

Growing Deeper
Riding the Air – Part II

Week Three - *Turning Yourself In*
Psalm 32:1-5

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Psalm 32 is attributed to David, the Old Testament King. Read Psalm 32:1-5. From what you know of David, what might have caused him to write this psalm? (See also 1 Samuel 11 and Psalm 51.)
2. Some Bibles title this psalm “The Joy of Forgiveness.” Another calls it “The Testimony of a Forgiven Sinner.” Describe the emotions you perceive in these verses. What is David declaring as true?
3. Let’s focus on verse 1. Read it aloud. How would you define “blessed”?
4. Blessing in the Old Testament means, “to be given a rich and abundant life.” How do you think confessing your sin to God could bring richness and abundance to your life?
5. End your FIFTEEN listening to God. Ask him to reveal how he wants to bless you today.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. Read Psalm 32:1-2. In Hebrew, this Psalm of Thanksgiving uses three nouns to denote sin and three ways God deals with it. What words does your Bible use for these?
7. The NIV Bible uses the words “transgressions,” “sin,” and “iniquity.” “Transgressions” refers to rebellion against God’s authority. This rebellion has been forgiven with the sense of being “lifted up” and “carried away” like a burden. What does rebellion against God look like in your life? How does it burden you?
8. The two words translated as “iniquity” convey a failure to keep God’s law and a crookedness or deviation from the right path. Who suffers when we turn away from God’s guidance?
9. Verse 2 declares that David’s failure to keep God’s law has been “blotted out” from the sight of the divine Judge and his crookedness is no longer counted against him; the debt has been cancelled. What is left of David’s sin in the sight of God?
10. What occurred to bring this relief and reconciliation?

11. There is no deceit because David has been honest with himself and with God. How honest are you with God? How honest with yourself?
12. End your FIFTEEN asking God for courage to be honest with yourself and with him.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Three

13. Read Psalm 32:1-5. Focus on verse 3. What are your secret sins?
14. Have you ever kept a sin to yourself and told no one, including God? Why?
15. What are you afraid could happen if these sins are revealed? How do you expect God to react if you “reveal” your sin to him?
16. How did keeping this secret benefit you? How did it damage? What were you longing for?
17. Have you ever experienced physical consequences for unconfessed sin? Emotional? Mental? Spiritual? How did that feel?
18. Think about your current struggles. Could any part of them be related to unconfessed sin? Ask God for courage, honesty, and discernment to see your sin and admit it to him.
19. End your FIFTEEN by reading Psalm 51 as a prayer to God. Consider naming any unconfessed sin God has revealed in place of the words “transgressions” and “sin” in the psalm.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Four

20. Read Psalm 32:1-5. Why do you think David says God is responsible for his heaviness and weakness? Why do you think God would do this?
21. How would you define confession?
22. What are the risks of confession?
23. How is confession counterintuitive?

24. Some define confession as agreeing with God. Do you think God wants us to agree with him for his benefit or ours? Why?
25. What characteristics of God come to mind when you think about confessing? What characteristics of God should encourage you to be more open with him?
26. Read Psalm 103. Meditate on the characteristics of God in this psalm. Then end your FIFTEEN with a time of honest conversation with God.

Spend FIFTEEN: Day Five

27. Read Psalm 32:1-5. Reread verse 5. How is God able to forgive sin? Does God just pretend it never happened? Would God be perfectly just if he did?
28. Now read 1 John 1:5-9. What makes forgiveness of sin possible?
29. What is the one thing that makes forgiveness impossible?
30. Forgiveness is a gift, paid for by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. To open the gift, you need to admit you need it. Why is that so hard?
31. From Psalm 32 and 1 John 1, what is the impact of confession and forgiveness once we embrace it?
32. The Message Bible translates verse 5 this way, “Then I let it all out; I said, ‘I’ll make a clean breast of my failures to God.’ Suddenly the pressure was gone – my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared.” The only way to free yourself from the corrosive power of “secret sins” is to do the scariest thing ever...admit it. But therein lies the promise of relief, forgiveness, and freedom. Spend some time in confession. End your FIFTEEN in thanksgiving for the relief, forgiveness, and freedom guaranteed by Jesus Christ.

Week Four - *Steering into the Skid*

Psalm 46:1-11

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. To begin your week, read Psalm 46:1-11. Verse 1 says, “God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” What does ever-present mean to you?
2. Is it hard to understand or comprehend that God really is ever-present?
3. What does it mean to *you* that God is our refuge and strength?
4. We often don’t truly live as if God is our one refuge and strength. Do you? Why do you think we have such a hard time living this way?
5. To finish your FIFTEEN for today, spend some time in prayer, thanking God for his ever-present love and protection. Ask him to help you better appreciate and better trust in his care.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

6. To begin your FIFTEEN for today, read Psalm 46:1-11. Did anything new or different stick out to you today? If so, what?
7. Have you ever felt like the earth was giving way and the mountains were falling into the sea? When was the last time you felt that way? Did you feel afraid?
8. When change comes, when chaos happens, when trouble arises, how do you typically respond? Do you fight it? Do you embrace it? Do you try to control what you still can?
9. How has this response worked for you in the past? How is it working for you now?
10. Before finishing your FIFTEEN for today, ask God to help you better handle change and stress in your life. Ask him to help you rely more fully on him and respond to chaos in your life as he would want you to.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

11. To begin your FIFTEEN for today, read Psalm 46:1-11 again. What do you think verse 6 means when it says, “He (God) lifts His voice, the earth melts”?

