

Life Group Notes

Lord, teach us to pray

3. Confession

These notes are designed to be used in Life Groups alongside the Sunday teaching at Wavertree. You might want to begin the time by sharing what stood out from Mike's talk on the 20th.

One of the biggest mistakes we've made in the modern church is to reimagine spiritual maturity as the need to confess less.

The unspoken assumption is, "As I ascend in relationship with God, I confess less because I have less to confess." True spiritual maturity, though, is the opposite. It's not an ascension; it's an archaeological dig as we discover layer after layer of what was in us all along. Spiritual maturity means more confession, not less.

Maturity is discovering the depths of my personal brand of fallenness and the depths to which God's grace has really penetrated, even without me knowing it.

Tyler Staton - Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools

REFLECTION and INTRO: 15 minutes

Read the quote from Tyler Staton above and reflect on it.

- What do you think about confession?
- How aware are you of your ongoing need for forgiveness?
Is shame a struggle, or is sin something you don't think much about?

So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus

Christ our Lord!

Romans 7:21-25



REFLECTION: 10 minutes

Use paper and pens, playdough, lego etc as you reflect if your group would find that helpful.

- Do you have the same struggle as Paul in Romans, that there is a war within you?
- What pattern or attitude keeps appearing in your life? - Try looking beneath behaviours to find the deeper heart issue.

Share as a group if it feels helpful or appropriate

Most of us fear confession because we fear exposure. We worry; what if people think less of me? What if God is disappointed with me? What if revealing my struggles changes how others see me? And so we tend to downplay our issues, excuse them or blame them on others.

But the Holy Spirit helps us to confess. He gently exposes what needs healing and gives us courage to bring it into the light. The Spirit's conviction is different from condemnation.

Condemnation says: "You are hopeless."

Conviction says: "This needs to come into the light so that God can heal and restore it."

The foundation of confession is not our courage. It is the cross. We can be honest because Jesus has already dealt with our sin. Paul's declaration is stunning:

"There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

As believers, confession is not an exercise in humiliation or self-improvement. It is cooperation with the Spirit's work of transformation, because we are already forgiven through Jesus.

DISCUSS: 20 minutes

- What makes confession difficult for you personally
- Have you ever experienced the Spirit revealing something deeper than the obvious issue?
- What would it look like to confess without fear of condemnation?
- Are there any ways this Life Group could become a safer place for honest confession?

PRACTICAL ACTIVITY THIS WEEK

Put aside some time to reflect, that could be a quiet space at home, out in nature, or while you are active. But make sure your mind and spirit are free from distraction and able to think and listen to God.

Remember: Confession is about becoming a more truthful person in God's presence. As we live honestly before Him, we become more fully the people He created us to be, reflecting the image of Christ to the world.

Ask: David prayed ‘search me and know me’, pray your own prayer of surrender and trust to God, invite Him to show you anything in your heart or mind He wants you to face up to and confess. Pray your own prayer of repentance to God and thank Him for His forgiveness.

Tell: is there someone you need to confess to, not because they need to know, but to bring this issue out from darkness into the light of God’s love, grace and freedom.

Thank: Father, thank you that because of Jesus we can come before you without fear. Thank you I am forgiven. Thank you for your transforming work in my life.