

CHURCHES
— THAT HEAL

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

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Welcome to *Churches That Heal*

You are a leader. I'm so thankful for people like you who are creating safe spaces for those who are struggling. In this study, you and your group members will learn about the processes for healing God outlines in Scripture and begin to walk the path He has laid out.

Most of us have heard the phrase "the truth shall set you free." And that is absolutely true! But, we often do not read the entire source of where that phrase comes from, and what it says in its totality. Jesus is the one who said it, and this is what He said:

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free". (John 8:31, 32)

We all want the freedom that Jesus brings. But what we often do not realize is that He said to realize that freedom is going to take some work. It is going to be a process of living out His teachings, His ways, and the processes that He told us to "walk in." The word "know" there is an experiential word, not just intellectual. We must engage in what He taught.

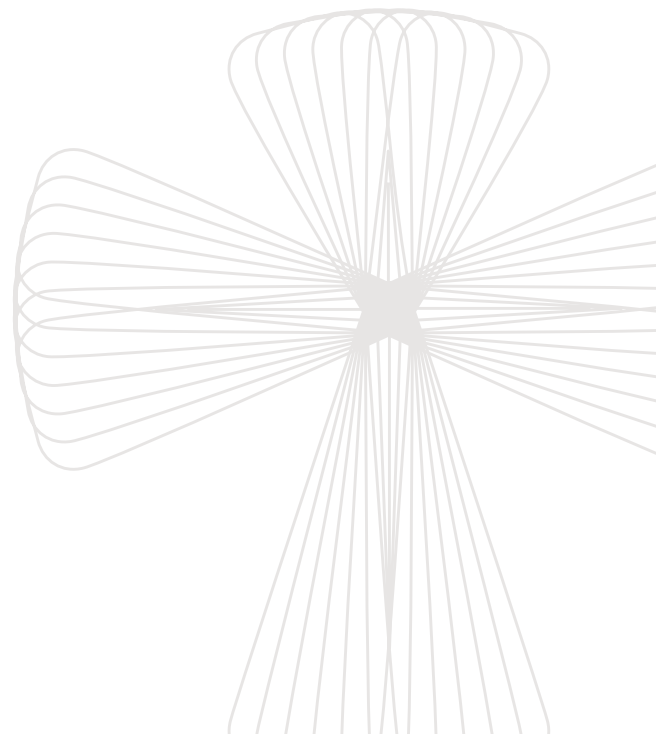
This program is a growth path through many of the processes that Jesus taught which bring healing to many of our deepest hurts, wounds, and inadequacies. He really did bring healing to the brokenhearted, the lost, the weak, and all of us who have gone our own way, or who have been hurt by others. But as the passage says, we will know that freedom as we engage in "holding" to those teachings... living them out. As He said in another place, if we only hear His teachings and do not put them into "practice," it leads only to destruction. This study will help you see how so many of His teachings bring about healing in the emotional and relational areas of our lives.

The basis of this study is the truth that all our problems stem from living in a fallen world where two things happen: we are sinned against and wounded, and also, we have our own failures to contend with. Ultimately, that can be described as a failure to reflect the full "image of God." But the great message of the New Testament is that as we grow up "into Him" and begin to reflect the image of who He is, we get healthier and healthier, and are healed more and more. This study will help guide you and your group members through that process and also call you to some rigorous self-examination through questions that at times will pierce your heart. My hope is that it will motivate you to make changes in your life and enable you to experience the healing God wants to give you.

We cannot control what has happened to us in the past, nor can we control the people in our lives now. But we can develop more and more control of ourselves today. We can work with God to make changes in our character and changes in how we relate to the important people in our life. The changes that we make will ultimately be changes that heal, because, through them, we will be redeemed from the damage done in the past and freed to grow our undeveloped parts into His image.

As you work through these tasks, remember that it is God who will work the changes in you and your group members and bring healing. And, since He chooses to administer that healing grace through His people (1 Peter 4:10; Eph. 4:16), it is critical that you do not travel this journey alone. Having a consistent, prayerful support group with whom you can honestly share yourself, with whom you can be vulnerable and real, who are also journeying in the healing process, and who are able to share what they are learning will greatly facilitate this healing process. In fact, the presence of such a community is implicit throughout the material.

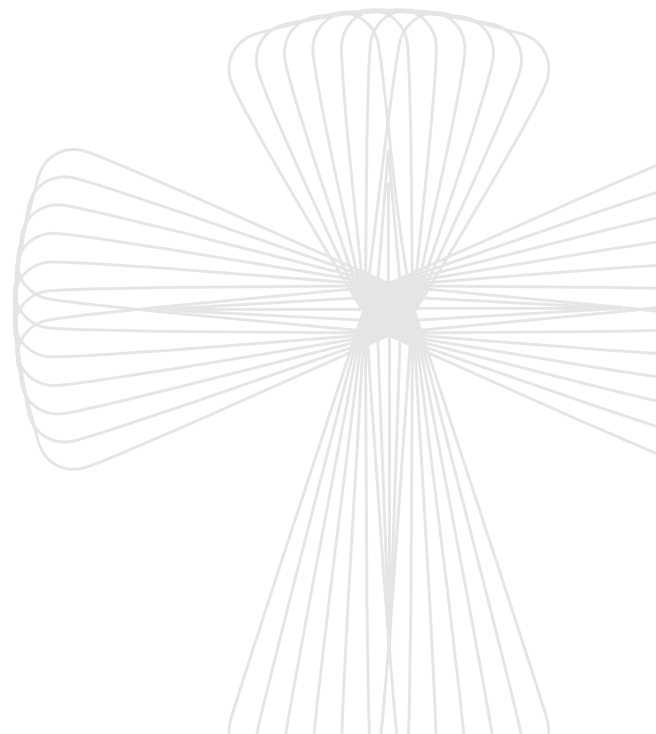
In this guide, you will learn about your role as a group leader and how to facilitate the six sessions of the *Churches That Heal* small group study. Know that I'm praying for you and that through the sacrificial leadership of leaders such as yourself, the local church will become a beacon for healing in communities all around the world.



