

In 2 Cro 12:9 Paul reminds us that rather than condemnation for our weakness, Jesus offers us His grace and power. God's invitation is to integrate, not to ignore the areas where we fail. To process, own, and bring before Jesus the weakest areas of our lives so we might encounter the good news of Jesus.

What if we brought our interior life before God believing he can know our heart, emotions, and motives better than we can, and that He wants to reveal truth and reality of our thoughts and emotions to us?

Pause now for a moment to pray and invite God to show you the areas you have kept hidden below the surface. Ask Him to guide you and give you grace and strength to allow Him access to correct and to heal the hurt that surrounds that area of your heart.

WRAP-UP

God invites you into His presence, welcoming all of who you are, while the enemy seeks to keep you distant and superficial. God offers a private, intimate, and sacred space where you can truly be yourself. Going beneath the surface means becoming aware of your feelings and actions, questioning the why or motivation behind them. Linking yourself to the Gospel helps you find meaning and purpose, while shedding the need for perfect, polished images. The interior life can be messy, but God's grace is more than sufficient to meet you there.

MEMORY VERSE

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. 24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. - Psalm 139:23-24 NLT

Challenge –

This week be aware of your disproportionate responses to “hot button issues” that lie beneath the surface. Allow God to reveal the source of your emotions and guide you in a better way of dealing with them.

Search All of Me Beneath the Surface - Week 1

INTRODUCTION

Our new series is going to push us to peer below the surface of our public image and take an honest look at what we have been unwilling to deal with in our lives. It challenges us to get real with ourselves, and that can be uncomfortable. Nobody likes to admit where they fail to meet God's standards, but God invites us to move closer to Him and trust that He knows our hearts even better than we do. He invites us to believe that when He reveals the truth that lies beneath the surface He will lead us in a better way to live.

Ice Breaker

When someone says, “Hi, how have you been?” do you always say, “Fine, how about you?” or do you give them the details of how you’ve really been?

Key Passages

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STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Taking an Honest Look in the Mirror

In Psalm 139 David invites God's discerning gaze. God has a clear and unobscured view of our hearts, perhaps more so than we do. When it comes to acknowledging our shortfalls, we might be unable or unwilling to recognize how we feel about them and why we feel that way, but God knows the truth.

24 Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life. - Psalm 139:24 NLT

In verse 24 David asks God to show him where he is headed in the wrong direction. The phrase there in Hebrew is a *ōṣeḇ dereḵ* or offensive way. This phrase is also translated as a harmful, wicked, grievous, or idolatrous path. So, David needed God to point out where he had stepped out of bounds.

Whenever you are willing to make a change to get back in step with God, you can ask Him to show you where you have taken the wrong path. But this requires taking an honest look in the mirror with humility and repentance. What do you think is the biggest obstacle to doing this - fear, guilt, shame, pride, or something else? What do we need to remember about the character of God to give us the courage to do this?

12 For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13 Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- Hebrews 4:12-13 NIV

How do you feel about the realization that you are fully known by God? What do you imagine God's response would be if you confess your hidden or unacknowledged sin? If He already knows about it, why do you think you need to confess those sins to Him?

2. The Samaritan Woman

The urge to shield ourselves from pain is powerful. So, we may want to hide or deny anything that might hurt us. Sometimes we even lie to ourselves, thinking “it isn’t a big deal”, that’s not really important” or “God doesn’t care about that”. When, in reality, those things we have pushed below the surface are festering and troubling us so that they bubble up in unexpected or inappropriate responses, as we find in Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well.

As Jesus was traveling to Jerusalem He passed through Samaria and there He had an encounter with a woman with hidden areas in her life.

7 When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" ... 9 The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10 Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." - John 4:7, 9-10 NIV

Jesus asked for a drink, but a painful issue surfaced when the woman replied. What did her response reveal about a source of pain in her life? If you've ever felt rejected or discriminated against you know how this woman felt. How would you characterize Jesus' reply to her?

As their conversation continues the woman is skeptical of Jesus (*Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob,*) But the Jesus gives her an opportunity to disclose what she has hidden.

16 He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back." 17 "I have no husband," she replied. Jesus said to her, "You are right (kalōs) when you say you have no husband. 18 The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true (alēthēs)." - John 4:16-18 NIV

It is interesting to note that in verse 17 Jesus says she is “right (*kalōs*)” a word that can also be translated as beautifully, truly, nobly, commendably, or honorably. And that in verse 18, He says that she has spoken truth (*alēthēs*) or literally *something not hidden, unconcealed*.

How do you think she felt hearing those words, kalōs and alēthēs spoken about her as she revealed what was below the surface in her life?

As a Samaritan this woman was despised by Jews, and as an unmarried woman living with so many men, she would also be rejected by other Samaritans. But as she reveals her painful truth, Jesus gently commends and corrects her and offers her a gracious gift; eternal life. He provides a safe, private and intimate place to be restored.

3. Counterintuitive

For most of us being searched by God can be a frightening thought. Even if we know nothing is hidden from God, it is very difficult to imagine inviting Him to have a face-to-face discussion about some areas we'd like to hide.

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

- 2 Corinthians 12:9 NIV