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KNOWING GOD 3

3

God's Forgiveness

ASSIGNMENTS

- **MISSION** – Your JG should be preparing for the upcoming service project.

EXERCISES

- Review memory verse of the week.

DISCUSSIONS

- **TRUTH** – You should try to emphasize these points:
 - Forgiveness is an expression of God's love for His people.
 - Spiritual maturity depends on acknowledging the destructive and pervasive nature of sin.
 - Experiencing forgiveness depends on acknowledging the seriousness of one's own sins.
 - God offers forgiveness on the condition of confession/repentance.
 - God offers forgiveness on the basis of Christ's finished work on the cross and His continued advocacy on our behalf. Christ doesn't plead our innocence. He pleads His work as grounds for our acquittal.
 - Unconfessed sin erects a dangerous barrier to one's fellowship with God.
- **TRUTH** – In pursuit of the goal of emphasizing the Holy Spirit's relevance to Christian living, you can discuss the **TO SUMMARIZE** section and any of the **IN BIBLE** questions. Here are some tips:
 - **EXODUS 33:12-34:7** – This passage reveals that God is both merciful and just, and that forgiveness is an expression of His covenant love for His people. Further, 33:19 shows us that He is absolutely sovereign in the administration of His mercy and justice. He is completely free of obligation to show mercy to anyone. God's revelation of Himself to Moses was also designed to impress upon him that God *loves* to show mercy to His people, and yet He does not treat sin lightly. God wants His people to know both the seriousness of sin that makes forgiveness costly, and His delight in showing mercy that makes forgiveness priceless.

- **PSALM 32:1-5** – The third question here is designed to help your JG members begin to apply this passage to their own lives. You could use this question during the accountability time if you wish.
- **LUKE 5:1-11** – In this passage Peter was confronted by Christ's divinity. He became aware of Jesus' sovereignty and holiness, and this made him acutely aware of his own sin. You can illustrate this event with an analogy of shadows cast by the sun. When clouds dim the sun, objects like trees and houses cast dim shadows. But a cloudless sky creates shadows that are revealed in stark contrast. When Jesus unveiled His deity, Peter's sin stood out in stark contrast to His holy light. You should make the point that we, like Peter, are often unaware of how great and serious our sin really is.
- **1 JOHN 1:5-22** – From John's use of the phrase, "*If we claim...*" we can deduce that Gnosticism had spawned three false beliefs:
 1. Habitual breaking of God's law does not break one's fellowship with God.
 2. It is possible to have one's sin nature completely removed.
 3. It is possible to live completely without sinning.
- In response, John emphasized that sin is destructive to one's fellowship with God and universally affects all people without exception. John wanted his readers to understand the seriousness of their own sin so that they would confess them to God and place their hope firmly in Christ alone, their propitiation and advocate. You may want to elaborate on the word "*propitiation*" in 1 John 2:2. Propitiation (translated "*atoning sacrifice*" in the NIV) means a *sacrifice that removes wrath*. The point is that God is angry at sin. He hates it. But Christ our propitiation, fully satisfied God's justice, removing wrath so that we can be at peace with God. (See also Romans 4:25-5:2).
- **EQUIPPING** – The biblical truth about sin and forgiveness may correct the thinking of some of your JG members who either tend to minimize their sin, or minimize God's willingness to forgive. Invite a few people in your JG to share the thoughts they wrote down.
- **ACCOUNTABILITY** – Allow time for smaller groups of two or three to ask accountability questions and pray for one another.
- **MISSION** – Continue planning and discussing your upcoming mission service project. It is vital that you emphasize the purpose of this project as an exercise in developing a missional life. Discuss the gospel as the motivation for living a missional life and how that applies to your service project.