

Growing Deeper
Where is God When...

Week Four: When I Fall Short?
Psalm 38

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Read Psalm 38. How would you describe David's present situation?
2. Look again at the first two verses. How would you describe David's relationship with the Lord at this moment?
3. What's the difference between "discipline" and punishment? Does God punish believers for their sin?
4. Read Hebrews 12:5-11. What's the stated reason for God's discipline in the life of a believer?
5. Consider Hebrews 12:10-11. What's the hoped-for outcome of proper discipline?
6. Were you disciplined as a child? If so, what was the most common form of discipline you experienced? What effect did it have on you?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for all of the parents in your life to know the difference between punishment and discipline and to be motivated by love.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. In Psalm 38 and other psalms, David actually had a physical reaction to God's discipline. Look at Psalm 38:2-8. To what human experience(s) did David compare God's discipline?
9. We often say, "We are just sick about what happened." How can regret make a person feel sick?
10. According to Psalm 38:9, did David believe that God understood his regret? How would you define sincere repentance?
11. Besides his relationship with God, according to verse 11 who else was impacted by David's failure?
12. Can you remember a time when your behavior caused heartache for your family and friends? How did you work through the disappointment?

13. Not everyone was upset by David's failure. According to Psalm 38:12 &19, who was happy to see David at odds with God and his family?

14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for the grace to always be quick and ready to forgive family and friends who have offended you.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. What was David's only hope of recovery from his failure in Psalm 38:15?

16. Read Psalm 130. What gave David reason to believe God would forgive his sin? (see verse 7)

17. What's the word that defines undeserved forgiveness?

18. Why should Christians have special confidence in God's willingness to extend forgiveness? See Philippians 3:8-9 for Paul's answer.

19. Do you find it easier to forgive others or forgive yourself? Explain.

20. How important is forgiveness? How would you describe the effects of guilt or shame on a person? What about bitterness over a past wrong? Again, how important is forgiveness?

21. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for God to grant complete remission of your sin, including relief from any lasting guilt or shame.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. There is an old saying, "If God seems far away, guess who moved?" What does that mean?

23. Read Psalm 38:21. Do you believe God distanced Himself from David or did David's sin (like Adam and Eve) cause him to keep his distance from God?

24. Read James 4:8-10. If God seems far away, what does the Bible say we should do about it?

25. How important is confession and absolution to you?

26. What sins should we confess to God? What sins should we confess to those we have offended? What sins should we confess to a spiritual mentor?
27. What can you do to create a safe place for a friend or fellow Christian to bring their burdens to your attention for prayer and help?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more gracious in both word and actions to those troubled by sin.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. David said in Psalm 38:4 that his sin had “gone over his head.” What do you think he meant by that?
30. Have you ever been caught up in an addictive or chronic behavior that no matter how hard you tried you could not overcome? Explain.
31. Most twelve-step programs are designed to help people ‘over their head’ in a behavior they can no longer control. Have you ever heard the steps that have helped so many? If not, do a quick internet search for them. Why do you think that concept has proven so effective?
32. Read Matthew 18:15-20. Outline the steps explained in these verses to help a fellow Christian who has succumbed to sin.
33. Some have said the last step in church discipline is the removal of the sinner from the body of Christ. Is that the goal of church discipline? If not, what would you say is the last step?
34. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be useful in the hands of the Lord to help others restore their relationships with others and with the Lord. Pray also for your heart to be open to the care and keeping of others.