



“God > My Sin”

1 John 1:2

Small Group Plan

Many years ago, I heard Landon Saunders say, *“It is not inhuman to fail. It is inhuman to deny that you fail. That’s failing at failure, the worst kind of failure.”*

A better answer to failure is to admit it and to accept God’s remedy ... Jesus. Here’s how his longest serving Apostle describes it:

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. ² The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

— 1 John 1:1-2

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How does our world usually respond to the failures of others?
- How do you feel about your own failures?

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THE PLAN —

Joyful Fellowship with God and His People

1 John 1:3-4

³ We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. ⁴ We write this to make our joy complete.

- What are the components of “fellowship” with God?
- How does it impact our lives ... what does it do to our own heart and soul?
- Why do we share it with each other?
- How does it bring “joy”?

— THE PROBLEM —

God is Holy, I am Not

1 John 1:5-7

⁵ This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. ⁶ If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

- What does light actually do and in what sense is God “light”?
- What does a “walk in the darkness” look like? What does it feel like?
- How does darkness hurt “fellowship”?
- What does a “walk in the light” look like?
- How does it bring “purity” to a life and to a community?

— THE PRETENSE —

When I Pretend I have No Sin

1 John 1:8-10

⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

- What brings a person to the self-deception described in verse 8?
- Notice how “If we claim ...” is contrasted with “If we confess ...” How would you describe the demeanor or attitude that lies behind each statement?
- What does he mean when he says, “we make him out to be a liar” (v. 10)?

— THE PARDON —

My Failure Washed Away by Jesus

1 John 2:1-2

¹ My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ² He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

- How and why is Jesus our “advocate” (v. 1)?
- The concept of “atonement” (v. 2) is not discussed often, but it is central to our faith. What does it mean and why is it so important?

— THE PROJECT —

Living As Jesus Did

1 John 2:3-6

³ We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.

⁴ Whoever says, “I know him,” but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. ⁵ But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶ Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

- What does it mean to “know” (vs. 3-4) Jesus?
- Read Matthew 7:22-23. When Jesus says to the religious people, “I never knew you” he means, “We never got to know each other.”
- How is it possible to be religiously active and involved (vs. 21-22) without really coming to “know” Jesus?
- Practically speaking, what does it mean to “live as Jesus did” (v. 6)?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

Leslie Weatherhead, in his classic book **The Will of God**, breaks the will of God down into three stages:

God’s Intentional Will – This was God’s intention with Adam and Eve in the garden, what he wanted all along — sinless, joyful fellowship with humanity.

God’s Circumstantial Will – In spite of the dark circumstances that we created with our rebellious failure God has been constantly working to accomplish his will, even using the murder of his son to bring about our salvation.

God Ultimate Will – At the end of time, ultimately God is going to win. There has never been any doubt about his victory.

- How does it feel to know that **God Will Win**?
- How does it feel to know that God can accomplish his will in spite of our failure and that he is not dependent upon our nation, our laws or our achievements?
- Why do some see God’s certain victory and choose to join him, while others choose to ignore him?
- Think of the life of someone who sees their own failure, sees God’s victory and chooses to walk with him. Why do they do it? What does their life begin to look like?
- Close by asking God to help us to leave the darkness and to walk in the light.