



Small Group Guide: Start Over

Series: Start Over

Message: "A Recipe for Starting Over"

Scripture: Genesis 3:1-13; Philippians 3:13-14; Lamentations 3:22-24

Icebreaker

Icebreaker Question:

What's one New Year's resolution you've made in the past that you actually stuck with? Or, if you haven't stuck with any, what made it so hard to follow through?

Key Scripture

"But I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us."

— Philippians 3:13-14

Sermon Summary

This week we kicked off the "Start Over" series by looking at the very first start-over story in human history—Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Just like a recipe needs the right ingredients, starting over requires removing certain "enemies" from our lives and adding key "allies." The two enemies are **hiding** and **blaming**, while the two allies are **drawing close to God** and **owning our responsibility**. The good news is that God's mercies are new every morning, and while we can't go back and change the past, we can start over today.



Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **The Recipe Analogy:** Dave shared a story about accidentally putting too much salt in strawberry shortcake. What are some "ingredients" in your life right now that might be out of balance—too much of the wrong things or not enough of the right things?
2. **Hiding vs. Running to God:** In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve's first instinct was to hide from God. Why do you think hiding is such a natural human response when we mess up? What would it look like to run *to* God instead of away from Him?
3. **The Blame Game:** Both Adam and Eve blamed someone else for their sin. Can you think of an area in your life where you've been quick to blame others rather than take responsibility? What makes owning our faults so difficult?

Going Deeper

4. **God's Response:** In Genesis 3:21, God made garments to cover Adam and Eve instead of condemning them. How does this picture of God differ from how you sometimes view Him when you've messed up?
5. **New Mercies:** Lamentations 3:22-23 says God's mercies are "new every morning." What does it mean practically to receive fresh mercy from God each day? How can this truth change the way you start your mornings?
6. **The Mantra:** "Today, I believe I'm not my past. I will trust God's grace for my future. I can't go back, but I can start over." Which part of this statement is hardest for you to believe right now, and why?

Personal Application

7. **What Are You Hiding?** Take a moment of honest reflection. Is there something you've been hiding from God, from others, or even from yourself? What would it take to bring that into the light?
 8. **Owning Your Part:** Dave said, "Owning your faults is like your favorite dessert—take the big piece." What's one area where you need to take the "big piece" and own your responsibility instead of minimizing it?
 9. **Starting Over This Week:** What's one specific area of your life where you need to start over? What would be your first step this week?
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one of the following action steps to practice this week:

1. **Morning Mercy Reminder:** Each morning this week, before you check your phone or start your day, say aloud: "Today, I believe I'm not my past. I will trust God's grace for my future. I can't go back, but I can start over."
2. **Confession Conversation:** Identify one thing you've been hiding or one person you've been blaming. Bring it to God in prayer, and if appropriate, have an honest conversation with someone you trust.
3. **Ownership Inventory:** Write down 2-3 areas where you've been blaming circumstances or other people. Next to each one, write what you can own and what your next step forward could be.
4. **Grace Journaling:** Each evening, write down one way you experienced God's mercy or grace that day. At the end of the week, review your entries and thank God for His faithfulness.

Closing Prayer

Spend time praying for each other, specifically:

- For courage to stop hiding and start being honest with God and others
- For humility to own our faults and stop blaming
- For faith to believe that God's grace is sufficient for whatever we're facing
- For hope that a fresh start is possible, no matter what the past looks like

Looking Ahead

Next week, we'll continue the "Start Over" series. Encourage group members to attend church and come ready to share how God met them this week as they practiced starting over.