12. Look at verse 7 again. How does this make you feel? Do you really *believe* it? Do you *trust* in it?

13. Admittedly, it's hard to always keep in mind, but those words in verse 7 *should* give us comfort and peace and safety. What can you do to keep them in mind?

14. Take some time to recall even just a few of the *many* stories in the Bible that show God's ever-present love and care for his people. Think about Noah and how he and his family were cared for during the flood. Think about Joseph when he was sold into slavery. Or think about Daniel in the lions' den. We could go on and on with stories like this. Which stories bring you the most comfort and why?

15. Before ending your FIFTEEN, spend some time recalling more of those stories from all over when it looked like everything was out of control, but God was right there. Thank God for his constant presence in our lives.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

16. Psalm 46:10 says, "Be still, and know that I am God." What does it mean to you to be still before God?

17. Do you ever take time to just be still before God, meditating on his goodness, mercy, and love?

18. If so, how do you feel after?

19. Do you find it easy to just stop and be still before God? Why or why not?

20. Does our culture and world make it easy to just stop, rest, and be still?

21. Finish your FIFTEEN for today with some prayer time. Ask God to help you spend more time being still, just listening to him and quietly relying on his strength and provision.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

22. To begin your final FIFTEEN for the week, read Psalm 46:1-11 one more time. Did anything new or different stick out to you today? If so, what?

23. Verse 11 says, "The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress." Does that sound familiar? Why do you think these words are repeated twice in this passage?

24. What have these verses taught you this week about how to handle change and stress?

25. Does it make sense that being still and not trying to control things would help when adversity comes? Is being still something that comes easy for you? Why or why not?

26. End your FIFTEEN by asking God to remind you of his ever-constant presence and to help you better give up control of your cares and worries to him. Then, throughout the day and the rest of the weekend, try to be intentional about being still and spending some time with God.

Week Five - *Falling Upward*

Luke 22:31-34

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Think about a time when you've been tested to your limits and you were tempted to quit at something. What helped you push through the temptation?
2. Author Simon Sinek says that one of the ways we overcome failure is by having a "just cause." What are some historical "just causes" that people have fought for?
3. Read Luke 22:31-34. What warning does Jesus give to Peter?
4. What "just cause" was Peter willing to die for?
5. Spoiler alert: Peter didn't die for Jesus that day. Jesus' prediction came true. How did Peter's failure affect his future success? (If you need help, turn to Acts 3:1-12.)
6. What about your relationship with Jesus can provide you a "just cause" that will make even failures worth overcoming?
7. Conclude your FIFTEEN in prayer by asking God to remind you what makes his cause worth everything—including overcoming our own failures.

Spend FIFTEEN – DAY TWO

8. Who do you think tends to succeed more: individuals or teams? Why?
9. Author Simon Sinek says that the "infinite game" of business, war, or life can only be won by being a part of a team you can trust. Who are people in your life that you would trust even if you failed drastically?
10. Read Luke 22:31-34. What team did Peter have around him?
11. Jesus seemed to take Peter's upcoming failure as a given. But what purpose did Jesus give to Peter for after he'd repented?
12. How would Peter's failure have affected his future ability to lead the disciples?

13. How can your own failures be used to strengthen those around you, instead of just disqualifying you from leadership?
14. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to show you how to lead from brokenness and failure, and not just competence and success.

Spend FIFTEEN – DAY THREE

15. Is comparing yourself to others helpful to your own personal growth or not? Why do you think so?
16. Look at Luke 22:24-34. What question were the disciples arguing about?
17. What comparison did Peter make to elevate himself at the end of this passage?
18. All the disciples would abandon Jesus that day, but only Peter would actively deny him. By that measure, Peter was worse than the others. Would comparison have been a helpful motivator for Peter, do you think? (For help, read Luke 22:61-62.)
19. Now read John 21:20-22. Peter was still trying to compare, but what was the only thing Jesus cared about?
20. Peter ultimately overcame his denial, to become a better follower than he had been before. What is one metric that you can track that will help you be a better follower of Jesus than you were the day before?
21. Conclude your FIFTEEN by praying for God's Holy Spirit to help you follow Jesus more closely.

Spend FIFTEEN – DAY FOUR

22. What trait separates courageous people from ordinary humans?
23. Read John 18:10-11. What courageous act did Peter commit?
24. What was Jesus' opinion of Peter's violence?
25. Read Luke 22:31-34. What did Jesus pray wouldn't fail for Peter?

26. How does faith help people to courageously overcome failures?
27. What failure in your own life would you like to overcome with faith?
28. Submit that failure to God. Then conclude your FIFTEEN by praying like Jesus, so that your faith will remain strong enough to overcome any earthly failing.

Spend FIFTEEN – DAY FIVE

29. What is it that truly defines you? What are your personal markers of success or identity? Is it relationships? Achievements? Reputation?
30. Read Luke 22:31-34. What about himself did Peter put stock in?
31. If you were to lose the things that made up your identity, your success, how do you think you would respond?
32. Now look at John 21:1-3. After his failure as a disciple, what identity did Peter return to?
33. Read John 21:15-19. What new identity did Jesus give to Peter after his failure?
34. What identity from God would transcend the worst failure that you could have? The loss of career, family, health, or reputation?
35. As you finish your final FIFTEEN this week, ask God to “lock you in” to the names he has given you: identities that cannot be “failed” because they rely on God’s actions and not your own.