



*Discovery Series #2*



# Experiencing God's Forgiveness



**Growing in my relationship with God, and understanding that Jesus “came to set the captives free”.**

*Pastor Stan Lubeck*

2006

# **Spiritual Growth Track**

Our desire is that our church will be a warm healthy spiritual environment where everyone is actively seeking to grow to spiritual maturity in Christ. We take the command of Jesus very seriously that instructs us to make disciples (students) of Christ to the ends of the earth. The following materials are the tools we use to help people to begin this lifelong process of obediently following our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. There is no homework in this series of four sessions. It is designed to be covered in four separate one hour time segments in a personal one on one setting.

## **Base Camp #1: 1 on 1 Discovery Series Topics:**

- 1) Knowing Jesus as Lord
- 2) **Experiencing God's Forgiveness**
- 3) Experiencing God's Power
- 4) Experiencing God's Love

The Lord Jesus Christ wants to be our closest friend. He is a friend who sticks closer than a brother, and changes us into people who please our God and Father. Congratulations on taking the first step in this life transformational process of obeying Jesus as Lord of all.

Pastor Stan Lubeck

# Experiencing God's Forgiveness

God's forgiveness is like a bar of soap that cleans up our lives. It is a wonderful thing to be cleansed by the Lord God Almighty. But God does not want us to continue cycling through sin, confess, forgiveness, sin, confess, forgiveness. When God forgives us, His desire is that we repent and "sin no more". His desire is that we will learn to walk with Him and enjoy fellowship with Him in holiness.

You are secure in your relationship with God because you are forgiven and accepted by God.

**What are some of the barriers that separate us from God?**

Independence	Selfishness
Anger	Un-forgiveness
Pride	Doubt
Fear	Lack of Trust



What would you add to the above list?

## **I. Defining Sin and Righteousness**

It is important for each of us to understand Righteousness from God's perspective.

### **A. Positional Righteousness**

Definition: Meeting the Standards of God's righteousness and justice.

- 1. Our position in Christ changes when we become children of God because of what He did for us:**

**Read 1 Peter 3:18** "For Christ died for sins once for \_\_\_\_\_, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God."

This is a position made available to every person separated from God (sinner) and only to those who are "in Christ".

- 2. We are "seated with Jesus"!**

**Read Ephesians 2:4-7** But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we

were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved. 6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the \_\_\_\_\_ realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

We cannot do this ourselves! We enjoy our position in heaven because of Jesus, and Jesus alone!

## **B. Practical Righteousness**

Definition: Maintaining a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

Though we are seated with God in the heavenlies, and are positionally righteous before God, practically we sin and fall short of God's desire. We live in a rebellious world where we are influenced to do evil and turn away from our Father. How do we restore and maintain our righteousness before God in our daily lives?

### **1. The condition of people separated from Christ:**

**Read Isaiah 64:6** "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like \_\_\_\_\_ rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away. "

### **2. Maintaining our right relationship with Christ:**

**Read John 1:8-10** "If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a \_\_\_\_\_ and his word has no place in our lives."

God will forgive our worst sins "if" we confess and repent

Only after God seats us positionally in heaven with Jesus, are we able to practically begin to live a righteous life in His forgiveness.



## II. Dealing With Sin (Spiritual Breathing)

Breath is like life itself. We must breathe air to live. In much the same way, we have a picture of spiritual breathing whereby we let out the impure and breathe in the pure. This is really the key to maintaining a healthy relationship with God.

Think of what it would be like if you did not take responsibility for your wrongs with your spouse or best friend. What do you think would happen to the relationship? It would suffer! This is the same *issue* in regard to maintaining our relationship with God. Sin separates us from God. So we need to learn how to repent and deal with our sin in order to restore a right relationship with God.

### A. *Exhale*

1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

When I exhale, I blow the bad air out of my lungs. This is a good picture of confession of sin.

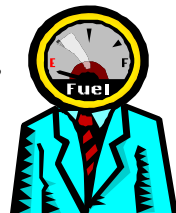
Confession is simply acknowledging my sin, agreeing with God that I am wrong. It is not telling God what I did wrong in the sense that He doesn't know, because He knows everything-including my sins. Confession is telling God that I know that I have done something that hinders the relationship between us.

