



Week One

Opening Praying

God, thanks for this circle of friends. Help us to hear from you and to point one another towards whatever it is you have for each of us here today.

Talk It Over

In our culture we often hear the idea of 'have no regrets'. The problem is we all fall short sometimes — mistakes, bad choices, and hard lessons learned are part of what it means to be an imperfect human. Our regrets may entail something we wish we hadn't done or a missed opportunity we didn't take action on. Our regrets might even entail details that are outside our control. Going even further, by seeing and owning our mistakes for what they are, we open ourselves up to deeper levels of health, transformation, and life change.

- When you hear the word 'regret' what comes to mind first?
- Share about an embarrassing or funny moment you wish would could do over.

When we consider our regrets we can place them into one of three large categories:

1. **Regrets of Action** - These are things that make us smack our foreheads and say, "Ugh! I wish I'd never . . ." It could be a lie we told, a relationship we torpedoed, or a dumb choice we made. The list is endless.
2. **Regrets of Inaction** - These are things we wish we would've done, but didn't. It could be opportunities missed, time wasted, risks not taken, and again the list goes on and on.
3. **Regrets of Reaction** - Sometimes our greatest regrets start with something that was done to us. It could be abuse, neglect, betrayal, illness, or different injury. When bad things happen to us, even if it was no fault of our own, we can regret them. What can be extra problematic is what we do in response to the pain. In fact, we too often allow original hurts to launch us into cycles of our own self inflicted regrets. (*Ex. My parents didn't love me well and I drink excessively to cover the pain.*)

- What do you think about these categories of regret? Does the list resonate with you?
- Which bucket would you say holds the majority of your regrets?

Read Proverbs 28:13 and Psalm 51:10

Some of the clear challenge we may have in learning to live beyond our regrets is our inclination toward denying the reality of negative choices or ruminating in the regret. (Rumination is when we replay our regret over and over again in our mind, and as a result we get stuck.) God invites us to see bad choices and mistakes for what they are, and to learn from our regrets. In this sense, our regrets can actually live as reminders that we can do better and are being invited to live better.

- Have you ever been hurt by someone who didn't own their mistake or bad choice? If so, how could their ownership contribute to the greater good of all involved and overall good of the situation? (**Continued to next page.**)

- Have you ever made a situation worse for yourself or others by not owning the effects of your bad choice or mistake? Tell us about that.
- In what ways have your own regrets offered important and helpful feedback?
- Do you know what it's like to replay an event or situation over and over in your head? Describe what that experience is like for you and why you think you do it.

Read John 21:15-19

After Peter denies his association, friendship, and love for Jesus, Jesus reassures Peter that his love and purpose are still on the table for Peter to receive. Peter was overcome by regret, but Jesus was still present with him and inviting him into God's mission.

- Have you ever felt unloved by God or disqualified for God's work because of your regrets? How did you move past that?
- Have you ever seen God use a broken part of your past to move his mission forward?

Read 2 Corinthians 7:8-11 (The Voice)

Jesus wants us to know we can all live a life *beyond* regret. While owning what went wrong, being compassionate to all the feelings involved, and respecting consequences, regret can be a catalyst for hope, freedom, and life-giving change. In fact, in this sense, we can befriend our regret, learn from it, and use it for good.

- Has regret ever lead to life-giving change for you? Share about that experience.
- Are there any regrets you are currently carrying that are leaving you stuck somehow? Consider sharing about a regret and the message you are telling yourself.
- In light of your regrets, are there any next right steps you should take to make to help bring hope, freedom, or life-change to the relationship or situation?

Closing Prayer

God, you know the details of our story. You know the good, the bad, the ugly, the shame, and even where we are stuck. Please help us to encounter your love and to say 'yes' to your mission time and time again.