

CHURCHES
THAT HEAL

SMALL GROUP
LEADER GUIDE

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Welcome to *Churches That Heal*

All great works of literature describe the hero's journey.

There's a character who wants something, but faces obstacles -- often within himself -- to getting it.

In this journey, the hero always meets a "guide," an authority figure who has been there and done that, and has advice for the hero.

You are playing the role of the "guide" in this small group study.

The heroes in your small group are all on a journey to find emotional healing. As a facilitator of this group, you get a front row seat to the transformation that can happen when people face their fears, open up and become vulnerable and connect with one another.

Facing the truth about who we are as people and the hurts that we carry is a tremendous undertaking.

I'm so thankful you are prayerfully approaching your role as facilitator of this group. I'm so grateful 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.

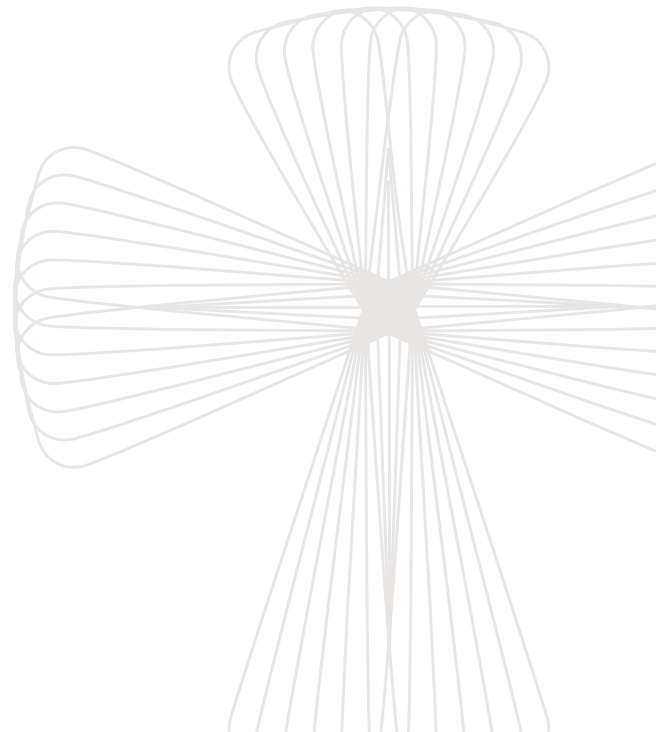
According to Genesis 1:27 we are all created in the image of God: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." But because of sin, we no longer function as we were originally designed, to fully live out His likeness. There are four abilities that God has, and wants to develop in us so that we can be healed and function more like He does:

- **Bonding (our loving attachment to others)**
- **Boundaries (our ability to be free from others)**
- **Sorting out good and bad (our ability to deal with sin and brokenness and process pain)**
- **Becoming an adult (our ability to develop competency)**

Often, our emotional and relational issues stem from one of these four areas. Over the next weeks, we'll discover where we need healing to happen within ourselves so that we can get unstuck.

The principles you will learn in *Churches That Heal* are found in God's Word, and are given to us to be learned and experienced in a healthy community of people in our lives. Romans 5:5 reminds us "so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another." In fact, Ephesians 4:16 tells us that we grow as each one of us helps each other in the ways we are supposed to help. You were never meant to make these changes all by yourself and on your own. The connections, conversations, and support that you have throughout this course will be critical to your healing process. To begin making changes in your life and absorb the maximum benefits of this course, you are going to need:

- Community:** You are going to need the support, encouragement, and accountability of a safe group of friends. Psalm 133:1 says, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"
- Contemplation:** Change can only happen with some needed self-examination. Until we are honest with ourselves, we limit our own healing. Psalm 51:6 says, "Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the heart."
- Courage:** Facing the truth about self and others is sometimes difficult and often painful. Leaving behind the familiar, even when it is hurtful and unhealthy, takes courage. And Jesus promised we will have trouble in this world. But He also said to "take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)
- Commitment:** Hearing alone will not produce the change you desire. You must put in a recurring effort. Dr. Cloud writes, "Only when we continually practice what we're learning about these new behaviors based on truth will we, over time, change." James 1:22 says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving ourselves."



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.

