

July 26-31

Written

Devotional:

Mark 1:35 "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place and was praying there." What was the result of Jesus seeking time with God alone and quiet? Jesus traveled to the towns nearby so that He could preach in the synagogues. Could it be that Jesus received direction from God during the alone time?

When Simon found Jesus, Jesus knew where they needed to go. Cross-referencing this with 1 Kings 19:11-13. We see that Elijah stands on a mountain wanting to connect with God. The strong winds, earthquake and fire were not tools to communicate with Elijah. Rather, God's message came as a gentle blowing. While the noisy world around clamors for our attention, the quiet around us draws us closer to God. Remembering the soft snow that fell in January, encapsulating many in their homes. The noise of traffic quieted as many held firmly to the idea that staying home was the best choice. The quiet whispers in the early morning which drew families together for interactions.

What happened when Elijah sought God in the solitude?

- God quieted the fear that Jezebel would kill him.
- God gave Elijah direction, better than a GPS. God tells Elijah the road to travel.
- Elijah received a new assignment. God tells Elijah to anoint a new king and to train Elisha to take his place. Does Elijah understand that the new prophet, Elisha, God will utilize to take away Elijah's loneliness? God takes away Elijah's loneliness and gifts him Elisha. I wonder how quickly Elijah traveled to receive this new friend? How quickly would you move to receive the gift of a new friend? This important information delivered to Elijah in the gentle blowing of God's voice.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

I challenge you to get alone; to a place with fewer distractions. Ask God the following questions, then wait for the answer.

- What fears do I need quieted?
- What am I holding onto that I need to let go?
- What relationships should I be building for Your glory?

Practical

Application

- When will you intentionally schedule time this week to get alone with God and listen rather than speak?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.



SERVANTHOOD

Mark 10:45

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 1

August 2-8

Focus: *Jesus*

Servanthood starts by following the example of Jesus Christ.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:

(10-15min)

- Who is the most servant-hearted person you've ever known?
- What made that person's example memorable?

Go Deeper

(5-10 min)

- Why do you think Jesus chose service rather than status as the defining mark of His ministry?

Scripture Prep

(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture

Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open

Scripture

Discussion

(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Mark 10:45

Philippians 2:3-8

John 13:12-17

Luke 22:26-27

Matthew 20:26-28

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 1

August 2-8

Written

Devotional:

"The measure of a life, after all, is not its duration, but its donation." --Corrie ten Boom. This is a powerful quote when you think about the life and ministry of Jesus. He lived on earth for about 33 years, and his public ministry was only for the last three of these. People dying at 33 these days is considered a life cut significantly short. Quite unfair, really. Often today, a death at 33 would cause people to doubt God's goodness, and perhaps even God Himself! But that is because the modern woman or man is obsessed with longevity. Maybe because the longer we have to "get it right," the more our odds of doing so increase? Safer gamble, for sure. Only, Jesus didn't do it that way. Isn't it extraordinary that when Jesus says to his squabbling disciples in Mark 10, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life as a ransom for many." He didn't need 50, 60 or even 100 years to accomplish it. Just 33. And in some ways, just three. Now, the application here is not that we should become comfortable with human lives cut short. Indeed, this is heartbreaking, and since we know God values life, we can conclude that He values long lives very much. The application here, rather, is to spend our lives focusing the time we do have on what God has made us and equipped us and called us to do. Using our gifts for His Church and Kingdom is called servanthood, and it doesn't take years to do it well. In fact, it takes a mere willingness to obey God's call on your life. For you, it may be many faithful steps over a long lifetime that God uses to bless his Church and Kingdom. But it may also be that one simple act of servanthood that you choose to engage this week that will be the "donation" that measures your life. Jesus' example, was short, and oh so very sweet, though, for Him, oh so very costly. As you model your life after Jesus, what does servanthood look like for you?

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- When you think about the "donation" of your life, what do you hope people will remember about how you used the gifts and opportunities God gave you?
- How does Jesus' willingness to serve and sacrifice challenge the way you currently think about your time, priorities, and purpose?
- Where is God calling you to serve right now—even if the opportunity seems small, ordinary, or unnoticed by others?

Practical
Application

- Where is God inviting you to follow Jesus' example of service this week?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 2

August 9-15

Focus: *Sacrifice*

Servanthood often means yielding our will to God's

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:

(10-15min)

- What is a job or responsibility that nobody notices, but still needs to be done?

Go Deeper

(5-10 min)

- How does seeing yourself as a servant rather than someone who occasionally serves change your perspective on ministry and daily life?

