



The Secret Lives of Almost Everyone Week Two

Opening Prayer

God, help us to be aware of your presence and voice today. We want to hear from you and experience you.

Talk It Over

Last week we talked about the idea that “it’s okay to not be okay”. God gives us permission to drop the mask and to live authentically because God knows we are all in process, God loves us just as we are, and God knows love will transform us best.

- Can you think back to a time or think of a relationship where you were or are loved just as you are? Share about that memory or that relationship.
- In light of admitting, owning, or acknowledge our problems, what role does love play in all of it for you?

Important Note: As we look at this week’s talk of enabling, please be respectful, thoughtful, and wise in how we talk about other people. We want your group to be a safe place to process, but let’s do our part to believe the best about others, to remember we don’t know the whole story, to own our ignorance, to own our issues, and to not slander others character.

Read Proverbs 4:11-12 (Voice)

As humans, we not only have the capacity to influence one another in life-giving ways, we can also fuel each other in negative ways. Even when our intentions are good, our helping can enable bad behavior. For example, we can enable negative behavior when we protect someone from experiencing the natural consequences of their own behavior or decisions, when we don’t speak up when there is a problem, when we minimize or ignore issues that need to be addressed, and so on.

- Has someone ever enabled you to make bad choices or behavior? How did you come about seeing that you were being enabled? Share about that experience.
- Have you ever enabled someone’s bad choices or behavior? How did you realize you were enabling? Share about that experience.
- Sometimes knowing our role in an issue or problem can be hard. How do you know when you have to get involved in a problem and when you need to stay out?
- When you see a problem or issue in someone else, how can we be conduits of love and truth? What methods, principles, or values can we commit to as Christ followers?

To help us see how enabling might look in the context of a relationship, this week we looked at the story of Elijah and his sons. Below is a quick summary of the story:

Read 1 Samuel 2:12-13 (NLT), 1 Samuel 2:12-13 (NLT), 1 Samuel 2:17 (NLT), and 1 Samuel 2:22-24 (NLT)

Elijah was aware there was a problem, he was aware the problem was getting worse, he didn’t want to really see how serious or big the issue was, he was surprised by the outcome, and he himself paid serious consequences. **(Continued on next page.)**

- In what ways do you find yourself relating to Elijah in this story?
- Without concluding on the exact thing Elijah should have done here, what other possible steps, ideas, or choices, could Elijah have considered?

Read 1 John 1:6-7 (NLT)

Identifying a problem is often seen as the first step of healing.

- Looking at your own story and life, can you think of a time you saw an issue or problem in yourself for the first time? How long had you been unaware of the issue or problem? What equipped and empowered you to see this issue or problem for the first time?
- Have you ever seen someone's life turn around or experienced life change because they admitted or owned a problem or issue they had been denying, covering up, or blind to?

Read Proverbs 29:25 (Voice)

Often times what keeps us away from facing a problem head on is fear.

- In what ways has fear kept you back from facing a problem?
- While we don't want to act in fear, we also don't want to behave in aggressive ways or without showing humble respect for others. Have you ever tried to handle a problem in an aggressive way and made things worse?
- Have you ever had someone talk to you about an issue they saw in you in a life giving way? What was that experience like?

Read James 5:16 and Matthew 19:26 (NLT)

Admitting when you're helping is hurting and believing that God can make a difference allows us to stop enabling and opens us up to hope. This is very much a delicate dance verses a pendulum swing, and requires support and discernment.

- Looking at your life right now, do you see yourself enabling in any area or relationship? What is the motivation for your enabling? Where did you learn this method of relating to others? What is your next right step?
- In what relationship do you need a dose of hope in? What would the message of hope tell or offer you? If hope is difficult to see or express, consider getting some outside support and perspective in this situation.

Closing Prayer

God, you know us from the inside out. Help us to be open and honest to your wisdom and to walk in love with everyone we face.