

SECRETS

Week Two

Opening Prayer

God, we trust you are here with us. Help us to be aware of you and your leadership. We want you to guide us towards the good things you have for us. Amen.

Talk It Over

This series is all about looking at our secrets and how they impact our life with God and others. Today we are looking at some of the ways we willingly go to great lengths to hide our secrets. We likely do this because we are desperate to control the consequences. But today's big idea reminds us that no matter how hard we try, we don't control our secrets, our secrets control us.

- Thinking back to your childhood, tell us about a time you went to great lengths to cover an innocent mistake. You can define innocent in your own terms.
- Without sharing names, tell us about a time someone tried to hide an innocent mistake from you, but you saw through the deceit. Again, you can define innocent in your own terms.

In this series, we're taking a look at a serious mess King David found himself in all because of a series of bad choices he made. Last week we looked specifically at how David's secret first unfolded. This week we are looking at the web of trouble David stirred up because of his attempts to cover up his secret.

Read 2 Samuel 11

In this story King David shows us three ways he attempts to hide his secret from others. David is desperate to control the outcome and limit the consequences of his secrets. He wants power over his secrets, but through the story, we see that the real power seems to lie in the very secrets themselves.

Let's look at the three ways David attempts to hide secrets:

- 1. David hid his secret through the pattern of manipulation.** He was intentional about trying to cover up his story.
- 2. David hid his secret through the pattern of bullying.** In our attempt to hide secrets we can sometimes use our position to push people away. Sometimes this means we get loud or mean. Sometimes this means we try to make other people feel stupid, crazy, or little.
- 3. David hid his secret through the pattern of justification.** Justification entails telling ourselves the situation isn't that bad or minimizing the ways we have hurt others.

- Of these three patterns, which do you find yourself most likely defaulting to when you are trying to hide your secret? Tell us about that tendency.
- Have you been hurt by someone using one of these patterns of hiding? Without oversharing about the person or situation, tell us how this pattern affected you.
- Look through the three patterns of hiding we examined, what do you think is the allure of each? What is the motivation? Let's consider what inside of us as humans is so quick to fall into these toxic patterns.

King David's story with Bathsheba and Uriah reminds us that while we can go about trying to hide our secrets from others, our secrets are always with us. Again, reinforcing the idea that our secrets have a way of controlling us more than we control them. So much so that we are the ones left figuring out how to do life with

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these secrets.

Let's look at four methods we can implement in hopes of coping with our secrets:

1. Sometimes we cope with our secrets by numbing ourselves. Numbing comes in all sorts of shapes and sizes. It may involve drinking, shopping, needing to stay busy, shutting down, and so forth.

2. Sometimes we use religion to numb ourselves. We think if we do enough "good" Christian things then our secrets won't matter as much.

3. Sometimes we try to hide our secrets by striving for perfection. The idea here is that if we constantly strive to be better in one area it takes the focus off other areas of our life.

4. Sometimes we cope with our secrets by pretending they don't affect others.

- Tell us about a time you used one of these methods of coping.
- Looking at the home you grew up in, what methods of coping were more common?
- You don't need to tell us your secret, but looking at your current phase of life, what is your go-to method of coping when you are feeling the weight of a secret?

David's story doesn't end with him trying to hide his secrets. (We will talk more about this side of the story next week.) Thankfully, our stories don't need to end there either. God is always in the business of trying to help us find wholeness, grace, and freedom.

Let's look at three solutions we can apply to our secrets:

1. Embrace transparency as a way of life.

Read John 1:5-7 (Message)

Transparency is the opposite of secrets. Instead of living in the dark, live in the light. Jesus doesn't want us to hide or cover up. Transparency is a way of life.

- Who in your life are you able to be most transparent with?
- When do you find yourself most able or more willing to be transparent?
- What about transparency is the hardest for you?

2. We embrace transparency as a strength rather than a weakness.

Read Psalm 32:3-5 (Message)

We don't need to fear transparency; being transparent with the right people, is always a step in the right direction. Being open and honest brings us and our relationship life.

- Are you prone to see transparency as a weakness or strength? Why is that the case?
- Have you ever seen someone practice transparency poorly? What did they do that made transparency look unappealing to you?
- Who are some good, real-life examples of people we respect who embrace transparency and make it look like a strength? How does their transparency differ from the negative examples you have witnessed on this topic.

3. Embrace the transparency selectively by confessing to a trusted friend.

Read James 5:16 (Message)

Confession in the Bible is depicted as something we do with God and with others. Confession is vertical and horizontal. Confessing to others brings health to our life.

- What sorts of qualities should we look for in the people that we confess to?
- Who in your life can you confess to this season?
- Tell us about a time you confessed something and experienced healing. You don't need to tell us what the confession was, but rather tell us about that experience of confession.

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for inviting us in freedom! You know the details of our life inside and out; you even know our secrets. Help us to live in the freedom of healthy transparency and confession. We want to walk in the light and freedom that you offer. Amen.

A Note For Your 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 the mental health resource page on the EastLake Church website.

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.