

## **Growing Deeper**

### ***Guideposts***

#### **Week One: *Confession***

##### ***1 John 1:5-10***

#### **Spend FIFTEEN – Day One**

1. When was the last time you spent time fully awake and alert sitting in the dark? How did that feel?
2. Did you know southern Colorado towns, Westcliffe and Silver Cliff, have applied to become the state's first designated International Dark-Sky Association (IDA) community? If approved, these towns that border each other will join eight other communities and 29 parks around the world, battling light pollution at night to preserve the view of the night sky. When was the last time you went star gazing? What, if anything, affected your experience?
3. Why do you think most people are uncomfortable in the dark?
4. Read 1 John 1:5-10. How does this section of scripture, especially verses 5-7, use the metaphor of light and dark?
5. After a while, our eyes can grow accustomed to the dark. If darkness represents sinfulness, do you think people can grow accustomed to sin and not notice it anymore?
6. Do you think Christian toleration of sin is a good thing or a bad thing? Explain.
7. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray to be more tolerant of sinners while remaining intolerant of sin.

#### **Spent FIFTEEN – Day Two**

8. If you had to identify a person who "lights up" a room, who would you name? Why?
9. What would you consider the three most attractive characteristics of a true friend?
10. A famous hymn reminds us... "What a friend we have in Jesus." Read Proverbs 18:24. How is Jesus a better friend than even a brother (or sister)?
11. 1 John 1:5-10 speaks about having or not having fellowship with God. What do you think the term "fellowship" means?

12. Explain the difference between walking in the light and walking in the dark, as you understand it. Why do you think that metaphor makes sense?
13. How is being in the dark the same as not knowing or living in the truth?
14. Read John 3:19-21. Why would anyone prefer to live in the darkness? Do you think it is a conscious choice for most people or do they simply not know the difference between living in the light and living in the darkness?
15. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be light in the lives of those sitting in darkness.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three**

16. Read 1 John 1:8-10. Describe what it means to deceive yourself. Do you think self-deception is common? Explain.
17. Do you think many, maybe even most, people believe they are right even when they are wrong? Provide an example.
18. If you don't know what you are doing is wrong, how can you ever do right?
19. Read Romans 7:7-12. What example of unknown sin does Paul use as an example in his own life? How did Paul discover that particular sin in his life?
20. When you hear a sermon or participate in a Bible study, do you primarily hear the law or the gospel (freedom through Christ)? Explain.
21. Why is the law still needed in the life of Christians? In the life of nonbelievers?
22. Why must the gospel always accompany the teaching/preaching of the law?
23. As you finish your FIFTEEN in prayer, pray for a greater appreciation for the perfect law of God in your life.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four**

24. Why is confession good for the soul?

25. What sins should you confess to those you have offended?
26. What sins should you confess to a spiritual mentor?
27. What sins should you confess to God?
28. When it comes to sins of commission (sins you actively commit) and sins of omission (things you should have done but failed), which are the most troubling for you?
29. Read what David had to say about unconfessed sin in Psalm 32:1-5. Why is confession of sin so important?
30. End your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray a prayer of confession for all sins, known and unknown, that are a blight on your life, the life of your friends and the world in general.

**Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five**

31. Do the church services you attend often lead the congregation through an act of confession during worship? How do those moments impact you?
32. A famous movie once said, “Love means never having to say you’re sorry.” Do you agree?
33. The great reformer Martin Luther once believed that he had to keep track of all his sins so that he could enumerate them in confession in order to be forgiven. Why should some sins be specifically mentioned but other sins included in a general confession of all sins?
34. Does your behavior offer you all the assurance you need to meet your Maker? What gives you that confidence?
35. Who has the authority to pronounce the absolution of sins according to James 5:13-16?
36. How can a pastor pronounce the absolution of sin, “in the name and by the power of Jesus Christ?” See 1 John 1:7 for insight.
37. Conclude your FIFTEEN by praying for those who suffer from a guilty conscience, that they would feel the complete and cleansing power of God’s complete forgiveness.