

# SAINTS & STRUGGLES

P E R M I S S I O N T O B E H O N E S T



## WEEK 1 | GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### CONNECT

This week, the sermon was about how to handle our struggles. Dictionary.com adds new words and sayings every year to define things that are new or now common in our culture. They recently added the expression “[struggle bus](#)” to their list of definitions, which is “a situation or task that seems especially difficult or frustrating”. Here are some other recently added words or expressions:

- [Cancel Culture](#) - The practice of withdrawing support from public figures or companies.
- [Cheat Day](#) - A day in which a person goes off a dietary regimen.
- [Dad Joke](#) - A joke that is regarded as weak or corny.
- [Flex](#) - An act of bragging or showing off.
- [Hangry](#) - Feeling irritable as a result of being hungry (combination of hungry and angry)
- [Throw Shade](#) - To insult or disrespect a person or thing in an indirect manner.
- [Metaverse](#) - The world of computer simulations in which people are digital avatars.

**Which of the new terms mentioned above is most likely to put you on the “struggle bus”?**

### CONSIDER

**What encouraged or challenged you from the sermon and/or daily devotions this week?**

### CHRIST

- Sometimes, some of our greatest struggles come when we can’t forgive ourselves for something we’ve done. It could be something we’ve done or said to someone that was hurtful. It could be a missed opportunity that you’ve squandered. Maybe, it was or is a sinful activity or action that you cannot seem to let go of. However, God’s forgiveness is always available to us when we sincerely and humbly come to Him. **What are some practices we can put in place to prevent ourselves from the destructive patterns of unforgiveness we have not extended to ourselves?**

**Read John 21:1-6**

- As is often the case, in just six verses, there is enough wisdom for a lifetime. We see the resurrected Christ appearing to his disciples once again. This time, Jesus meets them where they are; at work, fishing to provide for their practical needs. We also see Jesus meeting them in their struggles. The fishing was so unfruitful

that they continued to work through the night only to come up empty once again. But then Jesus shows up and when the disciples followed his simple yet specific instructions, they struggled no longer. **What is the lesson for us in this story as it relates to our struggles? What are we to make out of the result of going from absolutely no fish to a haul so large they could not even drag the net into shore?**

### Read John 21:15-25 (NIV)

- In an interesting exchange between Jesus and Peter, Jesus asked Peter three times, “do you love me”? After receiving Peter’s answer three times, Jesus then gives Peter two simple and direct instructions saying, (if you love me) then “*feed my sheep*” (vs. 17) and “*follow me*” (vs. 19). Peter then, seeing another following them who was “the disciple whom Jesus loved” asks “*what about him*” (vs. 21). Jesus replies, “*what is that to you?*” (vs. 23). The final verse of this exchange and this book of the Bible says:

- “*Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.*”

**Is the Christian life really this simple? Love Jesus? Feed His sheep? Follow Him? Don’t be jealous of others? In what ways do we overcomplicate our Christian life?**

- Part of forgiving ourselves involves understanding God’s ability to forgive us, understanding that there is no sin too big for God’s mercy and grace. While it may be difficult to discuss in a group setting some things you may have done that you are struggling to forgive yourself for, you may be able to discuss that same process being lived out by someone else you may know. Of course, if you are talking about someone else, it may be prudent to leave the names out to protect their privacy. As much as you are comfortable, discuss the following:

- **I am struggling with forgiving myself for \_\_\_\_\_ for some time now.**
- **I’ve seen \_\_\_\_\_ struggle to forgive themselves for \_\_\_\_\_ and this is how it affected them adversely \_\_\_\_\_.**

### CALLING

- “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*”  
**(2 Corinthians 5:17-18 ESV)**

Dealing with our struggles and even our own ability to forgive ourselves for past indiscretions involves understanding the process by which God, through Christ, has reconciled us to himself and how that has given us a “**ministry of reconciliation.**” This ministry involves us being willing to share the Gospel; the good news of what God has done for us and letting people know that forgiveness of sin is available to all of us in the person of Jesus Christ. **Commit yourself to living out your calling by sharing this good news with others.**

- **Daily Devotions:** Read and engage with the Saints & Struggles Daily Devotions. Text “DEVOS” to 81212 to have them texted to you each morning at 7:00AM or tap on Study in Northside’s App to find the Daily Devotions.

- **Further Study & Reflection: Read these scriptures:**

- **1 John 1:9**
- **Espesians 4:32**
- **1 Corinthians 15:3-8**

- **Memorize:** “*Cast all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*” **1 Peter 5:7 (ESV)**