



GODS LOVE AND FORGIVENESS BREAKS DOWN THE WALL OF

The BIG IDEA:

Though our relationship with God is secure once we have placed our faith in Christ, our fellowship (intimate experience of God's love and forgiveness) is blocked when we sin against Him. When we confess our sin to God and receive His forgiveness, he restores our fellowship with him.

The PROBLEM:

Our unconfessed sin hinders us from fully experiencing our relationship with God.

Our RESPONSE:

Each time we recognize our sin, we just need to turn to God, confess our sin, receive His forgiveness secured by Christ's death on the cross, and ask Him to take back control of our lives.

The IMAGE:

Holding hands is a sign of intimacy whether it's between friends, lovers, or a parent and child. It's a sign of intimacy going both ways. This study focuses on how to tear down the barrier in our fellowship with God caused by sin so that we can again experience this intimacy with Him.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC:

God's love and forgiveness are boundless through Christ, but our sin creates a barrier to experiencing this. It's important to know how to deal with our sin, so we can experience His love and forgiveness moment by moment.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

What I want the group to know and understand:

Sin can block our communication with God but does not stop the relationship; turning toward God and confessing or owning up to our sin restores that communication.

What I want the group to experience: Restored communication and fellowship with God that comes from turning to God and confessing our sin.

How I want the group to respond: As the Holy Spirit convicts us, we will turn to God and confess our sin and receive His forgiveness.

**LAUNCH:**

Tell of a time you have willfully done something to go against a parent or a sibling? How did it affect you? How did it affect the relationship?

EXPLORE:**Read Psalm 32:1-7**

Israel's King David wrote this after committing adultery and murder and being confronted by Nathan, the prophet. David, a married king, saw the beautiful Bathsheba and slept with her. To cover his sin, he had her husband murdered and took Bathsheba as another wife. You can read the whole story in 2 Samuel 11 and 12.

1. Describe how David feels physically in verses 2-5.

His bones wasted away. He ached He groaned, felt God's hand heavy upon him, and his strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.

2. What caused him to feel this way?

He kept silent about his sin, and God was putting his hand upon him in conviction.

3. What did he do to deal with his sin?

He acknowledged his sin. He didn't cover it up any longer. He confessed to the Lord. The word "confess" means to admit one's sin and guilt.

4. In verses 1, 2, and 5, what is God's response to David's sin?

God forgives the sin and the guilt of his sin, covers the sin, and does not count David's sin against him. "Sin" means "missing the mark." We sin any time we miss the mark of God's perfection. On a regular basis we sin without even realizing it, but we also willfully choose to disobey God.

"Forgive" means "to lift, to carry, to bear." God doesn't hold David's sin against David ever again. In the same way, Jesus took our sin from us, placed it on Himself, and bore the consequences for that sin by dying on the cross. In the place of sin, Jesus gives us His righteousness or right standing with God and purity so that he sees us as if we had never sinned.

5. In verses 1 and 2, how does David feel after acknowledging his sin and acknowledging God's forgiveness?

He feels blessed or happy instead of guilt ridden and heavy.

6. In verses 6 and 7, how does David respond after being forgiven and relieved of his guilt?

He encourages others to turn and talk to God, and he praises God for being his hiding place, protection, and deliverance. By this you can tell that the distance with God is gone. David's experience with God highlights the distinction between our relationship with God (our unchanging position as his children that comes from trusting in Jesus) and our fellowship with God (our experience and communication with God that's hindered when we sin).

APPLY:**7. Think of a sin you have committed recently. How does holding onto that sin affect you internally? How does it affect your fellowship with God?**

Allow the group to discuss.

8. Read 2 Corinthians 5:21. What does God do through Jesus to let us experience his love and forgiveness?

He places our sin on Jesus, and he places Jesus' blameless, right standing with God on us. This takes away all the barriers that keep us from experiencing his love and forgiveness.

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9. Just as David experienced God's love and forgiveness when he confessed his sin, we can too. Confession involves these three things on a regular basis, each time we notice that we have sinned:

Call it sin--Agree with God about your sin.

Call it forgiven--Thank Him for His forgiveness because of Christ's death and payment for you (1 John 1:9). Thanking is an outward expression of believing it and receiving it.

Call on God to change you. Choose to move toward God instead of away from him and invite Him to take control back of your life.

10) Take time right now to apply confession: Write down on a piece of paper the ways you have sinned; thank God for forgiving your sin and rip up the paper to show the sin and guilt have been taken care of; ask God to change you and take control back of your life.