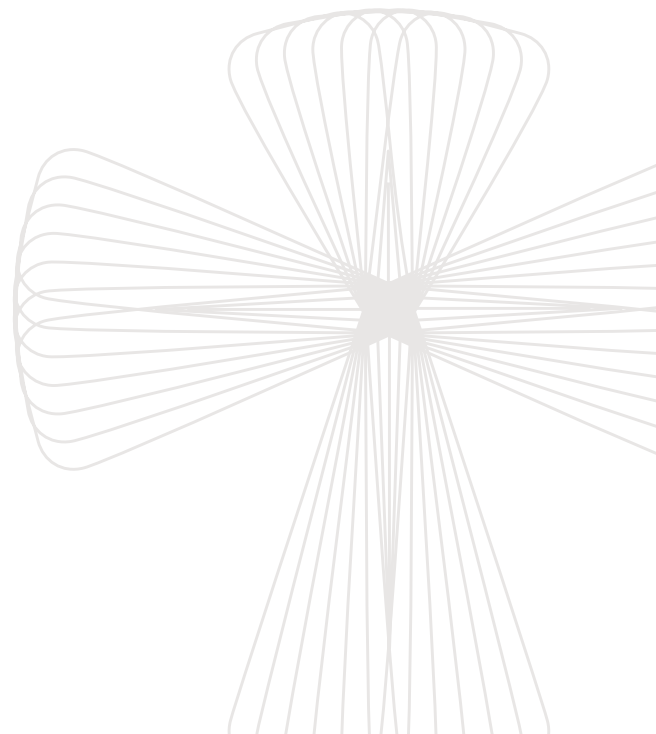
How to Use This Study

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 and lead the group in one to three deep breaths. This helps the group to focus and become present and open.
- Begin 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?

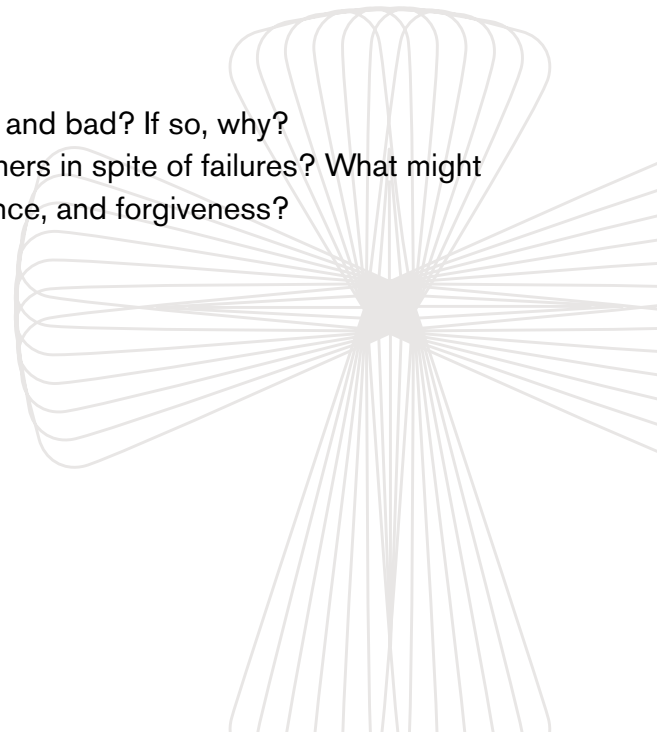
Week 6

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

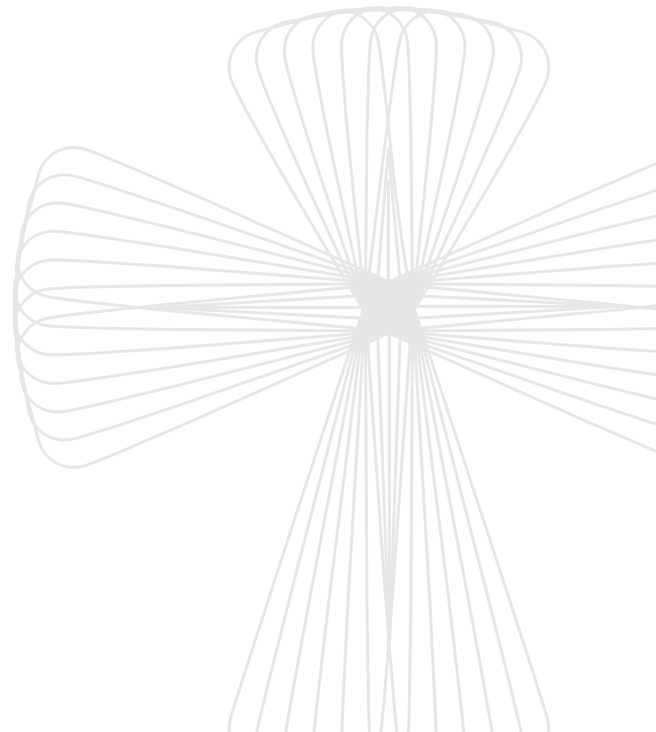
Session 6: Becoming an Adult

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** with Dr. Cloud, 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

