

Sermon Based Small Group Guide
For May 8, 2022 sermon:
"Making progress in purity"

Warm up:

1. Sunday, May 8 is Mother's Day. What is your favorite story about your own mother or perhaps about being a mother? Maybe a touching story, or a funny story...your choice.
2. For many of our small groups, June through August will be a "time out" and groups will not start meeting again until September. This might be a good time to evaluate the progress of your group. Did you feel like you grew in connections with each other? Were you challenged spiritually by the studies and discussion? If you could change just one thing, what would that one thing be?

Digging deeper: (20-30 minutes)

1. All of us still struggle with sin and most (if not all) believers have what is called a "besetting sin" ...one area of temptation we keep falling to over and over again. No matter what our personal area of struggle, we can all learn something from the way Jesus pursued and restored Peter after he boasted that he would stand with Jesus to the very end, then denied him three times while he was on trial. Read John 21:15-24 then answer these questions:

- Why did Jesus ask Peter three times, "Do you love me?" Is this a rebuke, or an opportunity for confession? If a confession, how would this help Peter?
- Why does Jesus ask Peter if he loves him "more than these?"
- What are the essential components of confessing our sin? If we are forgiven due to Christ's death, why do we need to confess our sins?
- What role does faith play in feeling (not necessarily being) forgiven?

2. In the sermon, Pastor Craig talked about anticipating the people, the places and the things that "trigger" our temptation to sin. If we are sensitive to the Spirit of God, he is always giving us warnings that we are about to move in a dangerous direction so we can heed him and avoid sin. Read the story of David in 2 Samuel 11:1-4 then discuss these questions:

- What would have been different for David if he had gone out with his army to war?
- Feeling bored and probably a bit guilty, David wanders around on his roof looking for something to "entertain" his mind. Why is "too much free time" often a problem for us?
- David's boredom turns to lust, then adultery, and finally murder. This is the promised pattern of sin...starting "small" but becoming deadly. Does James 1:13-15 support this?

Apply it: (10 minutes)

The message gave 7 practical steps to take to avoid falling into sin. Read Ephesians 6:10-17 and identify all the defenses and weapons God has graciously given you!