

Starting Over | Week 3 - Release Your Regrets

Opening Questions

Use these questions to get your group thinking about what it takes to do something challenging. This can be anything from running a race to sticking to a diet or even getting up earlier in the morning.

Bible Discussion

Use these questions as you read Psalm 51. Pay attention to the themes of forgiveness and confession. How did the author recognize and release his regrets. Many Bibles have a title under Psalm 51 that associates this text with the story of David. You may want to familiarize yourself with David's story in 2 Samuel 12, as many have found David's story to be a helpful image when recognizing and releasing regrets to God. More on his story below.

David had been walking on the roof of his palace when he looked down and saw Bathsheba bathing. The text says she was very beautiful and David desired her. He called her to his room and committed adultery with her. When he found out later that Bathsheba had become pregnant he had her husband, Uriah, killed. Nathan the prophet confronted David to his face and when David realized he had been found out he confessed to Nathan what he had done. David was famous for loving God. He was called "the man after God's own heart." He was the warrior who stared down a giant calling out, "The battle is the Lord's!" He worshipped God with such abandon it made other people despise him. He wrote many meaningful songs of spiritual depth. Now, he was exposed as an adulterer and a murderer. What did he do next? Many have associated Psalm 51 with the contrite heart David when faced with his sin. Read through it and underline any words or phrases that stand out to you.

Life Application Discussion

Use these questions to get people thinking about the ways they need to receive or extend forgiveness to others or to themselves. Encourage the group to be honest with their struggle to forgive. It's hard, challenging work that goes beyond saying the words, "I forgive you." Help the group see that as they begin to release regrets it will get easier to give and receive forgiveness if they keep at it.

Closing Prayer

Finish your time together by thanking God for his forgiveness. Ask that everyone in the group would know God's love and forgiveness and be able to show that to others.

Additional Resources and Questions

Exercising Your "Release" Muscles

Now that you've taken the first steps in releasing your regrets, you might be tempted to go about your life as usual. Releasing regrets can be like a person who decides to get a gym membership, but then doesn't actually go to the gym. Don't make that mistake as you begin to release your regrets. Start practicing as soon as possible. Ask for forgiveness. Extend forgiveness to others. Forgive yourself. Use the following methods for building your "release muscles."

Have A Conversation

Whether you've hurt someone or someone has hurt you in some way, you will more than likely need to have a conversation to find resolution in the relationship. If you need to ask for forgiveness or grant it to someone else, that will help you release your regrets.

Write a Letter

Sometimes a conversation won't work, because the other party is no longer living or they are unwilling to meet or speak with you. Sometimes the situation between you and the other party might only be made worse through further contact. In cases like these, write a letter, putting all your thoughts down about what happened. Don't hold back and write what comes into your mind. You aren't actually going to send the letter to the other party, but the process of putting your thoughts and emotions down on paper will be helpful to you in releasing your regrets.

Starting Over | Week 3 - Release Your Regrets**Pray**

Another option available to us is prayer. Talk to God about the regrets you have bottled up inside of you. The Bible says to pray for our enemies, so pray for the good of those who have hurt you. Wrestle with God in prayer and see if it doesn't lead to an attitude of surrender as you come to peace with what has happened in the past.

Additional Questions and Resources

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? communitychristian.org/baptism/
4. Have you read the Community Daily recently? How is it encouraging you and challenging you?
communitychristian.org/daily/
5. If anyone in your small group is seeking professional counseling, you can always refer them to our resource page: communitychristian.org/mentalhealth/
6. See also 1 John 1:9, Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:32
7. "Religion may be in retreat, but guilt seems as powerfully present as ever. . . people have a sense of guilt and sin, but no longer a sense that they live in a loving universe marked by divine mercy, grace and forgiveness. There is sin but no formula for redemption."- David Brooks
8. "At its core, sin is a failure to love. – Rich Villodas, Good and Beautiful and Kind