Scripture Prep

(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture

Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open

Scripture

Discussion

(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Romans 12:1

Galatians 5:13

Mark 10:35-45

Philippians 2:5-8

Hebrews 12:2

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 2

August 9-15

Written

Devotional:

A common hesitancy that humans have to the practice of servanthood is that we are uncertain that the benefits will outweigh the costs. Mix in a sprinkle of guilt ("I'm letting Jesus and the Church down if I don't do it!"), and even some remnants of asceticism and self-mortification (no pain, no gain!) and you have yourself a spiritual tension that can be quite damaging for you and your family if you don't get it sorted out biblically. Richard Foster addresses this exact tension in his chapter on Service (p132) in Celebration of Discipline when he writes, "Right here we must see the difference between choosing to serve and choosing to be a servant. When we choose to serve, we are still in charge. We decide whom we will serve and when we will serve...but when we choose to be a servant, we give up the right to be in charge. There is great freedom in this... we become available and vulnerable." To me, this is at the heart of Jesus' words to his disciples on that road that day on the way to Jerusalem for the final time (ref Mark 10:35-45). Our English translates the word to "serve," but the Greek word used is in an aorist infinitive tense, which implies that it is something that isn't just a thing the person does, but something that they always do-an identifier-who they are. In other words-Jesus didn't merely serve, he was a servant. Not a "do," but a "who." When a servant is who we are (with the Holy Spirit in us), rather than service being a thing we do, we all of a sudden experience the freedom from guilt and pain that the servanthood tension can often cause if misplaced. One action step that might be helpful in this journey is praying this, "Lord Jesus, as it would please you bring me someone today whom I can serve" (Foster p.140)

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- When was a time you served and felt spiritual or emotional tension rather than joy? Why do you think that was?
- How would you define yourself-as someone who serves, or as a servant? How did you arrive at this conclusion?
- Do you have room to improve as a servant in Christ's Church? What is God saying to you about this today?

Practical
Application

- Who can you pray Foster's prayer for this week: "Lord, bring me someone today whom I can serve"?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 3
August 16-22

Focus: *Multiplication*

Small acts of service can have a lasting impact far beyond what we see.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min
Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- Who was a mentor, coach, teacher, or spiritual influence that shaped your life?
- What made their investment memorable?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Why do small acts of service often have a greater impact than we realize?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

2 Timothy 2:2
Matthew 5:16
Proverbs 11:25
1 Corinthians 15:58
Ephesians 2:10

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 3

August 16-22

Written

Devotional:

We all remember one teacher or coach who left a lasting mark on our lives. Whether it was their encouragement, their belief in us, or simply their consistent presence, they made a difference. For me, that person was Coach Taylor. One day, he spotted me walking through the halls of my new high school and asked if I had ever played volleyball. I told him I had, but that I was new to the school and had missed tryouts. He invited me to join the team for a scrimmage that afternoon, and the rest, as they say, is history. Coach Taylor challenged me to work hard and never give up. More importantly, he was one of the first people who truly believed in me. He gave me rides home when my mother couldn't, encouraged me to do my best in school, and regularly checked in on how I was doing. His investment in my life went far beyond the volleyball court. Looking back, I doubt Coach Taylor realized the impact he was having. He probably thought he was simply doing his job, encouraging a student, offering a ride, checking in on grades. Yet years later, I still remember his investment in me. His service changed the trajectory of my high school experience, taught me what it looks like to care for people beyond the scoreboard, and inspired me to serve others. Jesus modeled this kind of servant-hearted living. In Mark 10:45, He reminds us that, "Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve." Jesus did not seek status or recognition. He invested in people. He noticed the overlooked, encouraged the discouraged, and ultimately gave His life for others. The beautiful thing about servanthood is that its impact rarely ends with the person being served. When someone invests in us, we are inspired to do the same for others. One act of kindness can ripple through families, churches, and communities in ways we may never fully comprehend. God can use your faithfulness to multiply His love far beyond what you can imagine.

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- Is there someone you need to thank for the investment they made in your life? Who has God placed in your path today? A coworker who needs encouragement? A neighbor who feels unseen?

