

SECRETS

Week Three

Opening Prayer

God, thank you for creating this space for us to connect in friendship and faith. Help us to be open to what you have for us as we close up these series. Amen.

Talk It Over

This series is all about looking at our secrets and how they impact our life with God and others. This week we continued looking at the story of David. The story is one of deception, sexual sin, cover-up, murder, and more. And as terrible as this story is, David isn't simply a bad guy. He does love God and there is goodness in him. More importantly, we see God moving on David's behalf so that David can find freedom.

- What has stood out to you the most about the David story?
- Even though we aren't always innocent bystanders to our secrets, feeling stuck in our secrets can be a brutal thing.
- Without feeling the need to share how we were stuck in a secret, how would you describe what being stuck in secrets feels like? What was/is that experience like?

Read 2 Samuel 12: 1-13

Before David was caught or exposed, God sent him help through Nathan. This week's big idea is that there is great hope even though we carry around secrets. God not only loves us despite our secrets, God also advocates to help us get out of our secrets.

- In your own words, recap what you read/heard in the David/Nathan story.
- What are some ways you have seen or observed God send help in his attempt to offer freedom?

Read 2 Samuel 12:5-7

God sends us help, but we have to choose to utilize it. When David was confronted by his secret, his initial reaction was to sidestep any conviction. David is tempted to deny his secrets.

- Consider the times you have been caught and you've tried to sidestep blame, and the times you were caught and you chose to own your sin. What was different about those two situations?
- Owning our issues can be hard. What things do you keep in mind when it comes to choosing the road of personal responsibility?

The goal was not for David to feel condemned, but to feel convicted. Condemnation is about us feeling beat up, but conviction is all about healthy justice. We can say conviction is when our heart knows something is off and we feel a sense of "I'm better than that" or "I want to be better than that". Along these same lines, some people fear that being caught or exposed will result in a brutal, shameful process. But according to the Bible, God is a good father and he is for us, not against us. Granted, none of this means there won't be consequences for our actions, of course. There is tension sometimes in how we see grace play out in lives. But as things play out, it's important we know God is looking to lead us towards health, wholeness, and freedom. He wants to help us overcome what is holding us back.

- In your own words, how would you describe the difference between condemnation and conviction? If you'd like to tell us the difference you've observed through your own stories, please feel free to.
- Tell us about a time you were faced with consequences from your sin but you knew God's goodness and grace were in your growth.

Read 1 Corinthians 10:13

Temptation is a part of the human condition. The Bible tells us, even Jesus was tempted. When it comes to temptation, two key things to remember is that we own we are tempted and we do something about it. This week the practical suggestion offered up was: Change physical locations and connect with a friend. We need a non-judgemental arena where we can talk through our struggles in real time and once the air cools.

- What are some common temptations in your life you have to be proactive to walk away from?
- Tell us about a time you had to physically move locations or take some real-life measure to avoid a temptation.
- Tell us a time you called a friend in the middle of a temptation.

Read 2 Samuel 12:13

David comes to terms with understanding that first and foremost, he has sinned against God by his choices. There are no excuses here or attempts to justify his bad choices. There is no entitlement here. He doesn't try to shut Nathan down. There is no sugar coating things here. He owns that he is not living out the values of the one who entrusted him with all he has.

- Tell us about a time you were intentional to confess your sins.

God invites us to bring all that we are to him. He wants our whole selves. Here are some steps we can take to walk this out:

1. **Own up to our secrets.** Call the secrets what they are.
2. **Pray.** Invite God into the situation. Praying is a sign of humility.
3. **Be brave and bold.** Walking towards restoration often requires us to be brave and bold.
4. **Be brief.** This point may resonate with some people more than others. If you are the type of person who beats yourself when you fail, understand God doesn't need you to hold onto your mistake and to beat yourself up for how you failed.
5. **Seek help.**
6. **Live transparently.** When we live transparently we are being honest about who we are, and we find grace to be kind to ourselves and to each other. Allowing imperfections to be a part of our narrative is what enables us to be kind to ourselves and each other. When we do this, the hope is to find freedom and joy to fully embrace God and live vulnerability with those around us.

- What on this list stands out to the most?
- Of these steps, which one is an area you want to grow in?
- As we close up this series, what is your biggest takeaway?
- Think of a safe person or group in your life. Can you call them this week to let them know how you feel about them and to ask them to be a safe person to call when need be? Are you open to that idea?

Closing Prayer

God, thank you for loving us as we are. Thank you for always leading us toward freedom. Help us to stay open to you and to your leadership. Help us to be willing to see ourselves the way you do. 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.