

Recovering from a Fall Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part all together, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What's the worst injury you've ever had?
2. Do you have any regularly occurring dreams? Explain.

Read the following passages: 2 Samuel 11:1-5; Psalm 51.

How do we recover from a significant failure? If we're going to navigate this life successfully, we have to learn how to get back on our feet after a fall. After abusing his power and committing adultery with Bathsheba, David did what many of us try to do: He tried to cover up his actions in the hope that no one would notice. But God exposed him. And even when we do succeed with such a deception, we don't experience real freedom. Psalm 51 shows us a much better path: 1) Keeping our eyes on the grace of God; 2) Identifying our actual transgressions; 3) Resisting self-justification; 4) Confessing our sins to another person; 5) Seeking real transformation; and 6) Helping others who are dealing with similar failures.

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. What are some unhelpful ways you or those around you have responded to a failure?
2. The prophet Nathan eventually exposed David's sin. Why is it a gift when God exposes us?
3. Do you struggle with feelings of self-loathing? Explain. How can vague feelings of self-loathing cloud the process of dealing with our actual sins? Why is it important to name our transgressions?
4. How can we overcome the temptation to justify our sinful words or actions?
5. Read the following passage from Life Together by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In your opinion, why do we often find it difficult to confess our sins to another person?

Why is it often easier for us to acknowledge our sins before God than before another believer? God is holy and without sin, a just judge of evil, and an enemy of all disobedience. But another Christian is sinful, as are we, knowing from personal experience the night of secret sin. Should we not find it easier to go to one another than to the holy God? But if that is not the case, we must ask ourselves whether we often have not been deluding ourselves about our confession of sin to God—whether we have not instead been confessing our sins to ourselves and also forgiving ourselves. And is not the reason for our innumerable relapses and for the feebleness of our Christian obedience to be found precisely in the fact that we are

living from self-forgiveness and not from the real forgiveness of our sins?

6. Read Romans 6:1-14. What does this passage teach about transformation? What are some helpful ways we can participate in our own transformation?
7. What are some ways you can be an instrument of God's grace in somebody else's life?

Pray