Practical
Application

- Who is one person God may be calling you to intentionally encourage, mentor, or invest in this week?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 4
August 23-29

Focus: *Intention*

Servanthood requires intentionality.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min

Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on
your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- Have you ever had someone unexpectedly invest time in you?
- What made that interaction meaningful?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- What keeps us from moving beyond serving tasks to genuinely serving people?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture
Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open
Scripture
Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Luke 19:1-10

Colossians 3:23-24

Hebrews 13:16

Matthew 25:35-40

Galatians 6:9-10

[SERVANTHOOD]

WEEK 4
August 23-29

Written

Devotional:

Many years ago I served as the night manager of a homeless shelter in Atlanta. The shelter was a beautiful outreach of 16 churches in the area that came together to provide serve the community and was the only shelter that could allow families to stay together. Every evening, a group from one of the churches would show up and serve dinner. It could have been a life group, a Sunday school class, or students, but the rhythm of the shelter was dependent on these servants showing up everyday with a home cooked meal and leaving breakfast for the morning.

Loving people who are experiencing homelessness can be hard for many Christians, but we are called to serve as Jesus called us. So faithfully, everyday, a group showed up with dinner. But the overwhelming majority simply showed up. They stayed in the kitchen, put food on the plates and talked amongst themselves. The dining room was large enough to hold us all, but there was a clear divide between the churches and the residents. One church stood out in that the members who came to serve would sit down with the clients, have a meal with them, get to know them, and invest in the families staying in the shelter. It had such an impact on me that I left the church I had been a member for years to start attending that one church with the members who earnestly worked to make connections and model the love of Christ.

Jesus didn't just show up. In Luke 19:1-10, we see Jesus approaching Zacchaeus while the crowd mutters, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." But Jesus tells the tax collector that, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Jesus was deliberate in how he served, seeing sinners as children of God and spending real, intentional time with them.

By being intentional with how we serve, taking the harder path of sitting with others rather than simply dropping off food for a drive and patting ourselves on the back, we align ourselves with Jesus and open ourselves to experience the profound joy that comes from selfless service.

Discussion
Questions
(15-20 min)

- What story of Jesus' servanthood resonates the most with you?
- Do your preconceptions about others prevent you from being intentional?
- What one thing can you do this week to be intentional with the ones that you are serving, be it with ministries at the church, people you meet on the street, or with your own family?

Practical
Application

- Who is someone you normally overlook that you could intentionally engage, encourage, or spend time with this week?

Closing Prayer
(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.



CONFESSION

1 John 1:8-9

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 1
September 6-12

Focus: *Sin*

Confession begins with honestly admitting our sin before God.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min
Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- What are some sins that aren't very obvious to others, or even to ourselves
- How do they affect us or become manifest to others?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- David prayed, "Search me, O God, and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23-24). Why do you think it is often easier to recognize sin in others than in ourselves?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

1 John 1:8-9
Romans 3:23
Psalm 51:1-4
Proverbs 28:13
Isaiah 59:1-2

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 1

September 6-12

Written

Devotional:

Sin is mentioned 16 times in John's first letter. 1 John 1:8-10 says we're deceiving ourselves, and even calling God a liar, if we think we have no sin, but the blood of Jesus Christ continually cleanses us as we confess and repent. In chapter 2, John says he wrote these things "so that you might not sin," but reminds us that if we do sin, we have an advocate in Jesus (2:1-2), who represents us before the Father on the basis of His sacrifice for our sins.

Sin is the antithesis of God and the essence of Satan. It's rebellion against God (called "lawlessness" and "unrighteousness" by John in 1 John 3:4 and 5:17), driven by our fleshly desires and selfishness. Oswald Chambers said, "'My right to myself' is the very essence of sin." Sin isn't always obvious, which is why David asked God to search his heart and reveal any sinful way to him (Ps 139:23-24). James says if anyone "knows the right thing to do and does not do it, for him it is sin" (4:17), and Paul says that "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Ro. 14:23).

Although our "old man" was crucified and buried when we believed in Jesus as our Savior (Ro. 6:6-7), our flesh - our inner being - is still influenced by years of submission to that old sinful nature. The author of sin, the devil, seeks to exploit our flesh, which opposes the Spirit of God in us (Romans 7:21-23). Sin can never separate us from the love of God, but it blocks our fellowship with Him and keeps us from the blessings of communion with Him. Confession restores that relationship, and it does so with other Christians we've wronged as well as with God. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of any sins in your life. Then confess, repent and experience the immediate assurance of forgiveness.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- We are drawn to faith in Christ by an awareness of the awful penalty of sin (Ro. 6:23). So why do Christians continue to sin after being saved?
- In light of 1 John 1:9, what harm is there in doing something we know is sinful, then confessing and being cleansed and restored to fellowship with God? (see Ro. 6:1-4)
- Why does God still love us if we intentionally sin after we're saved? (If you're a parent, think about how you'd feel about your children if they committed a crime.)

Practical

Application

- Take a few quiet moments this week to pray Psalm 139:23-24. What is one specific thing the Lord brings to mind that needs to be confessed, surrendered, or changed?

