

Bad Choices Devastating Consequences

A PRODIGAL'S STORY

(1) No mess is **TOO BIG FOR A MIRACLE.**

Luke 5:32 Matthew 11:28-30 Ephesians 1:18-20

(2) But God doesn't always respond
when we **CRY FOR HELP.**

Psalm 81:11-12 Romans 1:21-28 Proverbs 1:24-31

(3) God always responds
when we **"REPENT."**

1 John 1:8-10 Proverbs 28:13 Judges 10:10-16

(4) When **"PLAN A"** is wrecked,
there is always a **"PLAN B."**

Revelation 12:10 2 Samuel 12:13-14 Jeremiah 18:1-8

(5) Jesus is literally waiting for
US TO COME BACK.

Romans 5:10 2 Peter 3:9-10

Growth Group Homework

For the week of September 27, 2015

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. Would you rather...

- ⇒ Would you rather live one life that lasts 1,000 years or live 10 lives that last 100 years each?
- ⇒ Would you rather be Superman or Batman?
- ⇒ Would you rather be an Olympic gold medalist or a Nobel Peace Prize winner?

2. What are your top three places to eat (other than home)?

3. This week we launched our new series “UNSTUCK.” Looking back at your notes from this week’s teaching, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. This weekend we heard the great news that there’s no mess too big for a miracle! Even knowing this, sometimes it can feel like God is missing and there is little hope of becoming “unstuck.” In the following verses, what hope can we count on in the midst of the mess?

Psalm 34:17-18

¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.

¹⁸ The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit. *[NIV]*

Psalm 46:1-3

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamothe. A song.

¹ God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,

³ though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging. *[NIV]*

Psalm 37:1-2

Of David.

¹ Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;

² for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away. *[NIV]*

Psalm 9:18

¹⁸ But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish. *[NIV]*

Looking back at what you wrote above, which of these verses catches your attention the most?

2. The story of the prodigal son highlights the compassion and mercy of a loving father AND the wisdom of a dad who let his kid leave and experience major consequences. How do the following passages help us follow the Father's example and blend both of these responses in love?

Psalm 103:8-13

⁸ The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
⁹ He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
¹⁰ he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.
¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
¹³ As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him; *[NIV]*

Hebrews 12:5-7

⁵ And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
⁶ because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."

⁷ Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? *[NIV]*

Galatians 6:7-10

⁷ Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. ⁸ Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ⁹ Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. ¹⁰ Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. *[NIV]*

How would you define compassion based on these verses?

Would you say your natural and initial response to rebellion leans more toward compassion or consequences?

Can you think of any ways these passages help you balance your response? If so, explain.

3. Being able to help someone get out of their mess is part of being a follower of Christ and what it means to support and encourage one another. Yet, as we heard this weekend, we have to be careful that our help doesn't cross the line and become enabling or rescuing. The priest Eli ended up crossing this line with his sons in 1 Samuel 2:12-17, 22-25 and 3:11-14. What might be some reasons Eli ended up falling into the enablement trap?

1 Samuel 2:12-17

Eli's Wicked Sons

¹² Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD. ¹³ Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled ¹⁴ and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. ¹⁵ But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

¹⁶ If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

¹⁷ This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they were treating the LORD's offering with contempt. *[NIV]*

1 Samuel 2:22-25

²² Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. ²⁴ No, my sons; the report I hear spreading among the LORD's people is not good. ²⁵ If one person sins against another, God may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the LORD, who will intercede for them?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death. *[NIV]*

1 Samuel 3:11-14

¹¹ And the LORD said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. ¹² At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. ¹³ For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God, and he failed to restrain them. ¹⁴ Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'" *[NIV]*

List as many reasons you can think of as to why we end up rescuing and/or enabling our kids, spouses or friends, and not allowing the consequences to take place.

TAKING IT HOME

Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what's the most important thing to remember?

Do you have any prayer requests you'd like to share with your group?

Tips on Group Prayer

Prayer is an important part of being in Growth Group. Over the years we've found that group prayer goes better when we follow three simple guidelines.

WE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME - Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request either before prayer begins or during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next topic.

PRAY MORE THAN ONCE - Because the group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one is required to pray.

WE KEEP OUR PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE - Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one is required to pray out loud.



REAL MAN WEEKEND: OCTOBER 9-11

Our Real Man Weekend for the Oakbridge Experience is set for October 9-11. The weekend will include plenty of man event options (paintball, golf, sports, mountain biking, sleeping & eating, etc.). Cost is \$189-219. Space is limited. Don't delay! Register by Wed., Oct. 8, online at northcoastchurch.com/realman.