

Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

July 9th

Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What has been your favorite summer vacation/road trip?

Bible Study Questions

1. Read 2 Samuel 11-12.
 - Put yourself in David's shoes? What emotions would you be feeling after being confronted by Nathan?
 - How would this realization impact your relationship with God and the way that you view yourself?
 - How would you move forward in life after this experience?
 - Has there ever been a time in which you have been haunted by a bad choice? (share if you feel comfortable).
2. Read Psalm 51
 - What specific requests does David make of God?
 - What does he hope is the outcome of this prayer?
 - What posture does he take before God?
3. The word contrite means to be "crushed". David says that a contrite spirit is the sacrifice that God requires.
 - Why?
 - How do we develop that kind of a posture before God?
4. Why should we have a regular habit of confession before God? What difference should confession have in our life?
5. This prayer is between us and God. When is confessing to others appropriate?
6. Is there something in your life that you need to confess right now...either to others or to God?

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The Confession Psalm

The Bible teaches that all of us have sinned and fallen from the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The result is that sin becomes a stain in our life that acts as a barrier between us and God. The good news is that God forgives. In Psalm 51, we have a confession prayer. When we have sinned and nothing works to clean that stain, the prayer shows us how we can experience God's forgiveness and find ourselves restored and free.

I. Background of Psalm 51

- a. **David committed adultery and murder:** The story is in 2nd Samuel 11. David has an affair with the wife of one of his greatest warriors and then kills him to cover it up.
- b. **Found himself in a mess that he couldn't fix:** When confronted by the prophet Nathan, David is filled with guilt. He recognizes that he has hurt God and that there is nothing that will right the wrong. His only option is to throw himself before the mercy of God.

II. Steps to confession

- a. **Identify the sin:** David distinctly states that he has sinned against God and has done something evil (51:4). He knows his offense and is laying that before the feet of God. We cannot treat a wound unless we know where it is. In the same way, we can't address a sin issue in our life unless we identify it.
- b. **Recognize God's purpose in confession is a restored heart:** Many view confession as just getting a weight off of their chest or checking off a box so that they can continue to sin. Yet David is aiming for a pure heart (v. 10) and a restoration to God's presence (v. 11).
- c. **Develop a posture of humility:** David recognizes that God doesn't want a sacrifice, but a broken and contrite heart (v. 17). Contrite means a heart that is crushed before God.
- d. **Embrace a changed life:** David says that the result of forgiveness will be teaching others righteousness and praise to God (v. 13-15). The result of confession is not to continue in sin, but a life that moves one step closer to Jesus.

Conclusion

David experienced God's forgiveness and once again enjoyed the joy of the God's presence. Ironically, David took a posture of brokenness before God, but it was God who was broken for David when Jesus died on the cross. It was through the brokenness of Jesus that David could be forgiven.

A final note is that one practice that can aid us in confession is a spiritual discipline called the prayer of examine. It has three parts. One begins by examining the previous day and thanking God for each way that he showed up. A second step is to ask God to search our hearts and to confess any sin that comes to mind. Thirdly, we look ahead and ask God for support in the upcoming day.