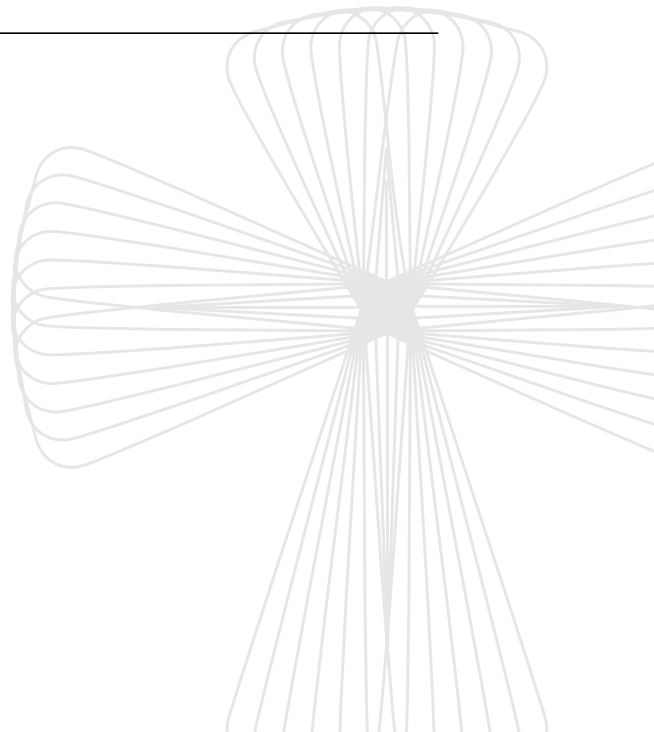
Hopeful

Frustrated

Discouraged

Struggling

Other _____

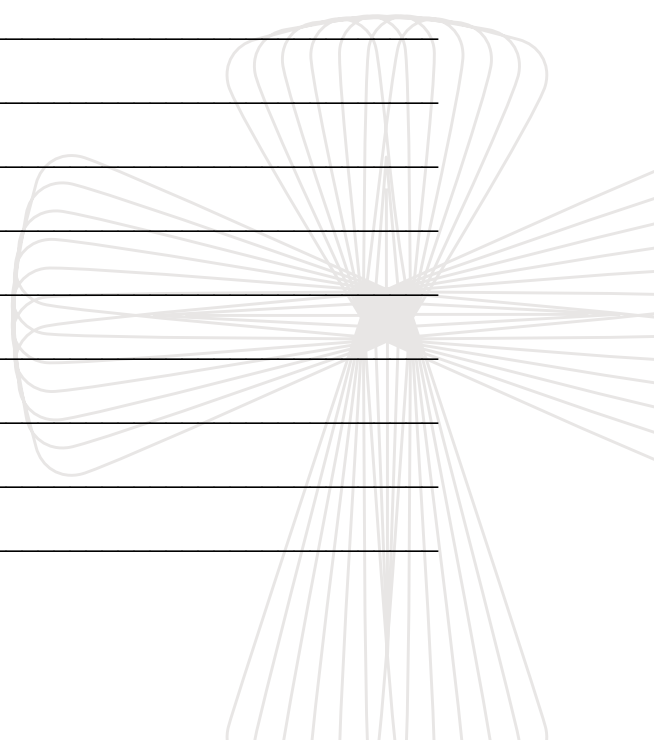


2. Dr. Cloud talks about “issues” and “capacities” in this video. What do each mean to you?

3. Why is “self-help” an oxymoron?

4. How did the video grow your understanding of what it means to be lost and what it means to be saved?

For Next Week: Read John 3:16-17, Luke 19:10, John 10:10, and 1 John 3:8. What do these passages say about the purpose of Jesus? What areas of your life do you think Jesus is most passionate about working on?



Video Discussion Questions

1. What questions did the video bring up for you?

2. We all experience “Bad Time,” which occurs when we are trying to fix a problem area in our life and it is not working. One a scale of 1-5, 1 being never and 5 being all the time, how often do you respond to the frustration of being “stuck” in these ways?

Judgement _____ Fear _____ Anger _____

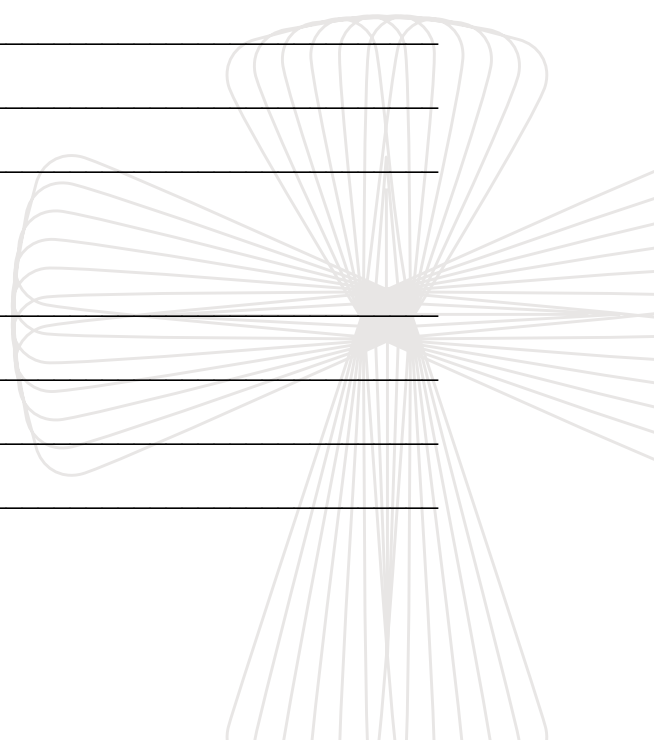
Depression _____ Shame _____ Trying Harder _____

