

3. Close by reflecting on John Wesley's 21 small group questions—

1. Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I am? In other words, am I a hypocrite?
2. Am I honest in all my acts and words, or do I exaggerate?
3. Do I confidentially pass onto another what was told me in confidence?
4. Am I a slave to dress, friends, work, or habits?
5. Am I self-conscious, self-pitying, or self-justifying?
6. Did the Bible live in me today?
7. Do I give it time to speak to me everyday?
8. Am I enjoying prayer?
9. When did I last speak to someone about my faith?
10. Do I pray about the money I spend?
11. Do I get to bed on time and get up on time?
12. Do I disobey God in anything?
13. Do I insist upon doing something about which my conscience is uneasy?
14. Am I defeated in any part of my life?
15. Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy, or distrustful?
16. How do I spend my spare time?
17. Am I proud?
18. Do I thank God that I am not as other people, especially as the Pharisee who despised the publican?
19. Is there anyone whom I fear, dislike, disown, criticize, hold resentment toward, or disregard? If so, what am I doing about it?
20. Do I grumble and complain constantly?
21. Is Christ real to me?

One Year Bible Reading

November 2: Ezekiel 3:16-6:14, Hebrews 4:1-16, Psalm 104:24-35, Proverbs 26:27
November 3: Ezekiel 7:1-9:11, Hebrews 5:1-14, Psalm 105:1-15, Proverbs 26:28
November 4: Ezekiel 10:1-11:25, Hebrews 6:1-20, Psalm 105:16-36, Prov. 27:1-2
November 5: Ezekiel 12:1-14:11, Hebrews 7:1-17, Psalm 105:37-45, Proverbs 27:3
November 6: Ezekiel 14:12-16:41, Hebrews 7:18-28, Psalm 106:1-12, Prov. 27:4-6
November 7: Ezekiel 16:42-17:24, Hebrews 8:1-13, Psalm 106:13-31, Prov. 27:7-9
November 8: Ezekiel 18:1-19:14, Hebrews 9:1-10, Psalm 106:32-48, Prov. 27:10

breaking free

Text: Jeremiah 8:4-9, 18-22

The Plain Truth

_____ turns our hurts and habits into healing.

1. Jesus calls _____ to himself but he doesn't call us to be _____.
2. We have to ask first where is the _____ or _____?
3. Claiming the _____ precedes turning hurts and habits into healing.

November 1 & 2,, 2014

Breaking Free

Turning... Hurts and Habits into Hunger for God

Life Group Lesson • Week of November 2

Sometimes it seems each new day brings with it more challenges—more problems, more difficulties at home, and more hardships at work. It's true, some issues we bring upon ourselves through poor choices or a lack of discipline, but other troubles seemingly come out of nowhere—job loss, sickness, betrayal, and evil in our world. We can't control a natural disaster, an act of terrorism, or even a child deciding to go prodigal. Jesus rightly reminds us, "Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b).

So how are we to respond to the many challenges around us? The book of James says: "Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven. Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results" (James 5:13-16).

Read Jeremiah 8:4-9, 18-22

Evil is a parasite of good. Although evil, hurt, and pain are not from God, experiencing such is inevitable. If we let Him, God can turn around for good what the enemy intends for evil according to Genesis 50:20. In fact, "we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them" (Romans 8:28). So how do we respond to setbacks and heartache brought on by the poor choices of those we love? While disappointment and anger are natural responses initially, at some point we must give our grief to the Lord and trust Him to do what we cannot do in our own strength—to cause "everything to work together for good."

1. Most of us are dealing with challenges even now. How are you responding to the hurt and pain you are currently experiencing?

First Peter 5:7 says: "Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you." Practically speaking, how *do* we "give our worries and cares to God"?

Although we are prone to scapegoat and play the victim, perhaps more times than not, our problems are brought about by our own poor choices. Jesus wants us to break free, not continue playing the victim card. And since we will all ultimately be accountable before God for our own actions, it is important to acknowledge our reality and begin taking responsibility for our own choices. If you have been making wrong choices and you're realizing you're going the wrong direction, then turn around! "When people fall down, don't they get up again? When they discover they're on the wrong road, don't they turn back?" (Jeremiah 8:4).

2. Why is it senseless to keep doing the same thing once you realize you are on a destructive path?

Continuing to live a lie brings about death, but living into the truth precedes healing. What happens when we obey the truth according to 1 Peter 1:22a?

What does James 5:16 say about confessing our sins and praying for each other?

If you are dirty, cleansing from sin is offered through Christ's sacrifice on the cross. If you are sick, healing is available through His suffering and His death (see Isaiah 53:5). In Christ there is a balm in Gilead! (see Jeremiah 8:22). Breaking free from past sin, shame, addiction, bitterness, and anger is possible for you. Just as Christ had the power to break free from the chains of death, He has the power to pull you up from your grave of despair. Just as Christ had the power to storm the gates of hell, He has the power to wreck the enemy's grip on you. "For sin is the sting that results in death, and the law gives sin its power. But thank God! He gave us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:56-57).