



SESSION ONE

Admitting Need— The Reality Choice

**I REALIZE I'M NOT GOD.
I ADMIT THAT I AM POWERLESS
TO CONTROL MY TENDENCY TO DO
THE WRONG THING AND THAT MY
LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE.**

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor." MATTHEW 5:3 (TEV)

LOOKING AHEAD

Welcome to the *Life's Healing Choices* small group study! If this is the first time you've met as a group, take a few minutes to get to know each other, and share what you are hoping to get out of this study.

KEY VERSE

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor." MATTHEW 5:3 (TEV)



**WATCH THE DVD TOGETHER AND THEN SPLIT UP INTO
GENDER-SPECIFIC GROUPS FOR YOUR DISCUSSION TIME.**

ADMITTING NEED—THE REALITY CHOICE

the Beatitudes

"Happy are those who know they are spiritually poor . . . Happy are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Happy are the meek . . . Happy are the pure in heart . . . Happy are those whose greatest desire is to do what God requires . . . Happy are the merciful . . . Happy are those who work for peace . . . Happy are those who are persecuted because they do what God requires."
(MATTHEW 5:3–10 NIV/TEV)

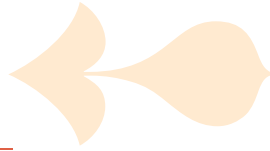
The Root Cause of your Problem: Trying to _____.

How We Play God

- 1 We try to control our _____ by wearing masks, playing games, and hiding the truth about ourselves.
- 2 We try to control _____ by manipulating each other through guilt or shame or praise or even through silence.
- 3 We try to control our _____ by saying things like: "I can handle it; it's not really a problem. I don't need any help. I can quit anytime."
- 4 We try to control our _____ by avoiding it, denying it, escaping it, medicating it, drowning it, or postponing it.

But the first step toward recovery—the first healing choice you have to make—is the Reality Choice, where you realize and accept the fact that you are not God, and you need help from someone much greater than you to overcome your hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

Consequences of Playing God



1

We fear that someone will find out who we really are and reject us.

2

I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to—what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I'm doing is wrong . . . But I can't help myself . . . It is sin inside me that is stronger than I am that makes me do those evil things. (ROMANS 7:15–17 LB)

My dishonesty made me miserable and filled my days with frustration. (PSALM 32:3 LB)

3

My strength evaporated like water on a sunny day until I finally admitted all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide them (PSALM 32:4–5 LB)

4

You'll never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up. Then God will show mercy to you. (PROVERBS 28:13 TEV)

We don't change when we see the light. We change when we feel the heat. God whispers to us in our pleasures, but he shouts to us in our pain. The fact is that if you could solve your problems, you would have done it a long time ago and you wouldn't have them anymore. You can't get fixed until you 'fess up, face your faults, and admit, "I am powerless."

Three Important Facts of Life

1

I am powerless to _____ my past.

2

I am powerless to _____ other people.

3

I am powerless to _____ with my hurts, hang-ups, and habits.

■ Good intentions are not enough. ■ Willpower is not enough. ■ You need another source of power. ■ You need God.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. (JAMES 4:6 NIV)

■ Grace is the power God gives you to make the changes in your life that he wants you to make. How do you get God's grace? There's only one way: God gives it to the humble.

■ What needs to change in your life? Make the Reality Choice today.

Life's Healing Choices Small Group Guidelines

Split up into gender-specific groups for your discussion time and review these *Life's Healing Choices* Small Group Guidelines.

*(IN LATER SESSIONS, LOOK FOR THESE GREEN CIRCLES THAT WILL REFER YOU BACK HERE.)

- 1 Keep your sharing focused on your own thoughts and feelings.
- 2 Each person is free to express feelings without interruption.
- 3 We are here to support one another. We will not attempt to fix one another.
- 4 Privacy and confidentiality are basic requirements. What is shared in the group stays in the group. The only exception is when someone threatens to harm themselves or others.
- 5 All *Life's Healing Choices* small groups are same-sex groups. For further help understanding these guidelines, watch the Session 1 *Helps for Hosts* segment on the DVD and read the notes on Page 44.

SMALL
GROUP
GUIDELINES

Discovery Questions

- 1 We all try to play God by attempting to control our image, other people, our problems, and our pain. Why do you feel the need to be in control? List some ways you try to control your image, your problems, your pain, or other people.

- 2 Read the passage again from Romans 7:15–17. Can you relate to that? Share your experiences with this kind of tension.

- 3 The first healing choice is to admit your powerlessness to change your past, control other people, and to cope with your problems. Which of these do you struggle with the most?

- 4 The Bible says, “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble*” (JAMES 4:6 NIV). Why do you think God “opposes the proud”? What does it mean to humble yourself before God?

- 5 Where are you in learning to trust God? Share honestly with your group and ask for prayer to grow in this process.

>>Living on Purpose: Fellowship

You are not alone on your journey, and the decision to begin this Life’s Healing Choices group study is not an accident. This material will help you find freedom from your life’s hurts, hang-ups, and habits, and your group members can support and encourage you along the way. To best understand what small group life looks like, please take a few minutes to read and review the Purpose Driven Group Guidelines on page 46. Then, commit to coming to each session.

>>Putting It Into Practice

C.S. Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, but he shouts to us in our pain.” That pain can be physical, emotional, relational, or financial. What might God be saying to you through your pain right now? We are all powerless over something. This week, take the first healing choice, and admit to God something you are powerless over.

>>Prayer Direction

Pray for God to give you the willingness and the courage to admit where you are powerless.

>>Diving Deeper

READ THE INTRO and chapter 1 of *Life’s Healing Choices*, and be ready to share your thoughts in your next session. Pay particular attention to the stories from Elaine and Joe at the end of the chapter.

