



BENEATH THE SURFACE: Saying NO to GUILT and Cultivating GRACE

Pastor Derek Sanford

August 4, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Share at least one of your favorite truths about God's grace (bonus points if you know the verse reference). How have you worked on cultivating grace in your life so far?

Scripture:

Read [Psalm 38:4](#). How does this verse resonate with you? How does unresolved guilt typically affect a person?

Look up the [definition of "Confess."](#) Read [1 John 1:9](#); [James 5:16](#); [Proverbs 28:13](#).

- What do we learn from these verses about confession?
- What do you see as the right and best way to think of confession? What should it involve?
- Why does our confession of sin necessarily involve interaction with other people?
- How would you explain the link between confession and experiencing God's grace and forgiveness?

Pass out some notecards or sticky notes and have people write down their feelings of guilt and the lies they believe about themselves regarding that guilt.

Read the following passages about the truth of how God sees us through Christ. How do these verses impact the list you made on the notecard?

- [Zephaniah 3:17](#); [Ezekiel 11:19-20](#); [Romans 8:1-2](#); [John 15:9](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#); [Ephesians 1:4-14](#); [Ephesians 2:4-10](#); [Colossians 1:11-14](#); [Colossians 2:10](#); [Colossians 2:13-14](#); [Psalm 139:14](#); [Isaiah 43:18-19](#); [Psalm 103: 8-12](#)

Choose one verse to write on the back of the notecard to remind you of the truth.

Prayer: Pray over the lies and guilt that everyone identified, and that the Lord's truth would help everyone cultivate grace.

Next Steps: What is your next right step toward cultivating grace? Pick one of the 5 points from the sermon.

1. Own what you did.
2. Confess it specifically.
3. Make it right.
4. Accept any consequences.
5. Replace all lies with the truth.



For more on this topic, check out Andy Stanley's book, *Enemies of the Heart* (2011)

Beach baptisms: August 25th at 5:30 on Beach 1 at Presque Isle. For more information on getting baptized- <https://whoisgrace.com/baptism> (Note: Under 18 applications will close on 8/19 @ 12 pm and Adult Applications will close on 8/22 @ 12 pm.)



BENEATH THE SURFACE: Saying NO to ANGER and Cultivating FORGIVENESS

Pastor Derek Sanford

August 11, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: As you think of the word forgiveness, what success stories come to mind (Personal stories or stories of others)? What have you learned about the potential of forgiveness?

Scripture: [Ephesians 4:26-32](#), [James 1:19-20](#)

- What was most helpful to you from this week's message? What was hardest to hear?
- Eph 4:26 says, "*Be angry and do not sin.*" When is it okay to be angry? When does anger turn to sin? How can Satan take advantage (have an opportunity) when we are angry?
- From your observations, how does unresolved anger typically affect a person?
- Eph 4:32 lists possible ways that a person can act out in anger. Which ones hit closest to home for you?
- How would you assess your own life in terms of the anger you are experiencing? What are some changes that God is putting on your heart?
- Eph 4:32 - What is involved in our full forgiveness of others?
- What are the most meaningful ways in which you have experienced God's forgiveness?
- What steps do you need to take to more fully extend God's forgiveness to others and be freed from anger? (Try to think of specific people)

Prayer: Saying no to anger and choosing forgiveness is too much for us to accomplish on our own. What God calls us to is only possible by the power of the Holy Spirit in a heart reborn. What specifically do you need God's help with (Specific people or situations)? Take time to pray for each other.

Next Steps:

"Here's my chance!"- What would it look like for all of us in this group to consider every difficult situation we face this week as a chance to cultivate grace and forgiveness? (Brainstorm ideas and make a plan to check in)

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BENEATH THE SURFACE: Saying NO to GREED and Cultivating GENEROSITY

Pastor Derek

August 18, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Check in with the group- Did anyone have a “here’s my chance!” moment since we last met? Has anyone been on the receiving end of a generous heart? Describe what that was like.

Scripture: [Matthew 6:1-34](#)

Greed says, “I owe me. If I only had more, then I would be happy.”

- How are money and wealth perceived in our culture? What does greed look like in “them” (super-rich, politicians, celebrities, etc.)? What does it look like in the average person (like you or me)?
- Share a key takeaway about greed from Derek’s sermon.

Matthew 6 is part of the Sermon on the Mount, a series of Jesus’ teachings that point to what it looks like to live in this world as citizens of God’s Kingdom. Read the entire chapter out loud and make some observations:

- What stood out to you? What was repeated? What was familiar? What was new?
- How do Jesus’ teachings push back on greed and the sneaky lie, “If I only had more, then I would be happy?”
- What do we learn about God’s heart in this chapter? What do we learn about greed and generosity?

It is possible that GREED is present in your life, unrelated to money or material possessions. Are you greedy with your relationships, your time, your skills, or something else? What does generosity look like regarding those things?

Prayer: Use the Lord’s prayer to guide your time.

Next Steps: Choose 1 of the practical ways to cultivate generosity and do it this week!

- 1- Intentionally become more aware of the needs around you.
- 2- Liquidate some stuff and give it away.
- 3- Leverage your toys for God’s kingdom.
- 4- Become a percentage giver. (tithe)
- 5- Give more stuff away.

For more on this topic, check out Andy Stanley’s book, *Enemies of the Heart* (2011)



BENEATH THE SURFACE: Saying NO to ENVY and Cultivating CONTENTMENT

Pastor Derek

August 25, 2024

Life Group Discussion

Encouragement: Encourage each person to share three things that they are grateful for *today*.

Scripture: [James 3:13-18](#); [Proverbs 14:30](#)

How do you define envy? What causes it? What is the root of it? (Working definition: a mingling of a desire for something with the resentment that another is enjoying it and you are not.)

How does James describe jealousy and selfish ambition? What do you find shocking or unexpected about his statements? How does our current culture view and respond to jealousy? How does comparison with others fit into this conversation? Compare/contrast this perspective to that of James.

Share your thoughts about Andy Stanley's statement, "Envy says, 'God owes me.' ...Your problem isn't with the person who has what you don't; it's with your Creator." How might this perspective challenge you? When have you felt like God hasn't been fair or good to you?

What does Proverbs 14:30 suggest about the nature and effect of jealousy on our lives? What does chronic envy look like in our day-to-day lives? How does it change us over time? How does it affect our relationships with God and each other?

Read [Philippians 4:11-13](#). How do you think contentment counteracts envy? How does God use times of 'need' in our lives to grow us? What do we need to believe about God to overcome envy? (Working definition of contentment: finding enough in God's current provision for you.)

Prayer: Give an opportunity to confess areas of discontent and envy. Use [Psalm 63:1-8](#) to close.

Next Steps: Commit to practicing contentment this week. Choose one of these three strategies or ask God to show you another:

1. Prioritize your walk with God.
2. Practice gratitude.
3. Limit social media and other means of toxic comparison.

For more on this topic, check out Andy Stanley's book, *Enemies of the Heart* (2011)