Closing Prayer

(1-10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 2
September 13-20

Focus: *God*

Confession draws us to God, who meets us with grace and forgiveness

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min
Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up

Questions:
(10-15min)

- Is confession more about relieving personal guilt, seeking forgiveness, or taking responsibility?

Go Deeper
(5-10 min)

- Can confession truly be meaningful without a change in behavior afterward?

Scripture Prep
(2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion
(5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

Psalm 32:1-5
Micah 7:18-19
Lamentations 3:22-23
Hebrews 4:14-16
Ephesians 1:7

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 2
September 13–20

Written

Devotional:

Let's look at the discipline of confession from the standpoint of some of the attributes of God.

1. God is Holy – God's holiness means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his honor. We are to imitate God's holiness. Leviticus 19:2 – "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy." Hebrews 12-14b – "...work at living a holy life, for those who are not holy will not see the Lord." 1 Peter 1:15 – "Be holy in all your conduct."
2. God is Just – God always acts in accordance with what is right and is Himself the final standard of what is right. Thus is it necessary that God punish sin, for it does not deserve reward; it is wrong and deserves punishment. Deuteronomy 32:4 – "All His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness who does no wrong, how just and upright is He."
3. God is Merciful – God shows goodness to those in misery and distress. 2 Samuel 24:14 – "I am in great distress. Let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercy is great." Ps 51
4. God is Love: God's love means that God eternally gives of himself to others; He eager to forgive: 1 Corinthians 15:3 – "For what I received I passed onto you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,". Mark 1:41 – "Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. 'I am willing', he said. 'Be clean!'".
5. God is Faithful – God is reliable and faithful to His words. With respect to His promises, God always does what He promises to do, and we can depend on Him never to be unfaithful to His promises. We confess and then He forgives. 1 John 1:9 – "But if we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all wickedness."

Discussion

Questions

(15–20 min)

- How do God's attributes—like His holiness, mercy, and omniscience (knowing everything)—shape the way we approach confession, and how should they influence what true repentance looks like in our lives?
- If you were to reflect God's mercy more fully, for whom among those you know would you show special care during the next week?
- Is it appropriate to define love as "self-giving" with respect to your own interpersonal relationships? In what ways could you imitate God's love specifically today? Is it possible to decide to love someone and then to act on that decision, or does love between human beings simply depend on spontaneous emotional feelings?

Practical

Application

Are there activities or relationships in your present pattern of life that are hindering your growth in holiness because it makes it difficult for you to be separated from sin and devoted to seeking God's honor?

Closing Prayer

(1–10min)

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 3
September 20-26

Focus: Share

Confession brings healing when we honestly share our struggles with trusted others.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min
Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20-30 min)

Warm-Up Questions: (10-15min)

- Who has been one of the safest people for you to talk with about spiritual struggles?
- What qualities make someone trustworthy?

Go Deeper (5-10 min)

- Why do you think God designed confession to include trusted believers and not just private conversations with Him?

Scripture Prep (2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion (5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

James 5:16
1 John 1:7
Galatians 6:1-2
Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
Hebrews 10:24-25

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 3
September 20-26

Written

Devotional:

Once you have begun to admit your sin and confess it to God, you are off to an amazing start! But Scripture also says that living in the light means living in fellowship with God and “with one another” (1 John 1:7). You might be wondering, “why is confession to others so important? Why can’t I just confess to God privately and move on?” In my relationship with God, there is no better reality than being fully known and loved. Confession restores us to God’s intended design – where we get a glimpse of the coming Kingdom and experience the perfect peace of shalom. Confession is a gift that God gives us as a rhythm to build into our lives, so we can enjoy the fullness of an intimate relationship with Jesus and others. Without confession, we cannot fully experience God’s love, grace, and forgiveness. When we confess to others, we experience God’s healing love in a tangible way (James 5:16).

When I was 21 and recently saved, I went on my first Christian retreat. The Holy Spirit had been convicting and freeing me of my former ways of sinful living, one area at a time. But there was one area I had been holding onto – sexual addiction. I was in a relationship involving sex before marriage and had been addicted to pornography since my teenage years. During the retreat, the Holy Spirit had been stirring my heart and convicting me of my secret sexual sin. One night they held a time of confession, so I went up to the microphone and confessed everything. I was nervous, but God gave me the courage. The pastors and men there wrapped their arms around me and prayed for me. A few of them began to walk alongside me until I eventually experienced healing. The night I confessed, I finally understood what it meant to walk in freedom and joy with Jesus.

