

Community Study

Session 3 Questions

Ice-breaker: What's one of your most embarrassing moments?

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German pastor martyred by Hitler, wrote, "Let him who cannot be alone beware of community." What do you think he meant by that warning?

Why are our private times with God so essential –even to the building of community?

2. Ever since the Garden of Eden, humans have tried to hide from God when they feel ashamed. David was no stranger to this tendency when he wrote,

*When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.*

Psalm 32.3,4

According to this Psalm, what are the byproducts of such hiding?

3. Take inventory of your own life during the past month: What have been your points of greatest struggle or temptation?

If you feel comfortable sharing, what hidden faults have reared their head? (Pride? Envy? Lust? Greed? A critical spirit?)

Have you hurt anyone with your actions?

Now look at Psalm 32.5:

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.*

*I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.*

What does David trust God will do because of acknowledging his sin?

Have you ever experienced such a phenomenon?

4. 2 Samuel 11 records the notorious time when David sinned and orchestrated a cover-up. After committing adultery with Bathsheba, David deliberately ordered her husband, Uriah, to be killed. But Nathan, a friend of David, knew the truth. Nathan addresses the issue with David and David repents (changes his mind/course).

Do you have any "Nathans" in your life? Do you have friends who have permission to lovingly speak difficult truth to you? Talk about that.

When was the last time a friend spoke difficult truth to you?

5. No one enjoys having someone expose something we'd rather leave hidden. What negative responses are you most inclined to when you are confronted?

*I get angry
I defend my actions
I withdraw from the person
I feel sorry for myself and pout
I deny the problem is mine and blame others
I outwardly comply, but feel resentful*

Why do you think this is so? What emotions are kindled when something in you is being exposed?

Why do these kinds of confrontations generally happen better in one-on-one settings than in group settings? Have you seen these confrontations at a group level go bad?

6. Consider this statement from Robert Mulholland's *Invitation to a Journey*: "The process of being conformed to the image of Christ takes place primarily at the points of our *unlikeness* to Christ's image." How would you explain the meaning of that statement?

In light of this, why is it so important to get a clear picture of our own areas of sin, weakness, and immaturity?

What role can group members play in helping diagnose our need and move beyond self-deception?