Guilt _____ Escapism _____

3. What happens when someone fails to meet your expectations?

4. How is the conviction God brings different than the legal response of judgment, guilt, and shame we often feel?

5. According to the Bible, what produces real change?



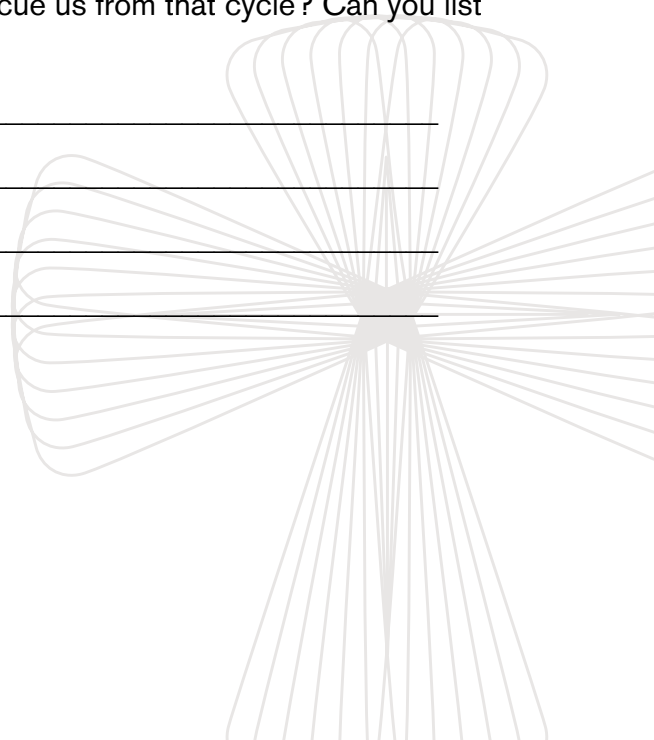
Video Discussion Questions

1. What questions did the video bring up for you?

2. What is an advocate? Have you ever had someone advocate for you? Have you ever been an advocate for someone else?

3. Read Romans 7. Where do you most often feel stuck in that cycle that Paul describes there? Does Paul indicate that there is anything that we can do to get out of that cycle?

4. Read Romans 8:1-11. What has God done for us to rescue us from that cycle? Can you list them in order?



2. What are some speed bumps or triggers that you regularly encounter?

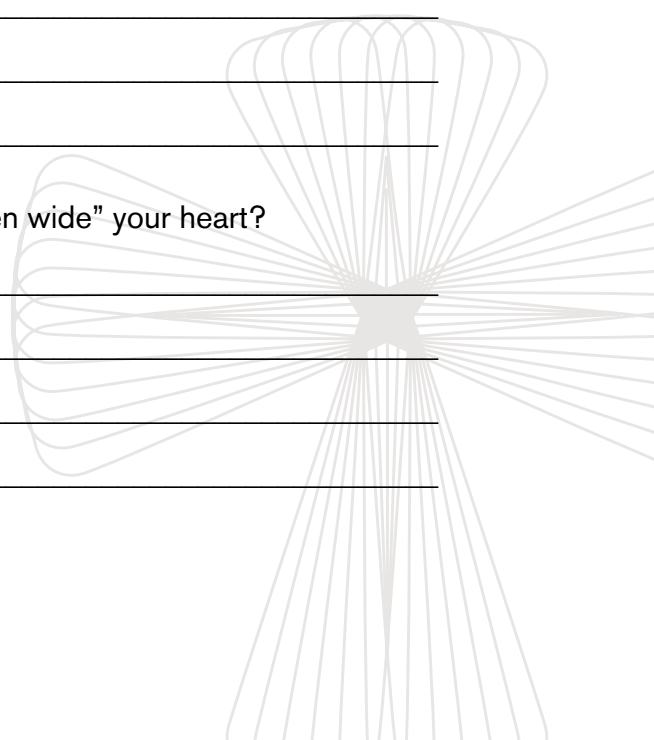
3. What is your defense mechanism when you hit speed bumps and trials in life?

- Self-Medicare
- Act Out
- Strike Back in Anger
- Denial and Detach
- Other _____

4. How do you connect with others? What ingredients have to be present?

5. What kinds of situations put you on edge and make it difficult for you to connect with others? What kinds of things trigger reactions or behaviors you would like to stop?

