

# WHO Cares?

November 6 & 7: When I'm Sorry  
Leader's Guide

## Series Overview

Do you ever ask yourself, "Does anyone really care about me and what I'm going through?" This series explores ways God walks with us even when we feel alone. In the midst of life's struggles, it is possible to experience peace, support and hope.



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## Sermon Highlights

How do we release our regrets? We all have some things we would like to forget. We've made some bad decisions. We've hurt other people. We've hurt ourselves.

David wrote in *Psalm 38:4-8*, <sup>4</sup>*My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear.* <sup>5</sup>*My wounds fester and are loathsome because of my sinful folly.* <sup>6</sup>*I am bowed down and brought very low; all day long I go about mourning.* <sup>7</sup>*My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.* <sup>8</sup>*I am feeble and utterly crushed; I groan in anguish of heart.*

For every person there is an opportunity to begin again. But we have to accept responsibility for past actions. Unfortunately we don't always release our regrets in the right way.

### 1. We try to *bury* them.

- We *minimize* them. – We try to bury our regrets by minimizing our responsibility.
- We *rationalize* them. – "Lots of people do that." But the actions of others will never release you from your own regrets.
- We *compromise* them. – We lower the standards. *Proverbs 28:13*

### 2. We try to *blame others*.

### 3. We try to *punish ourselves*.

## What should we do with our regrets?

### 1. Confess the past.

### 2. Accept God's forgiveness.

### 3. Celebrate the future.

*Isaiah 43:18-19*, <sup>18</sup>*Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past.* <sup>19</sup>*See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. This can be the day of beginning again for you!*

## On new beginnings...

- To discover a flaw in our makeup is a chance to get rid of it and add a new line of beauty to our life. –Billy Sunday
- *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!* –2 Corinthians 5:17
- The confession of evil works is the first beginning of good works. –Augustine



## Take it home ... Practical Applications

How do you handle the regrets in your life? Take some time this week to consider your past. Have you given it all to God? Confess any past sins that you regret, accept God's forgiveness and grace, then pray about the future and ask God to show you the first step into your new beginning with Him.



## Take it to the source ... Bible Study

**Introductory question:** Has there ever been a time when you said something incredibly silly, and even as you said it you knew you were getting yourself into trouble? How did you redeem the situation?

### Opening Thought

We all have regrets in life. One of the biggest areas of regret is in some of the things we say. Almost immediately we wish we hadn't said them. Sometimes these can be funny or insignificant things, but sometimes these can be hurtful. Use this rather lighthearted exercise to get your group thinking about the regrets that they may have in this life.

### Read *Genesis 3:9-12*, *Proverbs 28:13* and *Psalms 38:4*.

1. Why is the first tendency of most people to hide their sin from others and from God? How can that tendency contribute to a greater sense of guilt?
2. What are some of the things people do to try to hide from God? How can this have an adverse effect on their own spiritual condition?
3. How quick are you to blame others for your own mistakes? What are some spiritual practices you could use to help you to come before God with honesty and openly confess your own sins?
4. Why is despair such a dangerous spiritual condition? Why is it vital that once we recognize our sins, we don't bury ourselves under an avalanche of self-punishment but turn to God and accept His grace and forgiveness?

### Key Point

Since the time of Adam and Eve, people think they should hide from God when they know they've done something wrong. We all have a hard time facing our failures and weaknesses, but it is important to remember that God already knows, and He constantly offers us grace and forgiveness if we will just humbly come to Him and confess our sin. Since the early days of the church, teachers have warned against the dangers of despair. Despair focuses on our failings and neglects God's forgiveness. We need to see our sin, but we can't stay there. We need to move on to the grace of God that is much greater than any sin that any of us could ever commit.

### Read *Psalms 51:3-4*, *Psalms 32:4-5* and *1 John 1:9*.

1. It has been said that it is good to keep short records with God. How often do you confess your sins before God? How can this help and strengthen your spiritual growth?
2. Do you have a hard time confessing your weaknesses and failures? Why or why not?
3. Have you ever been in a situation where your confession not only freed you from guilt, but also allowed you to positively respond to others? What were the positive results?
4. How confident of God's forgiveness are you—no matter how serious the sin? Would you say that you trust the grace and love of God completely? Why or why not?
5. How can a regular time of reflection on the work of Jesus on the cross lift you out of guilt for past failings and help you to live in the freedom of God's forgiveness?

### Key Point

Confession is our way of acknowledging our failures, but it is also the way to complete forgiveness and acceptance with God. The basis of our restoration is the work of Jesus on the cross. It is not about how good you can be; it's about what He has already done. The fact that our acceptance with God is based on Jesus and His life, death and resurrection, should remove the fear that often accompanies guilt, and it will give us confidence to come before God with honesty. As we offer Him our failures, He is able to renew us and give us the power to live a new life with Him.

**Read Romans 6:1-4, Isaiah 1:18, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and Romans 6:5-11.**

1. How important is God's forgiveness in your understanding of new beginnings? Why?
2. Would you say that you look at the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the basis for your hope for the future? What are the practical implications of that viewpoint?
3. Do you look at yourself as a new creation and someone that God is daily transforming? How can you cooperate with God in your spiritual development?
4. How can your small group encourage each other to celebrate the future and walk into all that God has for each one of you?
5. How has this message on regrets practically impacted you? What differences should it make in your life from now into the future?

**Key Point**

Forgiveness means that a new beginning is available for every single one of us, no matter how bad the past may have been. The message of the gospel is that we all have the potential for new life in Jesus Christ. Most people struggle with accepting the unconditional love and forgiveness of God. They feel like they have to earn it in some way—walking over hot coals, praying for 40 days without stopping or fasting for a week—but salvation is a free gift from God. If we are in Christ, we are new creations. The past has been taken away and we can now look to the future with hope and anticipation. Help your group to see this for each member of the group and encourage each other to walk into the reality of this life with Christ.

**Notes...**



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*All Bible references are from the New International Version unless otherwise stated.*

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