



The Secret Lives of Almost Everyone Week One

Opening Prayer

God, you know who we are, who we aren't, and who we are becoming. Help us to find grace and safety through you and in our group.

Talk It Over

We live in a culture that often teaches us to do all we can to appear as if we have it all together, have life under control, and are doing "okay".

- Tell about a time you were not okay, but you tried to buckle down and prove to yourself or others you were okay.
- Tell about a memorable time you tried to push past your real feelings or thought for the sake of appearing under control and okay. Your attempt may have proved successful or not and the story may be serious or funny.

Read Mark 2:16-17 (New Living Translation)

Jesus story after Jesus story reminds us that his heart is open, aware, and welcoming to those who are struggling, hurt, or desperate for transformation. Jesus made it clear: It's okay to not be okay.

- While we all likely know how to appear as if we are okay to one degree or another, despite our real thoughts and feelings, many of us have tell tale signs we aren't okay. What is one of your tell tale signs that you are not really okay? Where did these signs come from? Who in your life knows these signs?
- Tell about a time you made the choice to show someone your real feelings or thoughts despite the cost or risk of appearing 'not okay'. What led you to that choice, how did that experience go, and what was your take away?

Read 1 John 1:8 and Matthew 7:3

God asks us to be honest about our struggles, hurt, and hangups. In other words, while it's okay to not be okay, being in denial about our issues isn't what God wants. As humans we can spend our whole life blaming others for our issues and justifying, minimizing, deflecting our issues, but God invites us to get honest with him and safe people so that we can experience his love and healing.

- Generally, how easy or hard is it for you to see and own your issues? Think back to what trusted voices have told you in the past on this topic.
- Being honest doesn't mean we should be transparent with everyone, but it does mean we are honest with ourselves, God, and core people. What guidelines do you use to determine if you should be transparent with someone or not?

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Romans 8:1 (Voice)

Walking with Jesus and doing life as a Jesus follower is not about perfection. While it okay to not be okay and God wants us to be honest with our issues in healthy ways, we don't need to beat ourselves up about it. The Bible teaches us that God will convict us, but he doesn't condemn us. Condemnation often leaves us feeling beat up, disapproved and powerless, but conviction guides us towards forgiveness, restoration, and freedom. Conviction is honest, but it is rooted in love.

- Share a time you were recently convicted by the Holy Spirit. What was that experience like?
- Share about a time you have experienced condemnation. What was that experience like?

Read Philippians 1:6 (Voice)

A beautiful aspect to the Gospel message is that we learn power comes through weakness and that God is looking to transform us through our the power of his Holy Spirit.

- Share about a time you saw God meet you in your weakness.
- Look at your thoughts, feelings, and life today. In what ways or areas of life would you like to experience God's transformation process? Where are you in the process now? What are you doing to surrender the situation to God?

Read Ephesians 2:10

Take a minute to quietly reflect on the following questions. Invite God into the process and be open to his gentle, kind, loving leadership.

- Is there an area of your life you need to admit you aren't okay with? Is there an area of life you are trying to appear as if you have it under control, but you really need help with?
- Is there any area of life you are lying about, denying, justifying, minimizing, or blaming others for?
- What is your next right step? In what ways is God inviting you into deeper freedom?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for loving us as we are and for inviting us into more. Help us to say 'yes' to you and to embrace the transformation process you have for us.