



breakthroughs

**finding freedom and true
fulfillment in jesus**

Lesson 4: Little Gods

We've completed 3 weeks of Breakthroughs together. Let me just begin this week's lesson by saying that I am so proud of you! The path that you stepped onto leads to healing, freedom and abundant life, but it is not an easy path. Do you recall the lesson about the wide and narrow gate? The narrow gate leads to life but it requires help. The wide gate is easy and leads to destruction. I think we could agree that we don't need a lot of help to reap destruction in our lives. We certainly have things that cause us pain and people who hurt us, but we can generally find a way to be destructive without help from others. As you continue to walk the path that is opened by the narrow gate, I pray that you are walking it with others. We need the support, encouragement and prayers of others who are traveling similar paths.

We learned last week that in order for us to step towards God, we need to:

- 1) Trust that He will help us.
- 2) Acknowledge that we need His help.

In order for us to trust that God will help us, what do we need to believe?

Hopefully your answer included that we need to believe that God loves us and that He wants to help us. Choosing to trust God to help us will become a way of life. It is something that we will learn to do on a daily basis. Each time we ask God for help we are training ourselves to rely upon Him. We are learning how to have a deeply personal relationship with God that will be life changing.

In addition to trusting that God will help us as we step towards Him, we also must acknowledge that we need His help before we step towards Him.

What do you think needs to happen in our lives before we acknowledge that we need God's help?

You may have answered that we need to hit "rock bottom," or experience something terrible in our lives before we acknowledge that we need God's help. Often we wait until desperate times before we ask God for His help, but this is not God's plan for our lives. God loves us and desires to walk with us every day of our lives. God's plan is for us to seek His help daily. He did not create us to walk this earth apart from Him. This is where the problem lies. We live in a world that teaches us to be independent. Our society prides itself in doing things in our own strength, by our own will, and for our own pleasure. We are even taught to heal our own hearts, overcome struggles with strong determination, and hide our weaknesses.

When we don't ask God and other people to help us, what statement are we making?

When we attempt to heal the pain in our hearts and overcome our struggles without help, we are making a dangerous statement. **We are telling ourselves that we have the power to heal our hearts and set ourselves free from darkness.** We may not have even recognized that we've made that statement, because it can be very subtle. We can get so accustomed to hiding our pain by attempting to numb it, ignore it, or running from it, that we don't even recognize our own feelings. We get so lost in our own world of addictions, or some other type of darkness, we often can't even trace our own steps. We simply find something that makes us feel less pain and we go for it. We follow it and it becomes what we believe will

help us with the pain and loss within our own hearts. We don't see that the way we have chosen to follow has become a darkness of its own.

What have you followed that you thought would help you with your pain, but has caused you even greater pain?

Perhaps you've followed the path of drugs or pornography to try to lessen the pain in your life. There are things that are always destructive to our lives but, there are plenty of things that are intended to bless our lives. Food, sports, hobbies, work and people are examples of things that God intended for good in our lives. However, when we follow those things, demanding that they heal our hearts, we are putting those things or people in a very powerful place in our lives. *We are putting them in the place that is reserved only for God.* Only God has the power to heal our hearts and deliver us from darkness.

Consider your own life. Have you turned to other people in hopes they would heal your heart or change your life? If so, what happened?

What about putting yourself in the place of God in your life? Have you tried to change your life or overcome a struggle/addiction by your own strength? What was that like for you?

Read what God tells us in Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) about our lives.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light. (NIV)”

What is God saying to you about your life through these verses?

When we turn to ourselves, another person, or something to heal our hearts and change us, we are inviting darkness into our lives. God tells us in His Word (the Bible) that we are not to have any other gods in our lives. You may be thinking that you don't worship any other gods in your life. However, if we put our trust in someone or something other than God to heal our hearts, set us free, and change our lives, we are exalting that person or thing above God. The people in the Bible did this. God called it worshipping other gods and it always led to darkness and destruction. These people and things were idols and the enemy loves for us to worship idols.

