

THE BIG IDEA CURRICULUM
Sermon: God's Plan for Our Growth
Sermon 4.04.09
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Small Group Study for Week of April 4 - 10

The Big Idea: God has a plan based on who He is and what He does, for us to grow. As He acknowledges who we are in Him we also need to acknowledge who we are, warts and all.

Group Reads: Genesis 2: 23-25 and Gen 3:6-13

Questions:

1. Why do you think God created people with the ability to choose, (what we call having a free will)?

Discuss: If we have a free will or the ability to choose, there must be more than one option. If we can't choose another option then we can't have free will. In a perfect world, for a person to be able to choose, you would need to have something as an option, something that was not necessarily evil in itself eg the tree in the garden, so that by choosing it, you can show you have chosen a different path, apart from God.

2. Even though God knew what Adam and Eve had done, He still came looking for them. What does this say about God?

Discuss: God always meets people where they are, He doesn't expect them to come to where He is. What does that say to you about God and also how we should treat people?

3. What do we learn about human nature in the responses given by Adam and Eve to God's questions? Have people changed much since the?
4. Adam and Eve went from being "naked and not ashamed," to covering themselves up, physically, emotionally along with covering and excusing their sins. Why does the devil (snake) want us to keep things covered up?
5. Anything else relevant to you in these passages?

Group Reads: Revelation 3: 1-6

6. People in Sardis had a reputation for being good but God knew different. God still knows when we cover up – why do you think we still try to fool people by covering up and pretending to be something we are not?
7. In verse 5 it tells us that there are people who are clothed in white – what does that mean?

Comment: We want to be people who overcome and are written in the book of life. Verse 5 says that these people Jesus will "acknowledge" or "confess" before the Father and the angels.

Group Reads: James 5:16

Comment: The word 'confess' here is the Greek word 'exomologeomai'. It means acknowledge, admit, confess etc. It is the same word that is used in Revelation 3:5 about what Jesus will do for us who are in relationship with Him. Jesus doesn't want to keep His relationship with us a secret, to cover it up – He wants to confess it to the universe.

8. Given what happened in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve trying to cover sin up – why is it important to confess our sins?

9. Why do we find it hard to confess our sins to each other? (not just to God)

10. Since confessing our sins to each other is not a suggestion but a command - if I want to be able to grow as part of God's plan for us, how can I do that in a safe and confidential way? How could small groups, and individual confidants help?

11. James 5:16 says that confessing and praying leads to healing. How?

Conclusion to The Big Idea: When sin started in this world, it resulted in people wanting to cover up and this allowed Satan to keep working in their lives. Jesus wants to confess or acknowledge us before the universe. For us to be whole and not need to cover things over, He wants us to acknowledge, to ourselves, our God and another Christ follower our sins. No one can successfully overcome or grow in Christ without doing so.

Question: What does God want me to do as a result of this study?