The Role of the Group Leader

The videos and the Participant Workbook will provide enough material for discussion. The role of the group leader is to facilitate discussion and connection amongst the group. During the discussion about each week's session, you can ask open-ended questions such as these, or make up your own:

- What are your thoughts about the video?
- What stood out to you?
- What touched you?
- What did you like and dislike?
- How do you think you might use what you learned?
- What did you learn about yourself?
- How did it speak to different areas of life, such as work, family, marriage, friendship, goals, and performance?
- How were you challenged?
- What did you learn about God? Yourself? Others?
- A group leader is there to help people to feel safe and to share their thoughts. Don't worry about having all the answers — your role is to create an atmosphere of safety and inclusion.



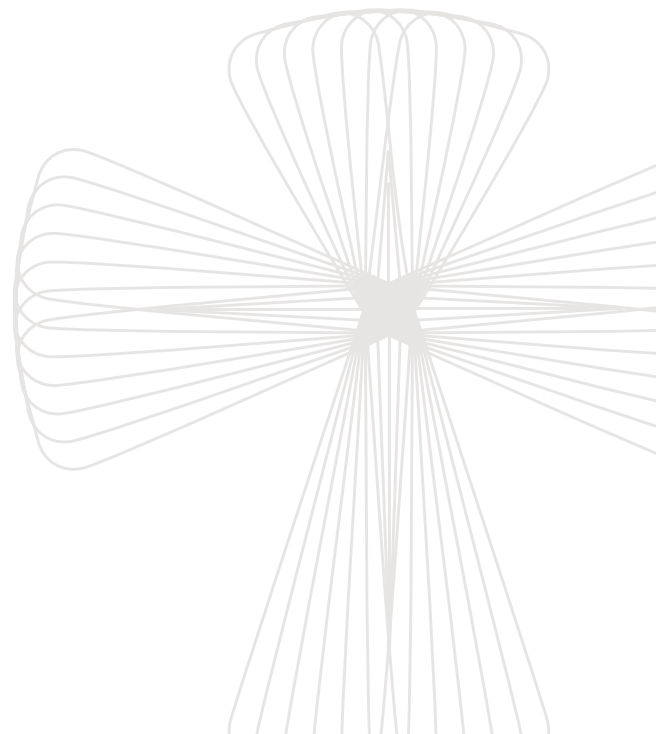
How to Use This Study

Before each group meeting:

- Watch the video corresponding to the upcoming session
- Complete the portion of the Participant Workbook for the upcoming session
- Reflect on the Conversation Starters — choose one or two that you feel would be a good fit for your group or write your own
- Send a reminder to your group about details for your upcoming meeting (time, location, what to do in advance, etc.)

During each group meeting:

- Open with prayer
- Lead off with the Conversation Starters found in the Session Overview pages to break the ice and facilitate connection among the group
- Guide your group through a discussion of the pages in the Participant Workbook corresponding with that week's session
- Take prayer requests if desired and close in prayer
- Remind group members about which session to watch and complete in their Workbook prior to the next group meeting



Session Overview

Week 1

Introduction

An introduction to this healing journey with Dr. Cloud. (8:15)

Conversation Starters:

- What drew you to join this group?
- When is a time in your life previously that God brought about healing in your life?
- Is there a particular change you'd like to see happen in your life as a result of this study?

Week 2

Session 1: Grace + Truth + Time (part 1)

Dr. Cloud unpacks the 3 key ingredients for growth: Grace + Truth + Time. You will discover how applying these principles helps you grow in the image of God. (9:45)

Conversation Starters:

- When is a time you felt “stuck” in the past — either in a thought or behavior? How did you get unstuck, or are you still stuck?
- How do you differentiate between “good endurance” and “bad endurance”?

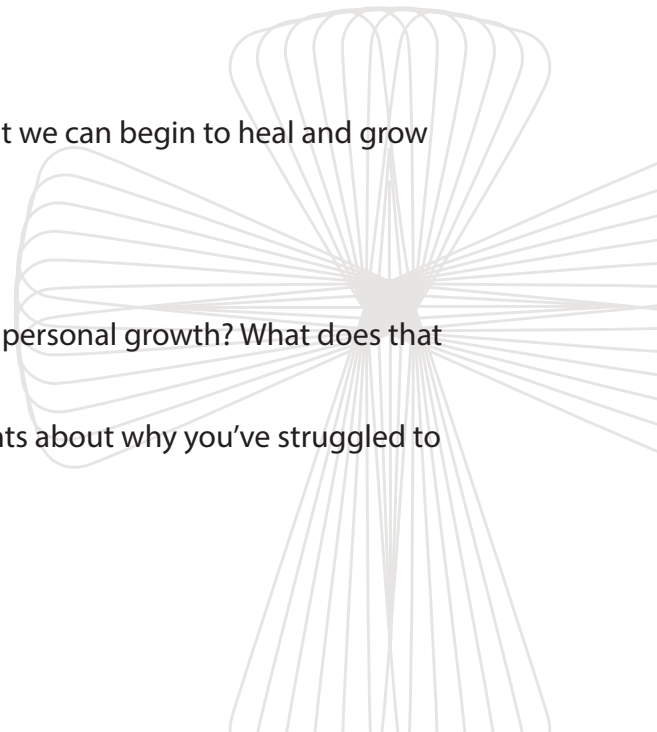
Week 3

Session 2: Grace + Truth + Time (part 2)

Dr. Cloud teaches how to break the cycle of “stuckness” so that we can begin to heal and grow both spiritually and emotionally. (19:37)

Conversation Starters:

- Do you ever struggle to be patient when it comes to your personal growth? What does that look like for you?
- Since starting the study, have you had any “ah-ha” moments about why you've struggled to change in a particular area?



Week 4

Session 3: Relational Connection

You will discover that God created us with a deep hunger for relationship – with Him and others – and learn how to have healthy bonded relationships in your life. (27:58)

Conversation Starters:

- How have you seen relational connection contribute to growth, or the lack thereof inhibit growth in your past?
- Where are you finding most of your relational connection these days? Where might God be putting an opportunity for increased relational connection in your path?

