**Growth Group Homework – May 1, 2022**

**LEADER OPENING STATEMENT:** After the Care time, you can read or paraphrase the following statement to set the stage for the group discussion.

*“As humans, we all have a long history of making decisions and growing our lives from the root of selfishness. God’s intention is to use the downturns in our lives to help us change old habits and patterns and learn to grow deep rooted patterns of righteousness. This means each downturn and point of pain in our lives is an opportunity to realize some truth about us that God wants us to be aware of. It’s an opportunity to agree with God and then begin to make changes. If we are going to bounce back, we have to admit the truth about ourselves. This is what we are going to explore in our group discussion today.”*

**Warm-Up**

1. What are some common responses or ideas about pain (both emotional and physical)?

**Talk it Over**

1. Summarize your top take aways from the message.

**Leader Note:** For this question, ask, “What were your top takeaways from the message?” or “What did you write under question 2?”

1. Israel’s King David wrote Psalm 51 after he was confronted and then convicted over his personal sin. Read verses 1-12 of this Psalm.

Psalm 51:1-12 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. **2**Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. **3**For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.**4**Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. **5**Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. **6**Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. **7**Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. **8**Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. **9**Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. **10**Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. **11**Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. **12**Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

**Leader Note:** Verses 5-6 may trip people up. Don’t let the discussion get stuck here. David acknowledges that he has a sinful nature, which is a consequence of the Fall (Genesis 3). He recognizes that God wants whole heart, whole life, devotion.

**Question:** What is the significance of David referring to his actions as sin?

**Leader Note:** Without an accurate diagnosis, a solution is not possible. If we think we are dealing with a small personality quirk or a simple mistake, we will not run to God for help.

**Question:** What do you think of the statement, *“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge” (v. 4)?*

**Leader Note:** David recognizes God is the authority and sets the standard. It’s more important to know what God says than to go with my opinion or that of others.

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1. When we become aware of specific sins in our lives, it’s important to take action. 2 Corinthians 7:11 lists seven actions that are evidence of repentance. Read through the verse and following scenario then answer the questions.

**Leader Note:** The purpose of a case study is to get practical experience applying a principle in a way that is not too personal or intrusive. Consider dividing into groups of 3-4 people for this. After they discuss as small groups, bring the whole group together to share their insights.

**2 Corinthians 7:11** See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness *(take initiative),* what eagerness to clear yourselves *(come clean/confess),* what indignation *(cut off the sin),* what alarm *(create a buffer)*, what longing *(accountability),* what concern *(make a plan to change),* what readiness to see justice done *(make amends)*.

Note: The parenthesis are added to help clarify the underlined actions.

**Scenario:** *“Without fully realizing it, I had developed some bad relational patterns in my life. Whenever I felt hurt or had a bad day or if I didn’t get what I wanted, I would sulk and give the silent treatment to those around me. I began to grow bitter towards people even though there wasn’t a specific way they had wronged me. In response, others were distancing themselves from me, not knowing if I was upset with them or not. Someone was loving enough with me to take the risk and pointed out my relational pattern.”*

**Question:** Based on the actions in 2 Corinthians 7:11, what would it look like for this individual to apply this verse?

**Question:** When was a time you became aware of specific sin in your life? What did you do in response?

**Take It Home**

1. What is one thing from this study that you can put into practice this week?