

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

OVER UNDER SIDEWAYS DOWN, week starting 02.26.2023

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Matthew 23:27-28 "You hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."

1 Samuel 16:7 The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Psalms 34:18 The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

Luke 7:36-50 (*full story*)

Romans 3:23 All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Psalms 147:3 He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Isaiah 53:5 He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

Jeremiah 18:1-6 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: "Go down at once to the potter's house; there I will reveal My words to you." So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was, working away at the wheel. But the jar that he was making from the clay became flawed in the potter's hand, so he made it into another jar, as it seemed right for him to do. The word of the Lord came to me: "House of Israel, can I not treat you as this potter treats his clay?"—this is the Lord's declaration. "Just like clay in the potter's hand, so are you in My hand, house of Israel."

2 Corinthians 12:9 But He said to me, "My grace—My favor and loving-kindness and mercy are more than enough for you—always available, regardless of the situation, for My strength and power are made perfect, as in fulfilled and completed, and show themselves most effective in your weakness." Therefore, I will all the more gladly boast in my weaknesses and infirmities, that the strength and power of Christ the Messiah may rest—yes, may pitch a tent over and dwell upon me!

QUESTIONS:

1. Share some idiom, "fact" or 'way of operating' that you grew up thinking or believing... only to discover later it wasn't really true, or wasn't the best way to do things.
2. Read the 1 Samuel verse above. Confession time: share one area where you tend to make judgments based on the outward appearance (even if you know you shouldn't)?
3. This woman with a reputation came to the home of a Pharisee to see Jesus—to say she was unwelcome and out of place is a gross understatement—and she *knew* that going in. Do you have a story where you knew you'd be out of place or unwelcome, but you were determined and went anyway?
4. Author William McDonald writes: "Usually when something is broken, its value declines or disappears altogether. Broken dishes, broken bottles, broken mirrors are generally scrapped. Even a crack in furniture or a tear in cloth greatly reduced its resale value. But it isn't that way in the spiritual realm. God puts a premium on broken things—especially broken people." What are your thoughts on this idea?
5. Churches often have a reputation of places where certain types of people are unwelcome or unwanted. What types of people come to mind who you think get that treatment?
6. Jesus says in this story "I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little" ... and He then says "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." How does this scene sit with you? What does it make you think about in yourself?
7. "Most of us are one paycheck, one divorce, one drug-addicted kid, one mental health diagnosis, one serious illness, one sexual assault, one drinking binge, one episode of unchecked rage, or one affair from being 'those people'— the ones we don't trust, the ones we pity, the ones we don't let our children play with, the ones bad things happen to, the ones we don't want living next door. We ARE those people." How do you respond to this?