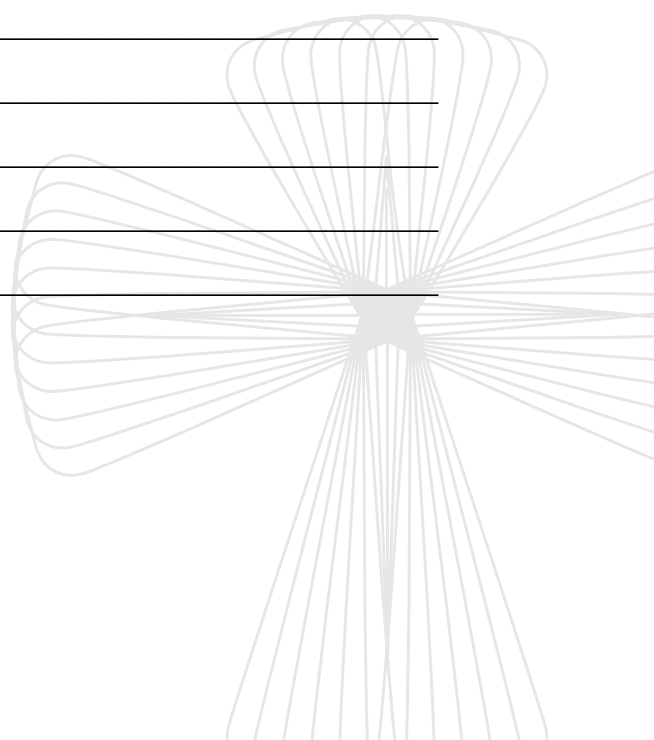
6. Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-13. What does it mean to “open wide” your heart?



7. What is one thing a person could do today to help you trust them? What is one thing you could do to be vulnerable to that person?

8. Dr. Cloud talks about transformational moments. Describe a transformational moment that has happened in your life through your relationship with another person.

For Next Week: James 1 tells us to consider it a joy when we go through trials. In order for us to experience that joy, we have to be willing to go through the trials. However, we are not meant to go through them alone. This week, find one or two people who you can share what you have been learning about yourself from this small group.



2. How adept are you at saying “no”?

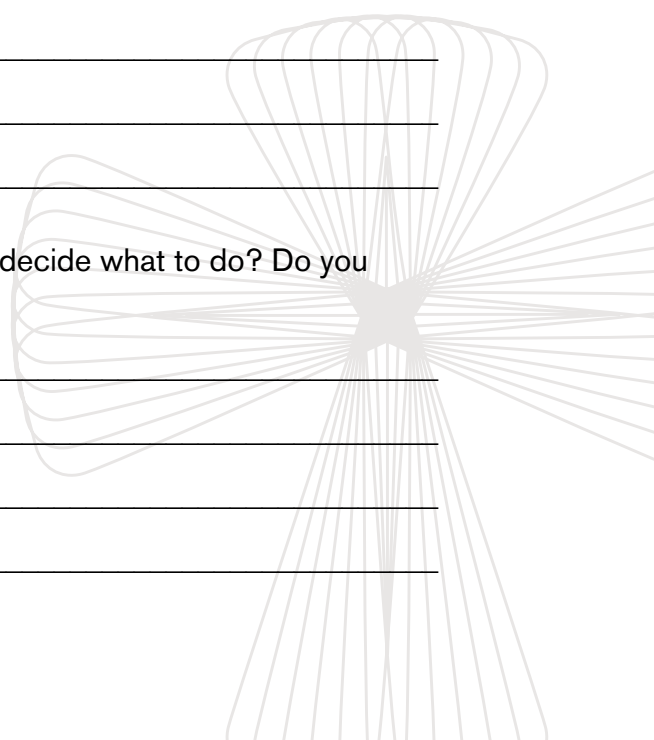
- Professional
- Pretty bad
- Getting better
- Can't say it
- Other _____

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

4. Read Mark 1:35–38. What did Jesus teach His disciples here about boundaries? What is the difference between being a servant and being a doormat? (Mark 10:45)

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

6. When you are faced with a choice to make, how do you decide what to do? Do you struggle more with independence or dependence?

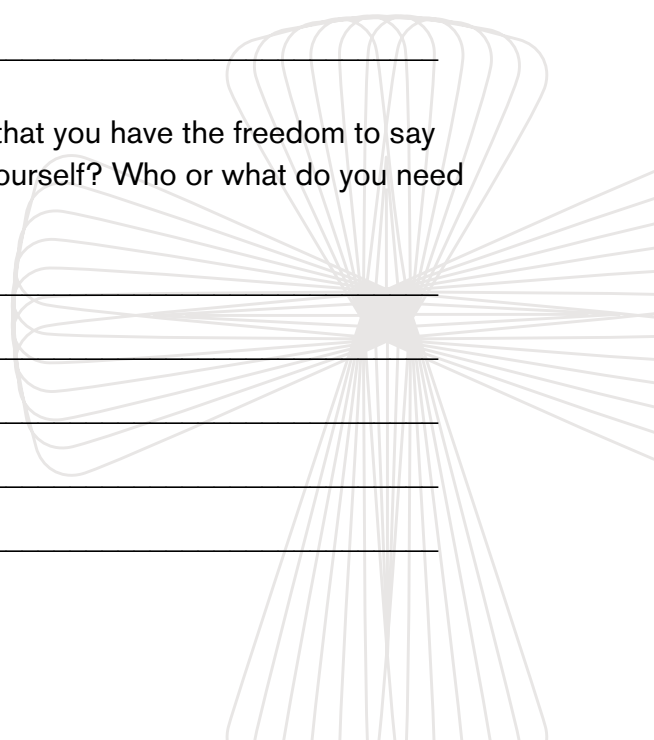


7. Dr. Cloud uses the formula (Freedom = Responsibility = Love) to show that our freedom is designed to empower us to love God, others, and ourselves. How do you use your freedom to love God, others, and yourself? Which do you find it harder to love (God, others, yourself)?

