



Week Three

Opening Praying

God, thank you for walking us through our regrets and teaching us about forgiveness. Be with us as we learn together today.

Talk It Over

This series is all about seeing that our regrets can be the beginning of a new story. When we see our regrets for what they are, we can then take healthy ownership and say 'yes' to the learning, healing, and future opportunities God offers us. Regardless of the type of regret — regret of action, inaction or reaction — or the magnitude of the regret, God invites each of us to walk with him through the residual mess so we can start over in a life-giving way.

- Have you ever done something you thought would be funny only to realize later it wasn't? Maybe it was a prank you ended up regretting.
- Regret leads to a sorry cycle — anesthetizing our wounds — and leading to more regrets. Can you recognize some ways that you have gotten stuck in the sorry cycle? What are some of the busy things you fill your life with in order to avoid regret?

Review 2 Samuel 11 and Read Romans 12:18 (NIV)

Looking back to the story of David we covered last week, we see that David struggled to keep his lie for a year before he decided to make things right. Living at peace with everyone requires starting with us. When we are living with a lie — distracting, numbing, and controlling — peace is not likely something we feel inside. The path to helping change starts with first acknowledging something needs to change.

- Can you recall a time you tried to assert control to keep something hidden? Have you ever tried to distract from a nagging feeling inside?
- Stressful situations and regrets keep many of us awake at night. Tossing and turning instead of falling into restorative rest. Lack of sleep actually increases anxiety and depression. Can you recall the difference between ending your day with peace in your heart and ending it carrying burdens?
- If living at peace with everyone begins with you, what might you need to do to encounter the peace of God in your heart?

Read Psalms 51:1-4 and Psalm 51:10 (NCV) *(Note: We read parts of Psalm 51 last week so this is us rereading parts of it.)*

In his prayer, David is finally willing to stop, be with what is, and turn to God as he expresses his feelings. When we choose to acknowledge that something must change we begin to close the gap of emotional distance between God and us. We sit with what is and realize there is no running. From there we can see a 'trouble shooting guide' of sorts that helps us not just move beyond regrets, but reconcile them relationally and spiritually, leading to more healing.

- What feelings does reading David's prayer evoke in you? Have you ever talked to God expressing what is going on in your heart? **(Continued on the next page)**

- What are some things that keep you from being with what is in your life? What keeps you from being honest with God?

Read 1 John 1:9 and Ephesians 4:32

As we unpack this *'trouble shooting guide'*, we begin to see that forgiveness is the key toward avoiding the dead end and instead creating a starting point. Hurt someone? Ask for their forgiveness. Commit a sin? Ask God for forgiveness. Make a mistake? Forgive yourself. Been hurt by someone or something? Forgive the offender. This can sound easier said than done. But thankfully, we can start by truly believing God has completed the work of forgiveness on the cross through Jesus.

- Do you need to receive forgiveness from God for something? Do you need to forgive yourself for something? Make a commitment to work through that today.
- Do you need to ask someone for their forgiveness? What practical step can you do to help make that happen? Consider writing a letter, making a phone call, or a coffee date to talk.

As we look at forgiving others who have caused us harm, it is important to clarify your safety is the biggest priority. While it may be helpful to be able to talk to the person and express your hurt, it isn't necessary or even the best choice in some situations. Discuss some ideas around how you can express hurt without letting the person who hurt you know.

- Are you a person who tends to hold grudges or let things go easily? What are the effects of each?
- Have you ever let someone who hurt you know that you have forgiven them? If you feel comfortable share that story.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for being close to us and providing a way to work through our hurt and regrets. Thank you for the gift of forgiveness given to us through the work of the cross. Help us to continue that work in our own lives and relationships.

Practice

Carve out some time this week to be still before God. Find a comfortable place to sit where you won't be disturbed, consider having a notepad and pen, and ask God to help walk you through the areas you need to extend or experience forgiveness. Then sit and wait to see what comes to mind. Write at the top of your notepad or journal the words "I'm forgiven" remember the forgiveness Jesus extended to you on the cross. Really feel that gift and allow it to guide you in your quiet time.