Week 5

Session 4: Boundaries

Dr. Cloud teaches about why setting boundaries is necessary for healthy relationships and ultimately, finding health and healing. (38:04)

Conversation Starters:

- Are boundaries something you've learned about in the past? What has been your experience with them?
- Why do you think boundaries are so essential for growth?

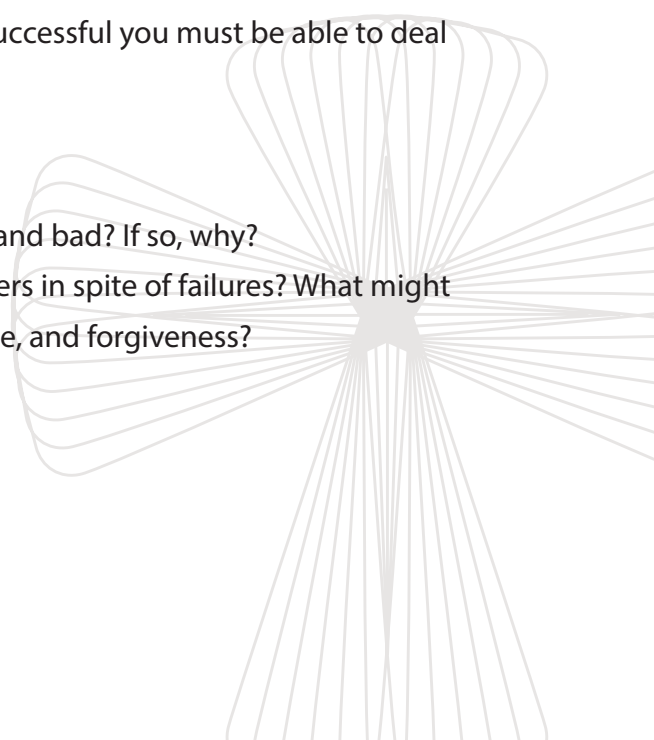
Week 6

Session 5: Processing Pain

You will learn that in order to be emotionally and spiritually successful you must be able to deal with issues of good and bad. (40:49)

Conversation Starters:

- Do you struggle with the idea that people are both good and bad? If so, why?
- Do you find it hard to love and accept yourself and/or others in spite of failures? What might be a next step for you in the area of confession, repentance, and forgiveness?



Week 7

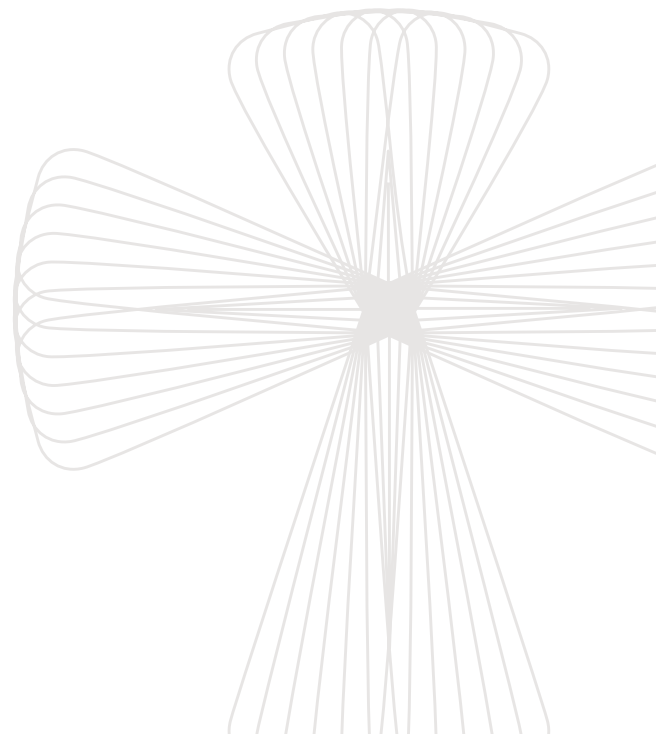
Session 6: Becoming an Adult

As you work through this principle, you will learn how to exercise the gifts and responsibilities God has given you. (41:10)

Conversation Starters:

- Which session in this study most resonated with you personally and why?
- What surprised you about this topic of Becoming an Adult?

Note: While there is not a Session 7, you may consider meeting one last time to celebrate the progress of group members and to discuss the Conclusion section of the Workbook.



Introduction

Before watching the opening session of *Churches that Heal*, take a few minutes of personal self-assessment and think about a few passages of Scripture.

1. Do you have any issues, problems, or struggles that you would like to see God heal and change?

Yes

No

List those areas in which you would like to see healing and change:

