

## **Skeletons In The Closet**

John 4:1-42

### **FACING THE TRUTH ABOUT ME**

John 4:1-42, John 21:15-19

Not dealing with the **past**, robs us of our **future**.

### **CLEANING OUT THE CLOSET**

1 John 1:9, 1 John 2:1-2, Luke 19:10, Hebrews 7:24-25, 1 Peter 2:24, Revelation 12:10,  
1 Peter 5:8, John 10:10, Romans 7:24-25, Romans 8:1-2, 1 Timothy 2:5-6

- ▶ You will have to **face the truth**.
  
- ▶ You will have to **accept the truth**.
  
- ▶ You will have to accept **grace**, not **guilt**.

### **LIVING WITH THE DOOR OPEN**

Your skeletons can be Satan's **greatest weapon**,  
or God's **most powerful tool**.

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

1 John 1:9

# Growth Group Homework

For the week of March 15, 2009

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This week is the final meeting of our Winter Quarter. (*Note: College groups are on a different schedule.*) Your Growth Group homework has been shortened a bit to give you time to celebrate communion together and finalize your group's plans for next quarter. The nine-week Spring Quarter runs from April 5 through June 7.

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## QUICK REVIEW

Take a minute to look back over your sermon notes and reflect on what you heard in this week's message. Is there a particular Scripture, principle, or application that caught your attention or challenged you?

## MY STORY

1. We heard a small part of Mikey's story this weekend and can see how God's grace and Mikey's vulnerability are working together to impact others. Can you think of any other stories of people sharing their past and God using those stories to point people to Himself?

2. Everyone's story is an opportunity for God to look good. Some testimonies of God's intervention and life change are incredibly exciting while others seem to be more "normal." How can your story, regardless of the "wow" factor, illustrate your need for Jesus and God's incredible grace?

## DIGGING DEEPER

1. Facing the truth about ourselves is one of the first steps in dealing with "skeletons" and mistakes from our past. Check out the very first account of a couple facing some hard truth. Read Genesis 3:6-13 and jot down a few observations on how they responded to their mistakes.

### Genesis 3:6-13

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. [7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

[8] Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. [9] But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"

[10] He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

[11] And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

[12] The man said, "The woman you put here with me--she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."

[13] Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." [NIV]

Can you think of any other ways that we deal with and respond to our own failures (small or large)?

Have you ever seen Proverbs 28:13-14 accurately describe how life works when dealing with sin?

**Proverbs 28:13-14**

He who conceals his sins does not prosper,  
but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

[14] Blessed is the man who always fears the Lord,  
but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble. [NIV]

2. King David is a great example of someone who faced the skeletons in his life. One of these skeletons was an affair he had with a neighbor's wife and a cover-up that included the murder of her husband. What "closet cleaning" steps do you see David taking in Psalm 51:1-17?

**Psalm 51:1-17**

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your unfailing love;  
according to your great compassion  
blot out my transgressions.

[2] Wash away all my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

[3] For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is always before me.

[4] Against you, you only, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are proved right when you speak  
and justified when you judge.

[5] Surely I was sinful at birth,  
sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

- [6] Surely you desire truth in the inner parts;  
you teach me wisdom in the inmost place.
- [7] Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- [8] Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
- [9] Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.
- [10] Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- [11] Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
- [12] Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.
- [13] Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will turn back to you.
- [14] Save me from bloodguilt, O God,  
the God who saves me,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.
- [15] O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- [16] You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it;  
you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.
- [17] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart,  
O God, you will not despise. [NIV]

When it comes to dealing with your own skeletons, is there any part of David's prayer that would be helpful for you to use?

What challenges or benefits can you see from taking the "closet cleaning" advice given to us in James 5:16?

**James 5:16**

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. [NIV]

**TAKING IT HOME**

1. Looking back at this week's teaching and study, is there a part of your story that God might want to use to help others? Can you think of anyone who may need to hear that story?

2. God's grace and forgiveness is possible because of the death and resurrection of His son Jesus. Communion reminds us of this amazing truth. Take a couple minutes to read the following passages and reflect on what was accomplished for you by Jesus' death on the cross.

**Isaiah 53:5-6**

But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,  
and by his wounds we are healed.  
[6] We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
each of us has turned to his own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
the iniquity of us all. [NIV]

**Psalm 103:10-14**

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;  
[14] for he knows how we are formed,  
he remembers that we are dust. [NIV]

**Psalm 32:5**

Then I acknowledged my sin to you  
and did not cover up my iniquity.  
I said, "I will confess  
my transgressions to the Lord"--  
and you forgave  
the guilt of my sin.  
Selah [NIV]

Now read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 and do what Jesus said....remember.

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26**

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." [25] In the same way, after supper he took the

cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." [26] For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. [NIV]