Confession also requires repentance! Instead of walking away from God when we sin, we repent, and turn towards Him, drawing near to Him. When we turn to God we naturally turn away from the thing(s) we have done wrong. Repentance is literally a 180 degree turn to honor and follow God.

### B. *Inhale*

**Read Ephesians 5:18** Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ with the Spirit.

How long can you hold your breath? It does not take



long before your chest is screaming for fresh air. Inhalation brings new oxygen into our lungs and invigorates us all over again. In much the same way, Spiritual inhaling is submitting ourselves to God's plan, allowing Him to be in control. After we confess our sins we are commanded to trust God and allow Him to control our lives. By faith we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is when we walk by faith and under the control of the Holy Spirit that our lives are filled with wonder and purpose and fruitfulness.

**Psalm 32:1-5** Oh, what joy for those whose rebellion is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin, whose lives are lived in complete honesty! When I refused to confess my sin, I was weak and miserable, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. NLT

What does this say about feelings of guilt and cleansing of sin?

### **III. What should you do if you still feel guilty after confessing your sins?**

Conviction of sin comes from God; condemnation and false guilt come from Satan. Satan is a liar and is the "accuser of the brethren".

**Read Romans 8:1** "Therefore, there is now no \_\_\_\_\_ for those who are in Christ Jesus."

**Read Hebrews 9:14** "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may \_\_\_\_\_ the living God!"

Once you have confessed your sin and have asked God's Spirit to control and empower you to live pleasing to God, what are you free to do?

**Read Hebrews 8:12** "For I will forgive their \_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_ and will remember their sins no more.”



If God is choosing to remember our sins no more, then we have no right to play God and allow our past sin to dominate our thoughts.

## IV. Receiving and Giving Forgiveness

1. Ask God to bring to your mind attitudes or actions that have not been pleasing to Him (John 16:8).
2. Agree with God about your sin. Acknowledge that sin has hurt your relationship with Him, and that you do not want anything to stand in the way of God's will for your life.

3. Forgive others. List those who have offended you. Pray something like this, “**Lord, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ (name of person)**

\_\_\_\_\_ **for**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(what the person did)**

\_\_\_\_\_, **even though it made me feel**  
\_\_\_\_\_ **(painful memories or feelings)**

\_\_\_\_\_.

When the Lord Jesus taught us to pray, He connected our willingness to forgive others with God's forgiveness of us.

**Read Matthew 6:12** “and forgive us our sins, \_\_\_\_\_ we have forgiven those who have sinned against us.”

What does this say about our responsibility to extend forgiveness to others?

4. Thank God for His willingness to wash and cleanse you of all your sin.

This week, try to spend 15 minutes or so each day with God in Bible reading and prayer. Suggested reading: Luke 15:11-32; Galatians 5:16-23

Do you know others who are struggling with feelings of guilt, condemnation, hopelessness? Do you think they would be interested in knowing God personally? Would you be willing to begin praying for them, that God would open their eyes to see their need of Him?

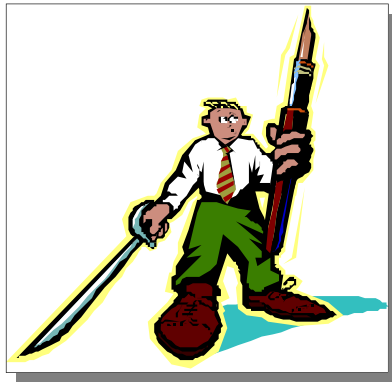
## IV. What about the Unforgivable Sin?

Saying “no” to God’s Holy Spirit

**Read Matthew 12:31-32** And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will \_\_\_\_\_ be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

God desires that we walk in fellowship with Him. He has given us His Spirit to lead us into all truth. When we say “no” to God’s Holy Spirit, our relationship with God is hindered or cut off. This is very serious to God because He made us to fellowship with Him.

Next week we will learn how to make sure that we are in tune with God’s Holy Spirit!



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