2. What do the following verses teach us about ourselves?

Romans 3:10–11, Romans 3:23, Romans 7:17–24

3. How are you feeling about your life right now?

Excited

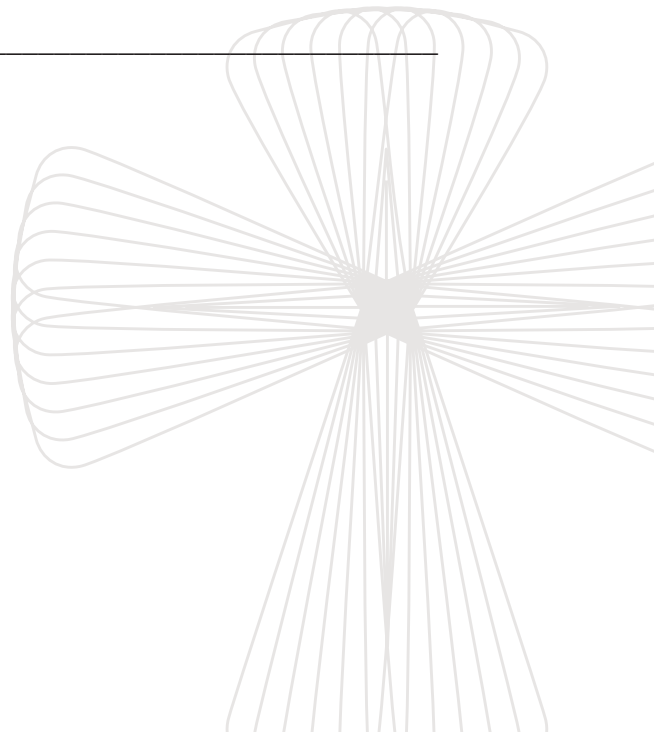
Hopeful

Frustrated

Discouraged

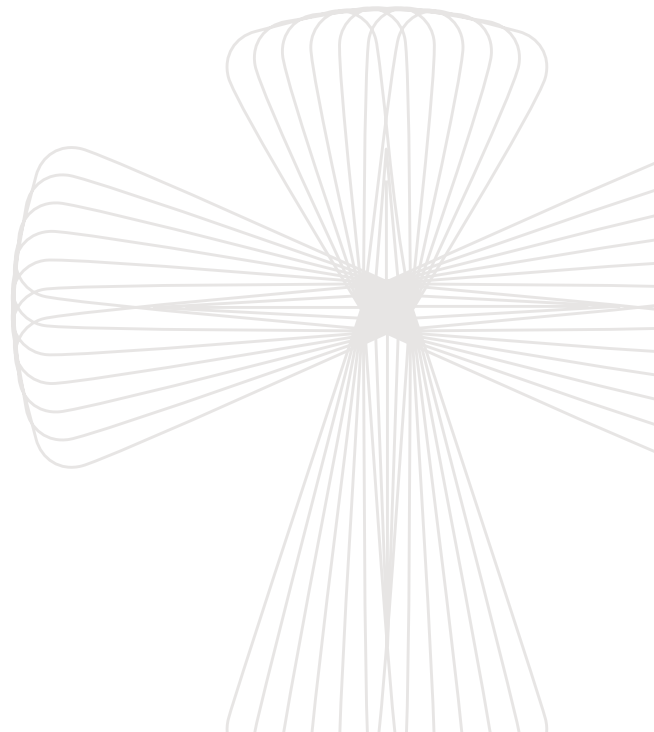
Struggling

Other _____



2. What is your takeaway from the introductory video?

Deeper Study: According to the following verses, how does God feel about you and your life experiences? John 3:17, Romans 8:1, Luke 19:10

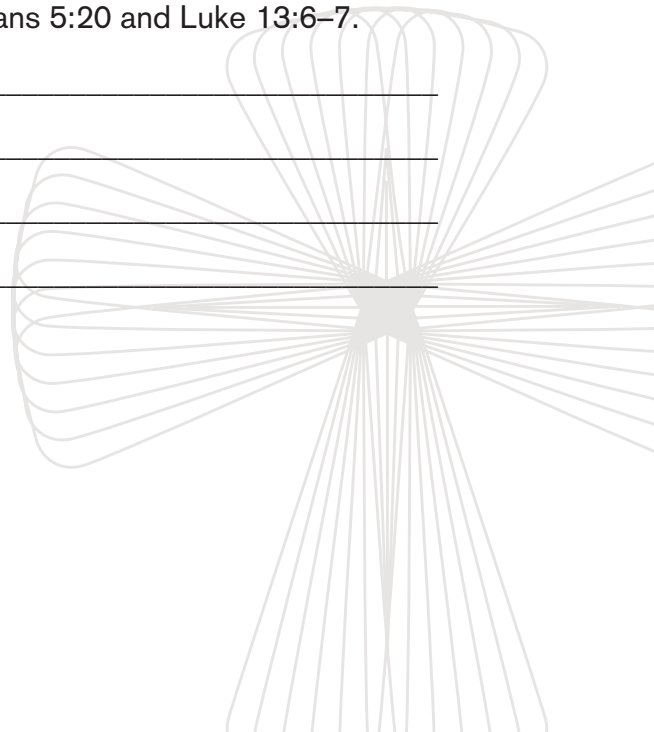


1. Read the parable of the stuck tree: Luke 13:6–9. What is the problem? What are the solutions?

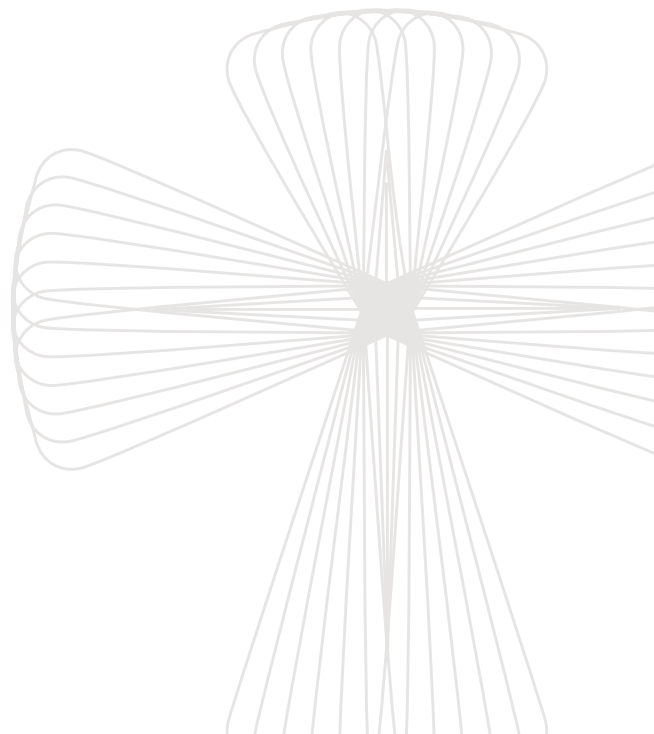
2. As you think through Jesus's parable in Luke 13:6–9, think of your own life as a vineyard. What truth do you need to face and accept? What love and relationship do you need to receive in order to grow?

3. How do you respond to your own failure to live up to expectations (judgment, anger, shame, guilt, fear, trying harder, depression, escapism)?

