

# Small Group Guide



## Small Group Guide: Living in Light and Community

Based on James 5:12-18

### Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by inviting God into your conversation and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

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### Icebreaker

Share a time when someone kept their word to you in a meaningful way, or when you failed to keep a commitment. How did that impact the relationship?

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### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **Words Matter** - Our yes should be yes and our no should be no. Christians are called to be people of integrity whose words carry weight.
  2. **Stop Talking to Yourself, Start Talking to God** - Prayer isn't adding another activity; it's shifting our conversation partner from ourselves to God.
  3. **Move from Isolation to Transparency** - We're designed for community. Living in isolation is like running a car on Kool-Aid—it doesn't work.
  4. **Sin Grows in Darkness** - Confession brings sin into the light where healing happens and Satan loses his power to shame and condemn.
  5. **Nobody Walks Alone** - The church should be a place where nobody suffers alone, celebrates alone, or heals alone.
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## Discussion Questions

### Part 1: The Weight of Our Words (James 5:12)

1. **Read James 5:12.** Why do you think James begins this section with "above all" when talking about our words?
2. Jeff confessed to lying about calling someone at a specific time. What are the "small" or "excusable" lies you're most prone to? (Examples: "I'll pray for you" when you don't, "I'm fine" when you're not, committing to things you can't follow through on)
3. How does understanding that our words have weight change the way we speak in everyday situations—at work, at home, or in church?
4. **Practical Challenge:** What is one specific area where you need the Holy Spirit's help to let your yes be yes and your no be no?

### Part 2: Constant Conversation with God (James 5:13)

5. **Read James 5:13.** What does it look like practically to "stop talking to yourself and start talking to God"?
6. When are you most likely to talk to yourself rather than to God? (Examples: when worried, when celebrating, when making decisions, when hurt)
7. The sermon mentioned that "any circumstance of my life looks different when I acknowledge God is in the room." Can someone share an example of when this has been true in your life?
8. **Reflection:** What would change in your daily life if you truly lived in constant conversation with God?

### Part 3: Prayer for Healing (James 5:14-15)

9. **Read James 5:14-15.** What stands out to you in these verses? What questions do they raise for you?
10. Why do you think the sick person is called to take the initiative and call for prayer rather than waiting for others to come to them?
11. Have you ever asked spiritually mature people to pray for you when you were sick (physically, emotionally, or spiritually)? If so, what was that experience like? If not, what has held you back?
12. How do we balance trusting God for healing while also acknowledging that healing doesn't always come immediately or in the way we expect?

### Part 4: Confession and Community (James 5:16)

13. **Read James 5:16.** Why do you think confessing our sins to one another is so connected to healing?
  14. The sermon said, "Sin grows deep roots in the darkness." How have you seen this to be true—either in your own life or in observing others?
  15. What fears or obstacles keep us from confessing our sins to other believers? (Examples: shame, fear of judgment, past betrayals, pride)
  16. The voice that tells us not to trust, share, or confess "is not the voice of God, but the voice of the enemy." How can we distinguish between wisdom/discernment and the enemy's voice keeping us in darkness?
  17. **Important Discussion:** What does healthy, biblical confession look like? Who should we confess to, and what boundaries are appropriate?
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## Personal Reflection Questions

*(Allow 3-5 minutes of silence for individual reflection)*

- Is there something in your life right now that's living in darkness that needs to be brought into the light?
  - Who in your life knows you well enough to pray for you specifically?
  - Are you living in isolation in any area of your life right now?
  - What is one conversation you need to shift from yourself to God this week?
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## Practical Applications

### This Week's Challenges (Choose 1-2):

1. **Practice Constant Conversation with God**
  - For one day this week, intentionally shift your self-talk to God-talk. Every time you catch yourself in internal conversation, acknowledge God's presence and include Him.
2. **Take Initiative in Prayer**
  - If you're experiencing any kind of sickness or weakness (physical, emotional, spiritual), take the initiative to ask someone spiritually mature to pray for you this week.
3. **Bring Something into the Light**
  - Identify one area of struggle or sin that you've been keeping in the darkness. Prayerfully choose a trusted, mature believer and confess it to them this week.
4. **Guard Your Words**

- Pay attention to the commitments you make this week. Before saying "yes" to something, pause and consider whether you can truly follow through. Practice saying "no" when needed.
5. **Be Available for Others**
- Let someone in your group know that you're available to pray for them or listen to them this week. Make yourself accessible for community.
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## Group Commitment

### Creating Safe Space for Confession:

As a group, discuss and commit to the following:

- What is shared in this group stays in this group (confidentiality)
  - We will respond to confession with grace, not judgment
  - We will pray for one another regularly
  - We will check in on one another between meetings
  - We will celebrate growth and progress together
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## Prayer Time

### Guided Prayer Focus:

1. **Praise:** Thank God for being a God who heals and for designing us for community.
  2. **Confession:** Take time for silent confession, acknowledging areas where you've been hiding or walking alone.
  3. **Intercession:** Pray for one another—especially for anyone who shared a struggle or need during discussion.
  4. **Petition:** Ask the Holy Spirit to give your group courage to live in the light and to be people whose words carry weight.
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## Closing Encouragement

Remember: "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16). You don't have to be perfect to pray powerfully—you just need to be in relationship with God. And you don't have to walk alone. God designed you for community, and healing happens when we bring our lives into the light together.

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## **For Next Week**

- Read James 5:19-20 in preparation for next week's discussion
- Follow through on at least one practical application you committed to
- Check in with at least one group member during the week