8. Read Matthew 18:15-17. How does Jesus teach us how to use boundaries responsibly and lovingly here? When have you seen this happen in your life? Has anyone ever corrected you in a responsible and loving way?

9. What happens to our own freedom when we choose not to responsibly and lovingly correct those who sin against us? How can you set limits if you are being mistreated at work, in your marriage, in a friendship, etc.?

For Next Week: What is one thing you can say “no” to so that you have the freedom to say “yes” more responsibly and with love for God, others, and yourself? Who or what do you need to say “no” to this week?



SESSION 5

Processing Pain

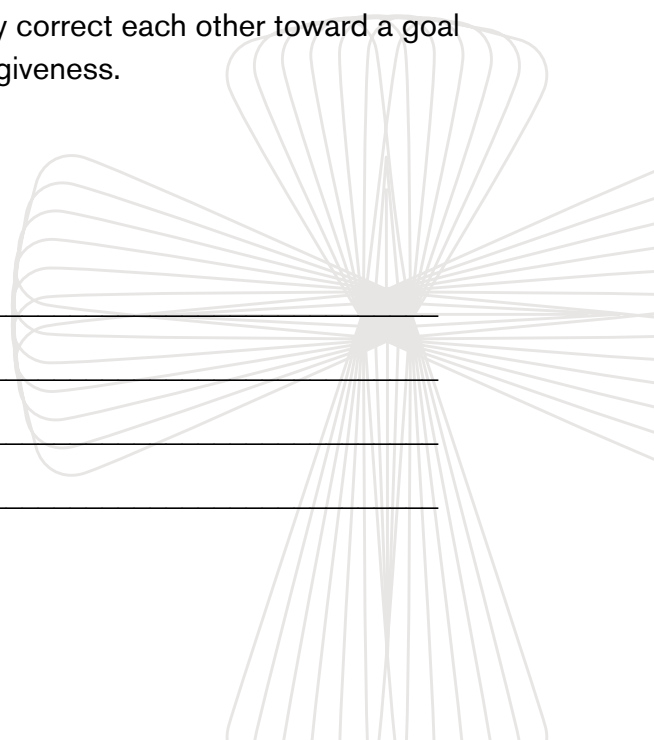
Intro to the Video: This session focuses on the importance of dealing with pain in life instead of bouncing between extremes of good and bad.

Notes from the Video

We are both good and bad. The same is true of the people around us. One of our tasks is to accept and love each other in spite of our failures and gently correct each other toward a goal of love. We do this through confession, repentance, and forgiveness.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What questions did this video bring up for you?



2. Is it easier for you to see the good or the bad in your life? Is it easier for you to see the good or the bad in the lives of those around you?

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

4. How do you respond when people don't live up to your expectations? How does God respond to you when you don't live up to His expectations? (See Romans 2:4)

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

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

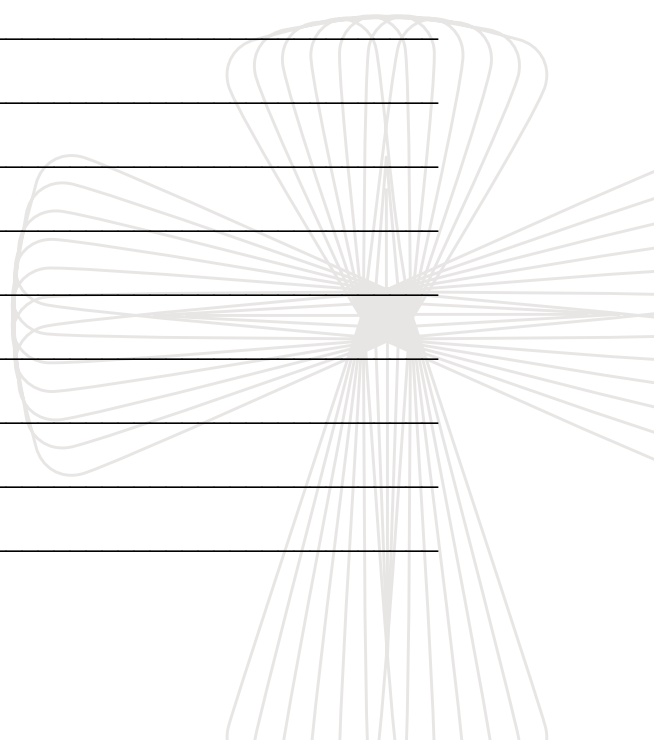


7. How does Ephesians 3:17-19 help you process the gap between the real and ideal with yourself and with others?

8. Not all pain is caused by sins we commit ourselves. Some of it is caused by things done to us. All of it needs to become exposed (confessed) if you want to experience healing and wholeness. Are there any sins you need to confess, either that you have done or that have been done to you?