4. What does Scripture say about our failures? Read Romans 5:20 and Luke 13:6–7.



5. Read 2 Corinthians 7:9–10. What are the different types of responses that we can have to Holy Spirit produced conviction?



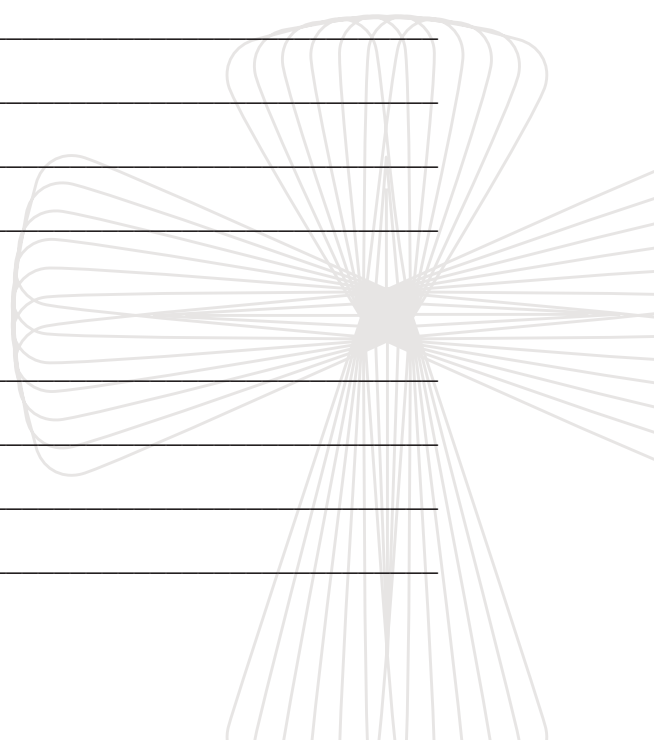
2. How does the physical body heal itself? According to Ephesians 4:16 and James 5:16, how does the body of Christ, the Christian family of God, heal itself?

3. Read Luke 13:8. What are the three ingredients for growth? What is the formula for change?

4. Read Luke 11:39–40. Where must the change process begin?

5. How are you extending grace to yourself and to others?

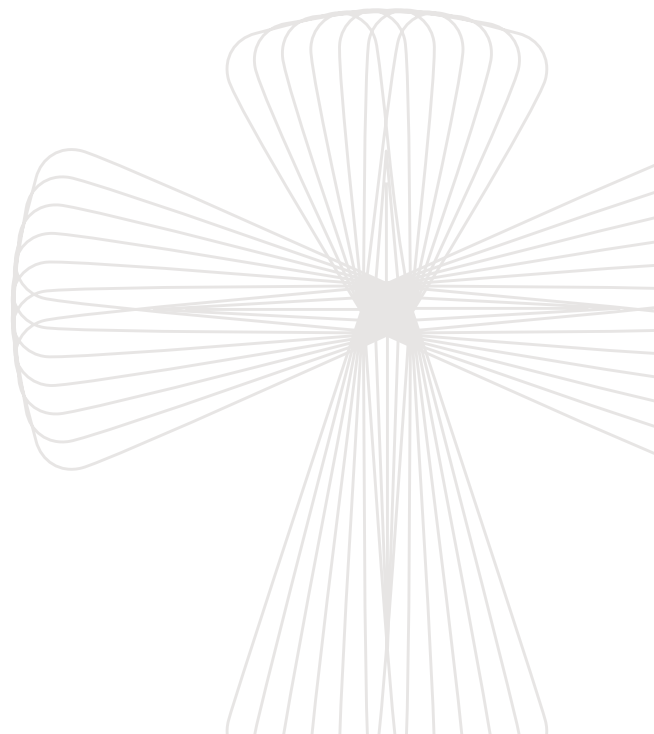
6. How are you extending truth to yourself and others?



7. How are you using the process of time – good time (community) or bad time (isolation)?
Explain.

8. What does 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 tell us about how we all can engage in healing with those around us?

Spend additional time meditating on the truths you learned this week.



2. What is your defense mechanism when you hit speed bumps and trials in life?

- Self-medicate
- Act out
- Strike back in anger
- Denial and detach
- Other _____

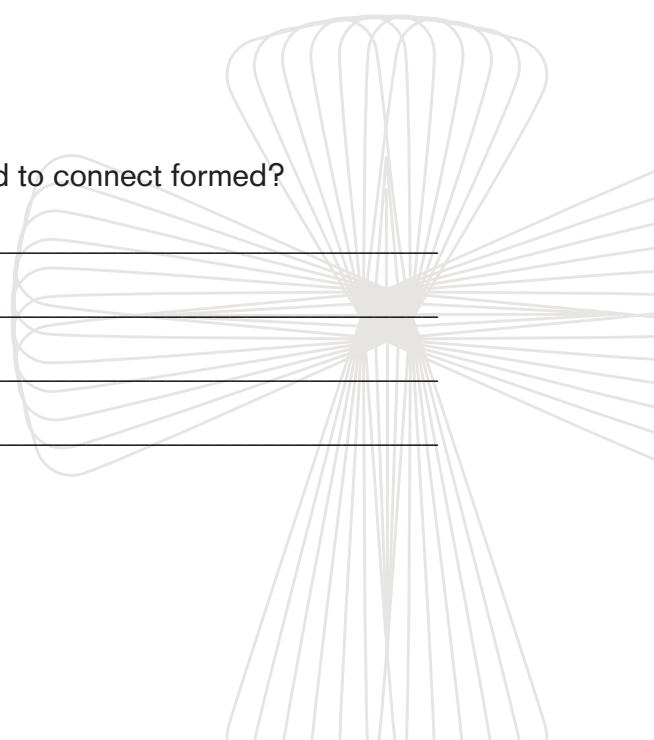
3. What challenges do you experience in bonding with others?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:11–13. What does it mean to “open wide” your heart?

