

Teaching outline for session 3: To know God we must trust His people.

Primary Texts: James 5:16, Romans 12:5, 15; Galatians 6:1-2; Proverbs 27:6

Primary goals of this session: This session focuses on how spiritual transparent relationships with other Christians are essential to growing in your relationship with God. The goal of this session is to look at some of the more pointed texts that teach us this and discuss how we can apply them to our lives. We want to develop a desire in our hearts for spiritually transparent relationships with other Christians that can help us work through our doubts, temptation, and sins.

Feel free to add to or detract from this tool in any way you feel would best suit your class.

Teaching Outline:

Imagine for a moment that you are walking blindfolded toward a cliff, and I see can you doing it. I'm too far away for you to hear me, I can't call you on the phone because there's no service. But I have a gun (bow and arrow if you like). Here's the question: Would you want me to wound you in order to save you?

Proverbs 27:6, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy."

As Christians, we are called to battle sin, we are called to hold each other accountable to Christ, we are called to help each other grow closer to God. We cannot do this if we are not transparent about our faith struggles with someone who loves Jesus and loves us. People can't see if we're heading for the proverbial cliff if we are not being real with each other.

King Solomon puts it this way in Ecclesiastes 4:10, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up!"

Read James 5:16 and 1 John 1:9 – point out what confessing sins to God brings and what confessing sin to others brings. Also, point out that the James passage is not presented as an option.

For discussion:

- Why is following James 5:16 hard for many?
- Why do you think confessing sins to other Christians bring healing?
 - Consider this quote: "A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother the sin has to be brought into the light." – Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- What sort of person do you think you ought to confess sins to?

Read Galatians 6:1 – Make sure to clarify that the word “transgression” is essentially another word for sin (if you’re using the ESV). Also note that the phrase “you who are spiritual” does not mean someone who is “ultra” spiritual or a “super Christian” it means people who live by or walk with the Spirit, that is they have the Holy Spirit in them and are genuinely striving to live for Christ.

For discussion:

- What is this verse commanding us to do?
- Under what circumstances should we do this?
- How should we feel about someone who calls out sin in our lives?

Read Romans 12:5 & 15:

For discussion:

- What does it mean that we are one body?
- Why is transparency so essential to verse 15?
- How can we develop the sort of empathy that would cause us to genuinely “weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice”?

Closing prayer