Based on what you are learning in Breakthroughs, why do you think the enemy loves for us to worship idols or 'little gods?'

You will hear throughout our time together in Breakthroughs that God loves you and wants to walk with you. He desires a close relationship with you daily. He wants to heal your heart and remove the darkness from your life. The only way this can become a reality for you is if you choose to trust Him and ask for His help. You will learn other steps and practical tools that you need to use in your life on a daily basis. *But the most important step that we take today and every day of our lives is to ask for God's help.*

When we don't ask for God's help and instead turn to 'little gods,' we will not be free. Please hear what a little god will never tell you. A little god will look and feel like your friend but will lead you down a dark path that you never thought you would travel. A little god has one very evil motive and goal for your life. It is to keep you from worshipping the One True God, who you and I were created to love and worship.

God's plan: *God created us with a deep desire and need to feel loved and accepted. He also made us with a need to worship Him. To worship God means that we acknowledge that He is God, we need Him and He is worthy of worship. To be loved by God and to love God is the way God designed our hearts.*

When we believe the enemy's lie that God doesn't really love us and that a 'little god' will fulfill the desires of our hearts, we walk away from God's plan. The enemy presents his path to us daily in a variety of ways with one goal: to lead us away from God. The enemy does not want us to trust God and follow God's path to freedom.

The enemy's plan is for us to follow his path of 'little gods' and lead us to bondage. **There is not a third path. There are two gates and two paths in our lives. We will never find the fulfillment that our hearts ache and long for apart from our God.**

One reason that 'little gods' are so effective in keeping us away from God, is because they try to look like God. 'Little gods' tell us they can help us feel better, make life easier, give us comfort, pleasure and confidence. 'Little gods' can provide immediate relief from pain so we become friends with them easily. If we have turned to 'little gods' for an extended period of time, we have established a relationship with them. The relationship may be harmful, but is

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comfortable. We know we can count on them and know what to expect. We may even know we will end up in a bad place, but we believe the lie that the journey getting there is worth it. That is until we get there... and realize that once again we have been deceived.

This is a lot to take in for most of us and what you are hearing is truth that can change your life. *I pray that you will allow God to speak to your heart through these words because you matter to Him.* He wants to heal your heart and set you free. He is the only way out of darkness.

Would you please take a few minutes and ask God to help you believe that He will deliver you. Ask God to take away the desires you have to follow after 'little gods' and begin the process of destroying the power those 'little gods' have in your life. This is what we call a big prayer because it means we are taking a big step towards God. We are saying to our self and to God, that we need his help.

Before we move on, let's make sure that we have a clear understanding of 'little gods.' In your own words, what is the definition of a 'little god?'

What is the danger in following a 'little god?'

Remember that 'little gods' often feel like they are our friends, but they lead us down a dark path. The enemy does not want us to view these 'little gods' as being destructive so he will try to convince us they are not so bad. Have you ever heard messages such as:

“My _____ is not that bad.”

“My _____ could be a lot worse.”

“My _____ does not really hurt anybody.”

“My _____ is not that big of a deal.”

Are there any other messages that you've heard about the 'little gods' in your life? If so, please list them.

Last week's lesson was titled "An Honest Heart." What do you recall learning about an honest heart?

One of the things we learned about an honest heart is that it is a heart that is willing to face failure and weaknesses instead of hiding behind deception. An honest heart is a brave heart. However, if we are not careful, we can easily fall into a trap called pride. If we begin to think we are the brave ones, and lose sight that it is Christ in us that gives us the courage to face our failures and weaknesses, the result is pride. God does cause us to be brave and He will give us courage. However, we must guard our hearts and minds from thinking we can have an honest heart apart from Christ. Pride is a slippery slope. Once we begin to step towards

God we must take those steps recognizing He is the One giving us the courage to take those steps.

One simple but very effective way of guarding ourselves from pride is to thank God for what He is doing in our lives. Let's close this week's lesson by thanking God for what He is doing in our lives. Please list things He is doing that you are thankful for, or write a prayer thanking God for what He is doing in your life.