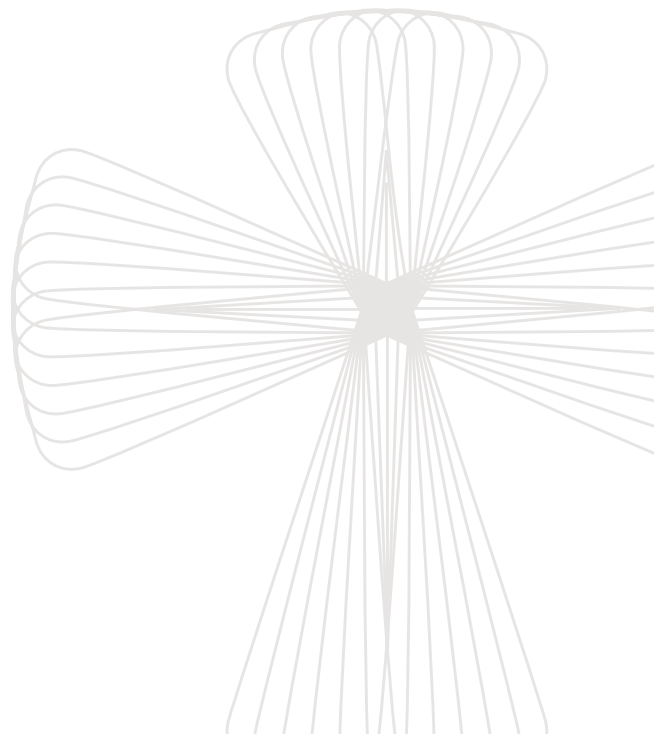
5. How is your trust muscle when it comes to opening your heart wide?

- Atrophied
- Weak
- Torn
- Buff
- Other _____

6. According to Psalm 22:9, where is the ability to trust and to connect formed?



7. Dr. Cloud talks about transformational moments. Describe a transformational moment of encouragement which has happened in your life through your relationship with another person.



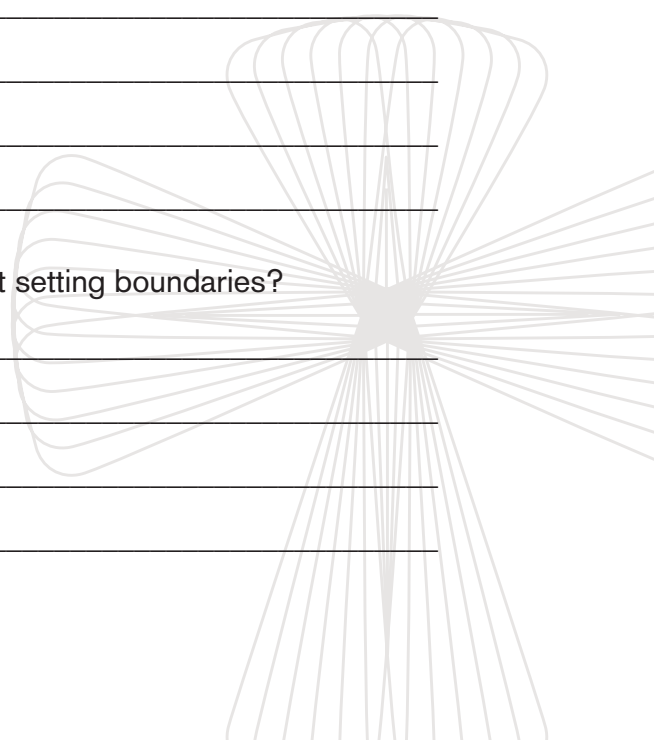
2. What are some reasons that people give for not being able to say no?

3. Who do you identify most with in Luke 10:38–42? Why?

4. Do you struggle more with independence or dependence?

5. Read Mark 10:45. What is the difference between being a servant and being a doormat?

6. In Exodus 18:13–18, what did Jethro teach Moses about setting boundaries?



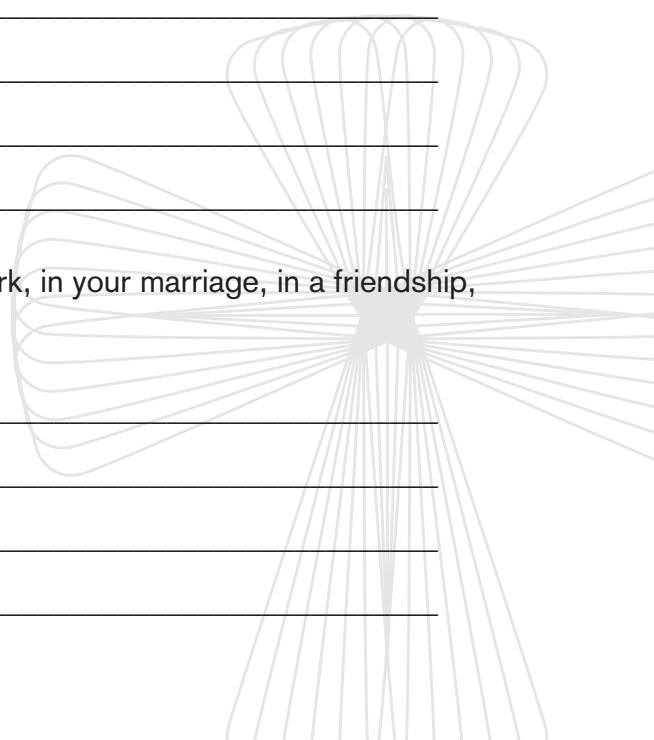
7. Read Mark 1:35–38. What do we learn from Jesus about boundaries?

