

## **BIG IDEA**

Growth happens when we're honest with God about our brokenness.

## **BIBLE**

Luke 18:9-14; 1 John 1:8-9; Mark 2:17;  
Psalm 139:23-24

## **ABOUT THIS WEEK**

We are all sinners, each carrying things we're not proud of. If left unchecked, these can lead us to shame or self-righteousness. But at the heart of our faith is the confession that we are broken and need a Savior. True growth happens when we run to Jesus, not from Him—being honest about our brokenness allows Him to bring healing and transformation. **Growth happens when we're honest with God about our brokenness.**

### WHAT? – WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT TODAY?

## **Welcome**

- Introduce yourself

## **Opening Story/Illustration:**

- Tell of a time when you or someone you knew was in trouble, but instead of reaching out for help, you/they decided to keep things a secret.
  - OR
- Tell the story of a time you were in trouble and you DID tell someone. What would have happened if you didn't? How did sharing and getting other people involved save you from even more trouble?

## **TENSION**

- When we find ourselves in trouble, we tend to have one of two options: We can acknowledge the fact that we need help, or we can pretend like everything is fine (which really only leads to us fooling ourselves).
- And if we aren't careful, we can end up doing this exact same thing in our relationship with God.
- I don't know about you, but there are times in life when I feel like I can run to God with my problems, but there are also some where I try to hide my sin and brokenness from God.
- And if you're thinking, why would you ever hide from Him? I think there are a couple of reasons:
  - I'm ashamed

- I think if I ignore it, then maybe it will go away
  - Sometimes I think it's not that big of a deal
  - And sometimes I think that I can handle it on my own.
- There's a story in the Bible where Jesus talks about these different approaches to bringing our brokenness to God.

## SO WHAT? – WHY DOES IT MATTER TO GOD AND US?

### SCRIPTURE

- In Luke 18, Jesus speaks to a large crowd as He so often did. But while He was speaking and sharing hope with those who desperately needed it, He noticed that there were a few people in the crowd who disagreed with Him.
- These people were the religious elite. Their lives were built on pride and they genuinely thought they were better than everyone else because they were "good people". They followed the law. They obeyed all of the commandments of the Old Testament... but their hearts were in the wrong place. Their obedience had nothing to do with their dependence on Jesus; they were more concerned with appearing to be good in the eyes of other people.
- So Jesus addresses these people by telling a parable (a short story that Jesus would make up that taught a lesson about who God was and what He is like.
- **READ Luke 18:9-41**
  - **The Pharisee (religious leader):** "God, I thank you that I'm not like these sinners. I do all the right things."
  - **The Tax Collector (hated by society):** "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."
  - **Jesus' Conclusion:** *"All those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

#### *Optional Illustration:*

- Imagine two students have a big test coming up:
  - One is overconfident, they think they know everything so they don't study. They fail.
  - The other knows they need help, so they ask for tutoring, and study hard. They pass
  - **The Point:** The humble one, who admitted they needed help, succeeded because of their dependency on someone who could help them instead of relying on their own strength.

#### **What this teaches us about God**

- With this parable, Jesus teaches us a lot about the heart of God towards us. And these ideas are repeated throughout Scripture:
  - **1 John 1:8-9: If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves... But if we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us.**
    - We learn that God is faithful to forgive us when we're honest with Him.

- We aren't met with shame or judgment. We are met with love and grace.
- **Mark 2:17:** Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
  - Imagine breaking your arm but refusing to tell anyone.
  - If you don't admit the pain, you won't get healed.
  - In the same way, if we don't admit our sin to God, we can't receive the healing and forgiveness He offers.

NOW WHAT? – WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO ABOUT IT?

## HONEST REFLECTION

- There's a pastor named Joby Martin, and he was asked in a recent podcast, "How do you know whether or not someone really understands the Gospel?"
  - His response was, "I'm interested in how they view God. Typically people respond in one of two ways:
    - Either "I'm in trouble... don't tell God"
    - Or "I'm in trouble... I better call my dad."
  - The person who knows to go to God with their brokenness is probably the one who understands the Gospel.
- Which of these best describes you?
- Because, **true growth happens when we're honest with God about our brokenness.**
- So here are some questions that I want you to wrestle with and answer honestly:
  - Are you being honest with God about your struggles?
  - Do you come to Him like the Pharisee, pretending to be perfect, or like the tax collector, humbly asking for help?
- God doesn't want fake perfection. He wants real honesty.

## CLOSING CHALLENGE/ACTIVITY

Ask:

- What is one area where you've been pretending everything is okay but need to be honest with God about?
- Encourage them to pray silently or have them write out: "God, I need Your help. I can't do this on my own."

Final Thought:

"Jesus already knows your struggles, but He's waiting for you to be honest. When you admit your need for Him, that's when real growth happens."

Closing Prayer:

- Thank God for His mercy.
- Ask for a heart that is humble and honest before Him.

Dismiss to Small Groups