For Next Week: The healing process only works when we stop judging, just as God has done in Jesus Christ. Where is it most difficult for you to stop judging the imperfections of others in your life? What have you experienced that makes that reaction to judge so difficult to control?

Hurts and sins that go unexpressed cannot be healed. However, some things are easier to share than others. What are some hurts that you can practice sharing with others who will not judge you to help you build up the trust to share some of those deeper, unexpressed hurts and sins? Find someone to practice “confessing” and expressing those with this week.



SESSION 6

Becoming An Adult

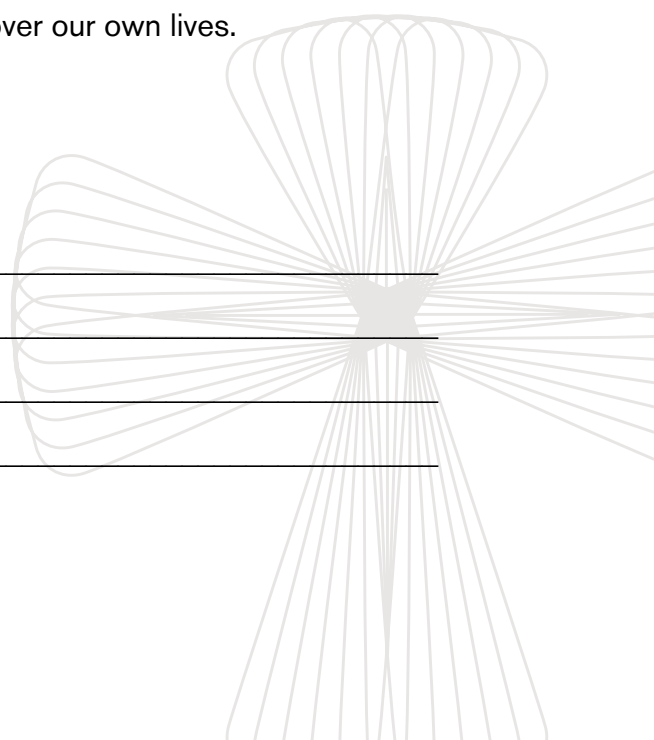
Intro to the Video: This final session is about the fourth principle of healing in our lives: how we mature into adulthood and the challenges we face in this growing process.

Notes from the Video

Becoming an adult is assuming an authority position of life. We are all born as children under adult authority, but over time we are to become authorities over our own lives.

Video Discussion Questions

1. What questions did this video bring up for you?



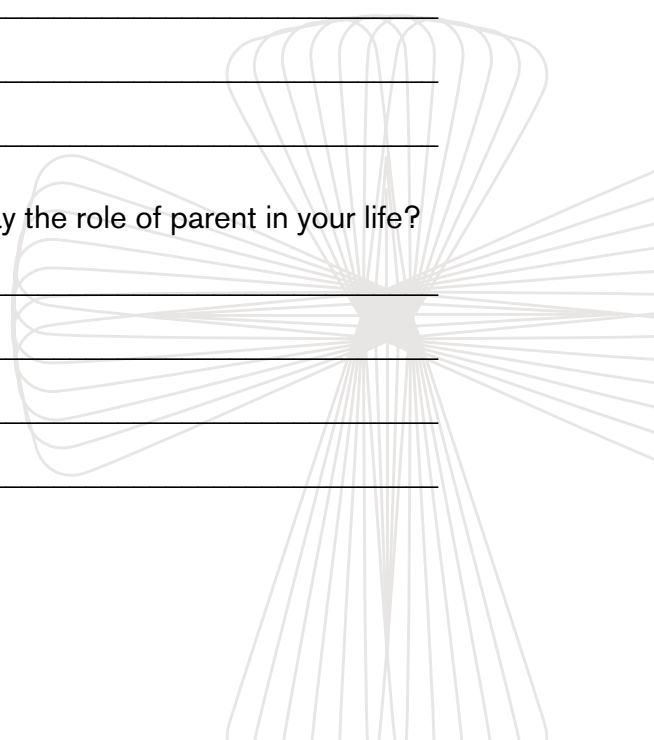
2. What does maturity mean?

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

4. What does Dr. Cloud say the biblical purpose of authority is?

5. What is an example of how an authority figure has passed on authority to you? How have you passed on authority to others?