8. Read Matthew 18:15–17. What do we learn about boundaries when people behave badly?

9. Read Galatians 6:7–8. What do we learn about responsibility and accountability from this passage?

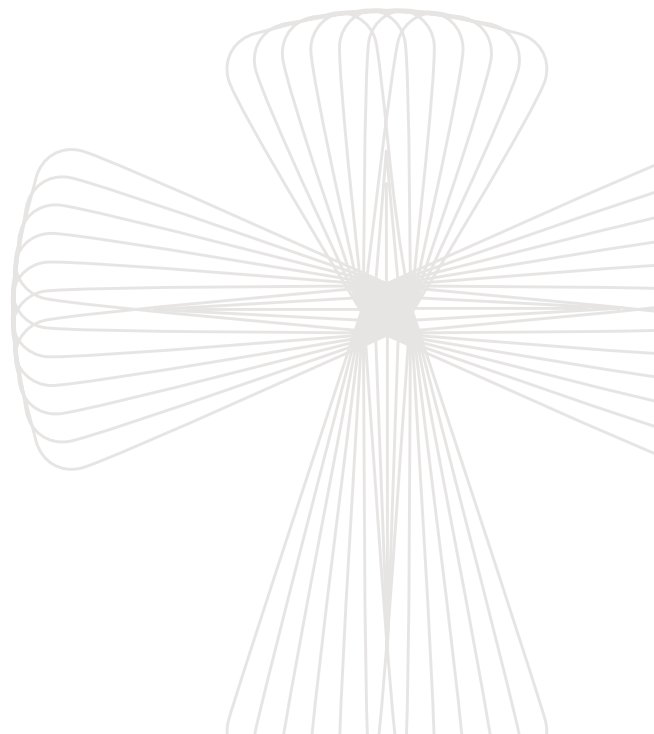
10. How does Proverbs 27:6 help us in being able to say “No” and set boundaries?

11. How can you set limits if you are being mistreated at work, in your marriage, in a friendship, etc.?



12. Sometimes we cling to negative attachments because we think they're better than no attachments at all. What negative attachments of "truth without grace" or "grace without truth" do you need to either change or avoid in order to grow?

Spend additional time meditating on the truths you learned this week.



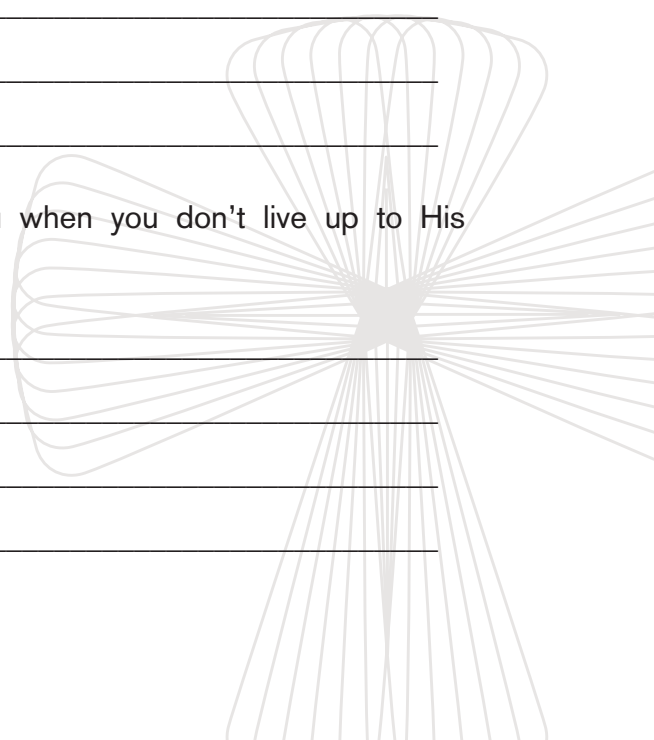
3. What does John 16:33 teach us with regard to reality?

4. What are some areas of weakness in your life? Where have you failed? Where are you immature and emotionally underdeveloped? How do you feel about answering this question?

5. What did you learn about failure and forgiveness in your family of origin?

6. How do you respond when people don't live up to your expectations?

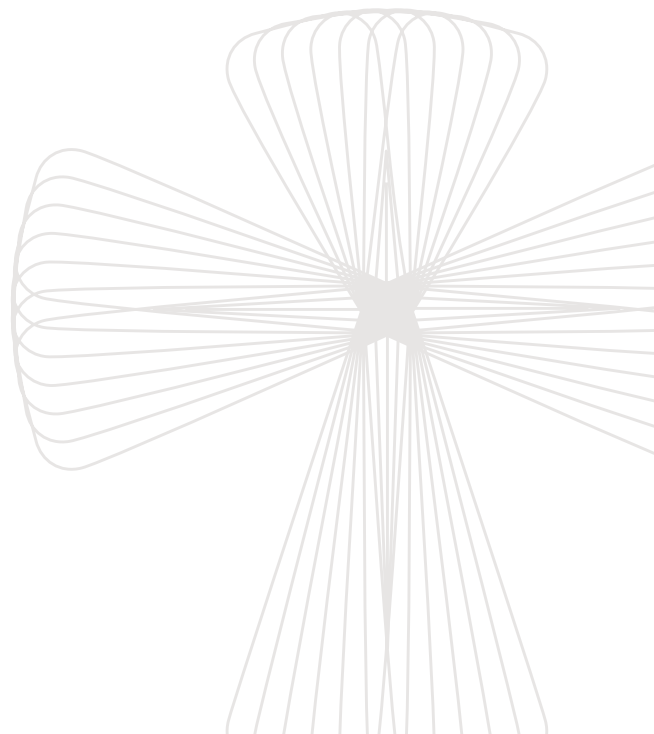
7. Read Romans 2:4. How does God respond to you when you don't live up to His expectations?



