

SECRETS

Week One

Opening Prayer

God, we thank you for this opportunity to be together. Help guide us as we look at the parts of our lives we normally keep hidden. Show us what you want us to share today. We trust your ways are good.

Talk It Over

This week we started a new series where we are looking at our secrets and how they impact our life with God and others. We covered three types of secrets: silly, sinful, shameful. Silly might be a fun story for others to hear but actually was a moment where we felt embarrassed and are therefore not quick to share. Sinful is the type of secret that most of us struggle with, it's rooted in destructive behavior and is damaging to relationships. Finally we looked at shaming secrets, recognizing that there are also secrets others have put on us and ones that are connected to such deep pain they can keep us quiet.

- Tell us your own "silly" secret story
- Can you think of a time (even if it's in childhood) where you kept a secret or tried to hide something? If it feels like an appropriate and quick story to tell share it with us.
- How have you seen shame impact someone else or yourself? Discuss the difference between shame and guilt.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5 (NIV)

In this series, we're taking a look at a story about a sinful secret – a series of bad, wrong, and sinful decisions and actions that created an avalanche of disasters. King David found himself in a situation where a series of small behaviors caused him to be trapped in a quite complicated story.

- What stands out to you in this part of the story of David and Bathsheba.
- Where do you see the first warning sign or yellow flag in the story?
- Have you been in a place where you talked yourself into a decision thinking you had ultimate control of the outcome?

Let's take a look at three specific ways David entered into a slide that ultimately led him to more destructive behavior impacting himself and others. Sinful secrets often end up taking place at the end of many small decisions or what can be viewed as a slide. King David compromised his values, gave in to his desires, and sacrificed his integrity.

Re-Read 2 Samuel 11:1

It was not customary for a king to stay behind and not go to war with his soldiers. David choosing to stay behind was reflective of a compromise to his leadership.

- Do you recognize this internal conflict: You know you should choose one thing but the thing you desire is so strong you find yourself justifying why compromising a little is not a big deal?
- Can you think of a time where you compromised a value of your own because you thought you might want to follow a desire more? How did that turn out?

Re-Read 2 Samuel 11: 2

David compromised his values and now he is met with the temptation of his desire. Not much stands in his way.

- Have you found yourself entertaining something you know is not healthy for you?
- We all have given in to something that was not God's best for our lives at some point. Name some feelings that come after doing this?

Re- Read 2 Samuel 11:3-4; 5

There was still time to choose! David could have changed his path all the way up to this point but as we see in the story he instead decided to sacrifice his integrity and give in. From here the consequences of his choice begin to unfold as Bathsheba let's him know she is pregnant.

- We all would love to avoid consequences when we mess up but that is rarely the case. Can you identify some consequences you have faced due to careless behavior choices?
- Through this story we can see that even as far back as the days of David humans have struggled to do what is right. What are some guardrails you have in your life to help you stay true to what you value and believe?

Read John 8:31 (NLT)

Walking in the truth means walking with Jesus. Living lights on windows open does not mean we live perfectly. It means we live openly. We confide in those close to us as we struggle. We allow the holy spirit to have access to all areas of our heart and life. This weekend we invited you to put on a wristband to remind you that this way of living is what will help us all walk in freedom.

- If you decided to wear a bracelet this week, tell us why?

Part of this idea is that it will not be comfortable. Being uncomfortable can be challenging to us but when it comes to our integrity that uncomfortability is needed and okay!

- Are there areas in your life where you embrace uncomfortability? What is that like for you?

Closing Prayer

God, we thank you for our time, for the sharing of this group, and for knowing us so well. Help us to continue examining the corners of our inner life this week as we rest in your presence. Continue to complete a good work in all of us. Amen.

Note (to be read outloud to the group)

If you have been the victim of someone else's sinful behavior and you've kept that a secret because of the pain and shame it causes you, it's not your fault that it happened and you don't need to be ashamed. You didn't do anything wrong. You are loved here, you are welcomed here, and you don't need to be ashamed anymore. If you need extra support email care@eastlakechurch.com or check out our mental health resource page. <http://eastlakechurch.com/next-steps/mental-health-resources/>

How To Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create space to grow in friendship and faith. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, consider reviewing the guide before your group to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content or to hit all the questions.

The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help foster friendship and faith in your specific group.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead.