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

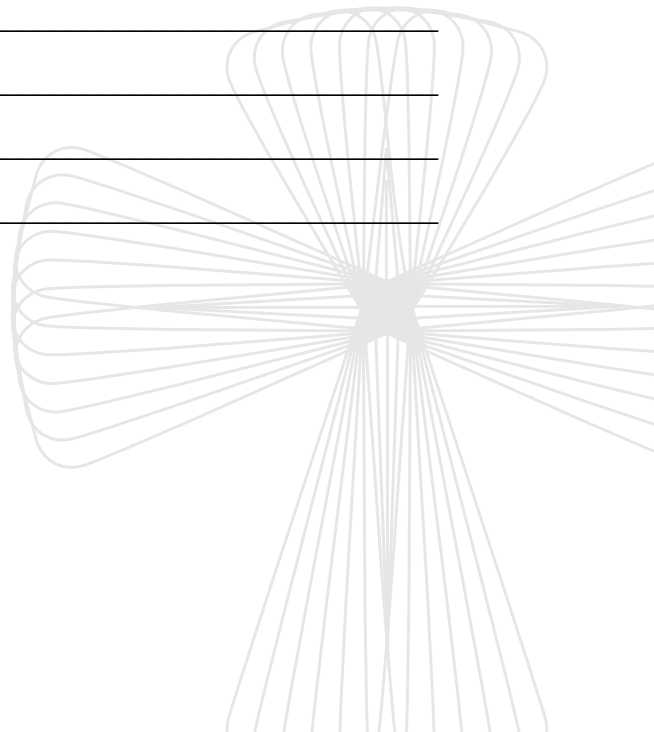


7. In Matthew 23:9, Jesus tells us to call no one Father except God, our Heavenly Father. How can we handle people in our lives who seek to abuse their authority roles in our lives.

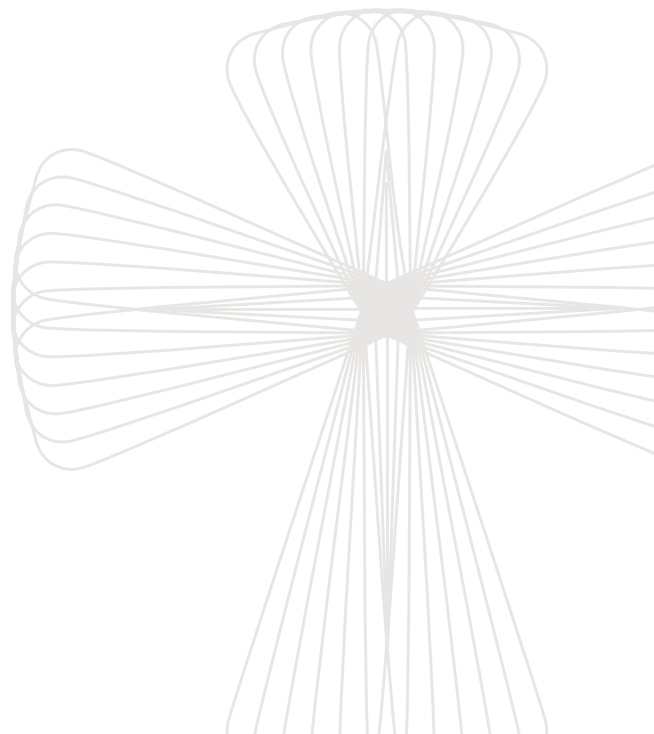
8. Read Romans 5:3–5. What role does struggle have in the process of maturing and becoming an adult?

9. What are your next steps in processing the pain and loss you have experienced?

10. What are your next steps in becoming an adult and helping those under you to become adults as well?



For Next Week: This is the last session. Make a plan to check in with one another in your group. Pray about starting another group yourself. Find someone outside the group to share what you have learned and experienced here.



Conclusion

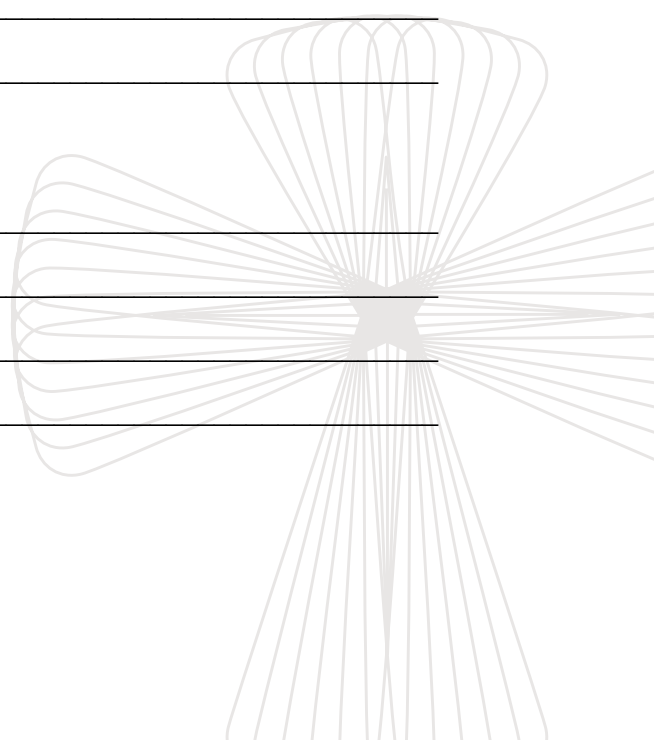
What have you discovered about your own struggle in each of the following areas? Take a moment and list two to three barriers you discovered and steps you have taken to overcome those barriers.

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, 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.