8. Who are people in your life who you idealize? What are some of the dangers of idealizing someone?

9. According to Romans 12:9, how are we to process both the good and bad in the world?

10. How does Ephesians 3:17–19 help you process the gap between the real and ideal with yourself and with others?



3. How does Colossians 3:23–24 help you relate to authority without feeling “one-down”?

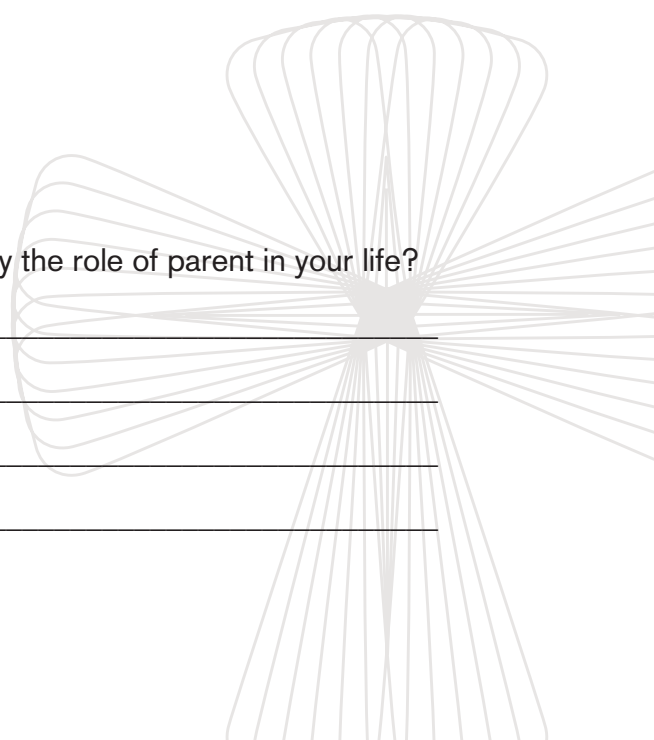
4. Whose approval are you more concerned with the approval of God or other people? Give evidence from your life to support your answer.

5. Of whom have you been afraid to disagree with in your life?

6. Not trying to please others is an important aspect of growing into adulthood. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:4. What stage are you presently at in regard to the approval of others?

- Infant
- Toddler
- Teenager
- Young Adult
- Other _____

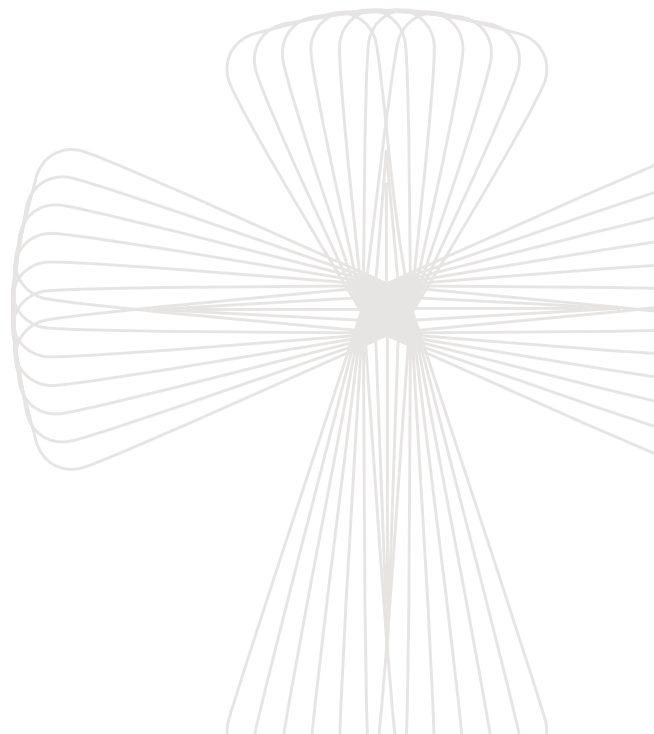
7. Read Galatians 4:8–9. Who are you presently letting play the role of parent in your life?



8. Read Romans 5:3–5. What role does struggle have in the process of maturing and becoming an adult?

9. When was the last time you disagreed with or expressed an opinion different than an authority figure in your life? How did it go?

10. What talents have you buried in the ground? What plans will you make to develop your expertise and be a good steward of the gifts God has given you? What is the first step you will take and when will you take it?



Conclusion

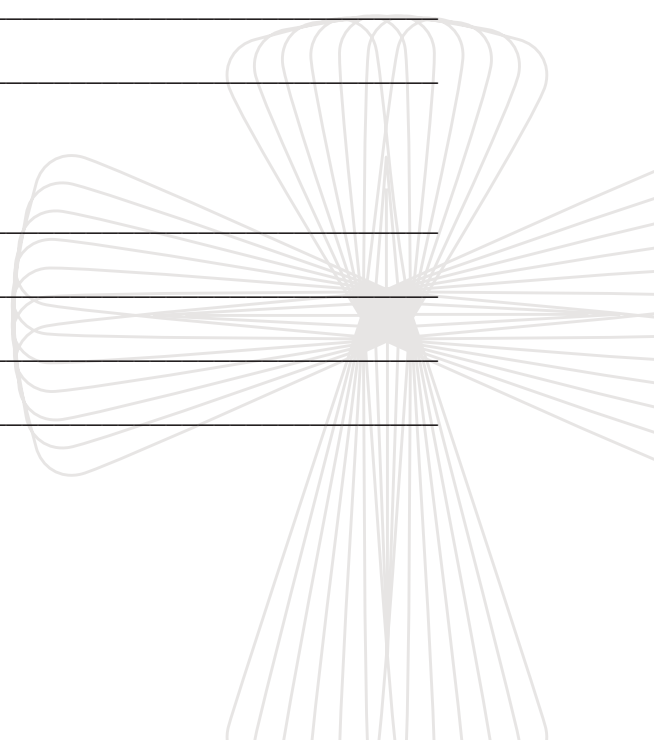
What have you discovered about your own struggle in each of the following areas? Take a moment and list two to three barriers you discovered and steps you have taken to overcome those barriers.

1. Relational Connection

Steps you have taken to overcome the barriers:

2. Boundaries

Steps you have taken to overcome the barriers:



3. Processing Pain

Steps you have taken to overcome the barriers:

4. Becoming an Adult

Steps you have taken to overcome the barriers:

In ***Churches That Heal*** we discovered:

- 1) We all struggle with four areas: relational connection, boundaries, processing pain, and becoming an adult.
- 2) There is no such thing as either an emotional problem or a spiritual problem. Because of our broken relationships with God, others, and ourselves, we develop symptoms that we feel on an emotional level and live out in our spiritual lives.

