

No Other God Like Yahweh Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To discuss how God's forgiveness frees us to confess our sins honestly.

Sermon Refresher: This week, Keith showed how no other God is like Yahweh, because Yahweh is the only God who forgives our sins.

Icebreaker: What's something that annoys you about other people that you wish *didn't* annoy you?

Transition: Annoying someone else might embarrass us or even make us feel guilty or ashamed. But we can usually move on. Some forms of guilt, however, are harder to shake. In fact, despite our culture's denial of moral absolutes, we all have areas in our life where we feel guilt for not measuring up. Keith said this is because we worship "other gods" like success, who never forgive us for falling short of their standards. Let's look at some of these unforgiving "other gods" more carefully

Discussion:

1. Spend time thinking through each following "other gods."

Success. What does success demand from us? What kind of emotions do we experience when we fall short of those demands (anxiety, anger, shame, etc.)?

Family. What does family demand from us? What kind of emotions do we experience when we fall short of those demands (anxiety, anger, shame, etc.)?

Relationships. What do relationships demand from us? What kind of emotions do we experience when we fall short those demands (anxiety, anger, shame, etc.)?

Reputation & appearance. What do reputation and appearance demand from us? What kind of emotions do we experience when we fall short those demands (anxiety, anger, shame, etc.)?

2. Read Micah 7:18-20

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Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Which of these our images most captures your imagination? Why? Which do you have the hardest time believing? Why?

3. Read 1 John 1:8-10.

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If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

John warns us against hiding and denying our sin. Why are we tempted to *hide* our sin from ourselves, others and God? Why are we tempted to *deny* our sins to ourselves, others, and God?

4. John says that if we confess our sins, God is "faithful and just and will forgive us our sins." How does a *deep* assurance of God's forgiveness free us to be honest about sins and confess them?

5. Read James 5:16

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Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

Confessing to God is difficult, but confession to others can be even more difficult. Why is confessing to others challenging? Why do you think James *commanded* us to confess our sins to one another?

Prayer: Take a few minutes to quietly reflect on your own life in silent prayer. As you pray, ask and answer these questions in your heart:

What are the areas of sin that you've kept hidden from yourself and others? What are the areas of sin that you've denied to yourself and others? What are the sins you fear God will not forgive you for? Jesus' death has secured your absolute, total, everlasting forgiveness, so now confess your sins to God. Who is someone God might be calling you to share your sin with? Ask God for strength to share with that person.