Is there a sin you’ve been holding onto? Bring it into the light before God and trusted believers, and watch what Jesus will do.

Discussion

Questions

(15-20 min)

- Why does God’s design of confession to others matter?
- How have you experienced God’s healing love when you confessed your sin to Him AND others? If so, what happened? If not, what do you think is standing in the way?
- Think about the trusted believers in your life: do you have relationships where that kind of honesty is actually possible? If not, what’s one step you could take toward building one?

Practical

Application

- Is there a trusted believer with whom God may be prompting you to share more honestly this week?

Closing Prayer

Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 4
September 27-30

Focus: Freedom

Confession leads to the freedom, peace, and restoration found in Christ.

Group Flow:

Total Time: 1 hr – 1 hr 30 min
Eat/Mingle: Optional, based on your group's structure (20–30 min)

Warm-Up Questions: (10–15min)

- What is something you carried for a long time that felt like a relief once you finally dealt with it?
- When have you experienced peace after facing something difficult?

Go Deeper (5–10 min)

- In Rachael's story, confession exposed deeper beliefs beneath her fear. Why is it important to identify the root issues underneath our emotions?

Scripture Prep (2 min)

Group leader (or delegate) gives a brief context for the passage.

Scripture Reading (2 min)

Choose someone in the group to read the scripture aloud.

Open Scripture Discussion (5 min)

Ask your group members if they have any immediate thoughts on the passage. Then, consider reading several of the following passages and ask for reactions to similarities or differences amongst the scriptures.

2 Timothy 1:7
2 Corinthians 10:5
Romans 8:1–2
John 8:31–36
Psalm 32:1–2

[CONFESSION]

WEEK 4
September 27-30

Written

Devotional:

Guest Contributor
Rachael Noonan

On Monday, January 12, I found myself driving to the ER. There was a pain in my pelvis that had been intensifying for the past 3 days. We have well-identified the enemy. It's an ovarian mass that is growing at an exponential rate.

I'm probably more acquainted with my mortality than many others. If preparing for death is a sport, I'm an olympian. So I'm already mentally seasoned for this moment. Surprisingly, of the 400 emotions coursing through my veins during the 40 minute drive to the ER, my only sadness was that I didn't get a chance to say goodbye to my youngest daughter. As I let the other feelings take turns surfacing, I realized one sensation was starting to make a slow, surrounding, and incrementally tightening feeling. The sensation was so subtle, I hardly perceived it until I stopped at a light, looked down, and saw my knees shaking. I paused right there and knew that this was terror. Two verses came to mind (and folks... this is why we memorize scriptures). The first was 2 Timothy 1:7, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind." The second was 2 Corinthians 10:5, "... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." I felt under the very subtle but potent attack of thoughts that needed wrangling before I became paralyzed with terror. I activated fight mode. "What's the kryptonite of terror?" I thought. The word "peace" came to mind almost faster than I could finish my question.

The terror was latched on to something...it was the anguish of leaving my family. There was a foothold that played on the idea of abandoning my children and the struggles they would have in life without me. This isn't to say that it's inconsequential for children to grow up without their mother, but it confronted two lies I was clearly holding: 1) I am their savior and without me they will flounder. 2) Only I, not God, will be the source of their love and provision. I continued my conversation with God and brought my pride to the table, confessed my misalignment, and asked forgiveness. Folks. I kid you not. The terror disappeared. Instantly.

That is the power of our God, but boy, that is also the power of confession and repentance. If you confess and surrender yourself, your sins, and your gods at the feet of our Heavenly Father, there is a freedom that allows you to face even death itself with shalom.

Discussion Questions (15-20 min)

- What entices you to avoid or neglect spending quality time with God (e.g., dedicated time for prayer, worship, church)? Is it sports? The comfort of a lazy morning? Brunch with a friend? Travel soccer? A few hours in the office? Grinding out that class project? A doom scroll session to decompress? What element of that activity are you afraid to miss if you earmarked time for God alone?
- What are your fears? What thoughts keep you up or wake you up at night?
- What triggers you to rage? Is there a sense of justice that has morphed into a right of pride?
- Do you ruminate or have racing thoughts? What is the topic and what tends to be the spirit of your "spirals"? Do you get amped up over an insult? Do you wither under the negative self-talk? Do you have any strong points of pride? Or on the flipside, what recurring themes anger you about others?

Practical Application

- Is there a fear, idol, lie, or source of pride that God is inviting you to surrender to Him this week?

Closing Prayer Ask someone to close in prayer, or share prayer requests and pray together.



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