



DON'T COME TO CHURCH IF... * SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Week 1 September 21, 2025

“...You Can’t Say ‘I’m Sorry’”

OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, as we gather today, we acknowledge our sins and need for forgiveness. We have sinned against one another and you. We are sorry for the ways in which we have hurt ourselves, others, and your Kingdom. Help us then, by the power of your Holy Spirit and in how we follow your Son, Jesus, to leave behind our sinful past and walk in the way that leads to life. Bless the reading of your Word today that we may grow in knowledge and faith. May we leave this study in a humble spirit, ready to live into the repentance we find today. All this we lift up in the name of the one that made our forgiveness possible, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

Psalm 139:23-24 (NIV)

²³ “The Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting

James 5:13-16 (NIV)

¹³ Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. ¹⁴ Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵ And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. ¹⁶ Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

John 8:10-11 (NIV)

¹⁰ Is Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

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INTRODUCTION

From the tiniest of infants to the oldest adults, all of us will have a need, at one point or another, to say “I’m sorry.” Intentional or unintentional, we mess up and our actions or inactions harm others. In the aftermath is the need to make amends. Fear, denial, pride, and many other things can get in the way of our reconciliation with other people and the Lord our God. From cover to cover, the scriptures call us to acknowledge our sin and seek God’s divine help to live justly. Marked with humility, love for God and other people, and a willingness to extend the same forgiveness we have received from our Heavenly Father, let us boldly move forward in today’s study. Amen?

QUESTIONS

1. In Psalm 139, the Psalm writer invites God to examine their heart. What is your experience with self-reflection? Do you find it helpful? How frequently do you invite God to examine your heart and intentions?
2. In the reading from James, the apostle asks if there is anyone happy, troubled, or sick. Do you find it easier to support people in easy or difficult times? In this season of your life, how do you fulfill this aspect of Christian communal life?
3. The United Methodist Church does not have a formal system of confession to its clergy like that of the Roman Catholic Church; however, we still believe confessing to be vital towards repentance. Do you have people that you can “be real” with when it comes to your shortcoming and sins?
4. In John 8:10-11 (on page 1), Jesus offers grace to the woman caught in adultery. At the end of their conversation, he invites her to “go now and leave your life of sin.” What spiritual disciplines and practices do you use to move on from a bad habit or sin? Do you use a support system or accountability partner? If so, has that helped you? How?

FINAL APPLICATION

As we continue to combat sin and seek to bring more of the Kingdom of God to earth each day, saying “sorry” can be an easily overlooked aspect. Through an ongoing examination of our own lives, deliberate actions to follow God’s way, and a humble spirit we continue our follow of Jesus and the Gospel. This week, may we ask the Lord for courage so that we may more boldly confront sin within us. In the great company of the saints, we find sinners, just like us, who have been redeemed by our loving and merciful Savior. Amen?