

Uncaged: Living in the Freedom of Grace

Clearing the Slate (May 2nd, 2021)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- You can watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

Welcome: *Icebreaker* – *What is the most humbling situation you have ever been in?*

Study Tip: The 2 books of Samuel begin with a song of a humble servant name Hannah. The humble will be lifted up by God while the proud will be brought low (1 Sam. 2). This proud vs. humble theme runs throughout the books! Consider the prophet Samuel. Samuel, the son of Hannah, was elevated as a humble servant and to an important role in the service of the priesthood that had gone astray in their prideful ways (1 Sam. 2:27-3:19). Eventually, Samuel anoints the next king of Israel, King Saul! Saul did not pursue the throne but was thrust into power by the people all the while expressing concern about being from Benjamin, the weakest of the tribes (Judg. 20:46-48; 1 Sam. 8:1-9; 9:21). However, when Saul began to increase in power and status, he took matters into his own hands (1 Sam. 13:8-15; 15:10) and began to act like a king that Moses warned of all the way back in Deuteronomy 17:14-20! It was at this critical moment that Samuel goes to anoint the next king of Israel, King David. The story of David begins with the youngest of Jesses' sons who is an overlooked "ruddy" shepherd (1 Sam 16:1-13), but God designed it so that He could do mighty things using a humble servant. David defeated the Philistine giant (1 Sam 17) and David was known for his military might Saul slayed thousands, David slayed hundreds of thousands (1 Sam. 18:7). David escapes Saul's wrath with integrity (1 Sam. 24:17, 26:21), returns the ark of the covenant to Israel (2 Sam. 6), and established God's city in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:7)! Things were looking good for Israel, even to the point where God promises David a royal seed who would sit on the throne forever and reign over this eternal kingdom (2 Sam. 7:1-17). It was shortly after the height of David's golden age campaign led by God that we get to the events of 2 Samuel chapters 11 – 12 mentioned in this week's Sermon about Psalm 51. The book of Samuel encourages us to take a step back and see the trajectory of someone beginning with humble beginnings only to be corrupted by the power that God appointed to them. As you walk through this week's study guide, pay attention to this background of God elevating the humble and humbling the proud as we talk about difficult concepts such as confession and repentance apparent in Psalm 51. In addition, pay attention to how David's downfall is evidence that the reader of the Old Testament is still waiting for the Messiah of Israel that would humbly rule from everlasting to everlasting without succumbing to sin!

What's Going on This Week

This week, Larry Vold, Pastor of Spiritual Care, led us into the fourth week of our new series titled *Uncaged: Living in the Freedom of Grace*. Pastor Larry brought our attention to *Psalm 51* in order to talk about forgiveness in terms of being someone who is in need of receiving forgiveness. As you read this Psalm, pay attention to what Pastor Larry calls the twin graces of confession and repentance and how these two free David from the shackles of his sin. As you seek to apply these scriptures in your life, spend some time meditating on what you feel like are sins that are unforgivable in your life and rest in the fact that God has made a way to restore our relationship!

“If we confess and repent of our sins God will completely restore us so that we can live in the freedom of forgiveness.” – Pastor Larry Vold

GROUP MEETING (60 – 90 minutes)

*******(NEW) Opening Time of Worship******* (10 – 15 minutes)

Take a moment with your group and prepare your hearts as you enter into the presence of God for this meeting.

Option 1: Worship Music Have someone share their favorite worship song. Find it online, play it, and sing along! Have them explain why the lyrics mean so much to them!	Option 2: Scripture Reflection <i>1 John 1:9 / 2 Cor. 7:10</i> Reflect on these two short passages that Larry mentions and share what the Spirit is placing on your heart!	Option 3: Backstory and Context <i>1 Samuel 11:1-12:15</i> Take some time to put yourself in the shoes of David as you read the backstory of Psalm 51
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Objective #1: Explore the concepts of confession and repentance as it relates to your life (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: Psalm 51 – In his sermon, Pastor Larry uses Psalm 51 to encourage us to engage in confession in a way that is honest with God and honest with ourselves about our sin. Alongside of confession, Pastor Larry encourages us to move in a new direction that renounces our sin and searches for transformation that only comes from God’s. **Would you say that there are sins in your life that you are attempting to cover up, rationalize, or outright deny? What is something in Psalm 51 that is particularly challenging to you when you see David confessing his sin and repenting from His ways?** **Prayer Tip:** Pay attention to the many challenges that often block us from confessing sin or repenting. Make sure to write down specific challenges and bring them to God!

Objective #2: Open time to confess sins to God (and one another if comfortable) (15 – 25 minutes)

Primary Texts: James 5:13-19 – Pastor Larry exhorts the church to stop denying our sin, go straight to God knowing He loves us and he will completely forgive, and remember that our transformation depends on being honest with God about yourself and your sin. Additionally, in verse 16 the author of James writes that we should practice confession and repentance with one another so that we can begin to pray for each other. **Is there anyone that would like to confess their own sin in this group so that we can pray for each other?** (NOTE: Do not pressure anyone to share! This is between them and the Lord) **Prayer Tip:** If any confessions come out, write them down and prepare to pray for them as a group.

*******(NEW) Closing Time of Prayer******* (20 – 25 minutes)

In light of this week’s discussion, here are some different ways that your group can pray!

- Pray for any obstacles to confession and repentance we may be facing.
- Pray for repentance base on any confessions that are made in the group.
- Pray for any individual prayer request that comes up in your group.
- Pray for the entire group and how they might be able to contribute to future group meetings.
- Pray for an interaction with someone who you can invite into your next group meeting!

We invite your entire group to participate in our **PRAYFAST** on the National Day of Prayer (Thursday 5/6 from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm @ the top of each hour)

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-**Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities:** Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus) . If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

-**Read Ahead:** *Luke 19:1-10* – Last week, we learned that all of our sin is primarily against the Lord, and we need to begin with confessing to Him. But often there is collateral damage: People we've hurt, trust we've lost, etc. The story of Zacchaeus gives us a glimpse into a man who desires to "make it right." We'll learn from his example how to walk down this path as well.

-**Suggested Resources:**

[1 and 2 Samuel](#)

-**Community Groups 2021:** For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org