

WHAT TO KEEP IN MIND FOR THIS DISCUSSION

1. We all have blown it in big ways, small ways, and in humorous ways. Get the group talking about the areas where they've blown it in a fun way. This lighthearted focus will help ease everyone into the topic.
2. You might ask your group members if they have been able to spend more time praying or be more intentional in their prayer lives during this series. Encourage them to practice each element and to try it out at home or with their family or other people who would welcome praying together.
3. You may consider breaking your group into smaller groups for this session, especially toward the end of the group time when the group is directed to pray for realignment with God. This kind of grouping makes it a safer environment for people to be vulnerable. If the group is a mixed group of men and women, consider dividing the group up by gender.
4. Peter Greig was quoted in the message saying: "Our greatest need and God's greatest gift are the same thing: forgiveness of sins." -Pete Greig, *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*
5. Some additional material might be helpful. In Psalm 139, the writer asks God to "search him." One commentary makes these helpful remarks: The first real petition comes at the very end, in verses 23-24. It is only two poetic lines long, but it gives theological balance to the whole as the counterpart of all the rest. The petition asks God to do now and in the future what God has done in the past, to examine and test the psalmist's heart and thoughts to uncover any way that troubles his relation to God so that God may lead him in another way, the way everlasting. The way everlasting is the existence that is not shaken or brought to an end as the way of the wicked will be. The psalmist wants God to be his judge so that God may be his shepherd. Such is his experience of God and confidence in God that he does not fear a judgment that leads to punishment but prays for a searching and testing that leads to pastoral care. This final prayer is reason to recognize that the foregoing confession contains no murmur of self-righteousness. It does not protest innocence or admit guilt. It is, rather, the voice of a person who has come to know the judge and the shepherd so much as one that he can wish nought else than to be known by God.
6. Leading your group in confession.
 - a. Break into small groups if you have space or assign people into different breakout rooms on a video chat like Zoom. In the group say to the group, we're going ask God to reveal to us anyway in us that is misaligned with God. The purpose of asking God to reveal this to us isn't to make us feel bad or be afraid of punishment; it's to be known by God and cared for by God. You might read a portion of Psalm 139, specifically verses 23 & 24.
 - b. Pray to God, asking that for God to search each of us. Was there anything we did or didn't do in the last few days that we can bring before you? (Give the group 20 seconds or so of silence).
 - c. Does anything come to mind? Is there anything you'd like to confess? Would anyone like to share with the group? If so, have them share or type it into the video chat function. Don't linger here and press people too hard, especially if this is new territory for your group.
 - d. Pray to God, asking for forgiveness and asking for his strength to turn from actions and inactions that lead us away from God.
 - e. Finally, pray that your lives would be realigned with God's purpose. We get distracted, or we sin and get things wrong, so whether we are a little off or we've gotten completely off the trail, help us be aligned with you, God.
 - f. Check-in with the group. Ask them what that was like for them? Did anyone gain any new insights from this time of prayer?