

let's be honest

a CHRISTCHURCH original study

Denial

week six

- 1) **Welcome and introduce any new members**
- 2) **Open in prayer**

Prayer can be led by the small group leader, or by alternating members of the group.
- 3) **Review of the covenant**

Walk the participants briefly through the covenant again. This will be especially important if there are new members in the group.
- 4) **Brief conclusion of Week Five discussion: "Secrets"**
 - Was there anything that you read in the daily readings, or wrote about during the week, that you wanted to discuss today?
 - What insights (if any) did you get regarding secrets?
 - What damage can keeping an unhealthy secret do to you? To your relationships with other people? To your relationship with God?
 - What lingering questions do you have about secrets? (Note: the pastors would be happy to help you deal with any challenging questions that come up in your group.)
- 5) **Discussion of "Denial": the weekend's message & Week Six introduction**
 - What stood out to you from Pastor Phil's message: "Huh? Not Me!"?
 - What questions were raised for you— in the message, character study, and the Week Six introduction— about the danger of denial?
 - What does the story of David and Nathan teach us about denial?
 - In the message, Pastor Phil quotes Eugene Peterson: "It's always a mistake to concentrate attention on our sins; it's God's work on our sins that's the main event. ... We have a finite number of ways to sin; God has an infinite number of ways to forgive." What do you think of this statement? What can it mean for your life?
- 4) **Scripture— Denial**

With the remaining time in your group this week, you'll be studying the story Jonah on the next page. Jonah received a command from God to go preach to the city of Nineveh. Jonah didn't particularly like this assignment, so he attempted to run away. Serious consequences resulted. Have someone read through the scripture out loud, then go through the questions. It's not necessary to get through all the questions if you are running out of time.
- 6) **Share prayer requests**
- 7) **Close in prayer**



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Jonah 1:1-13 (New International Version)

¹The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

³But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

⁴Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

⁷Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

⁹He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

¹⁰This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.) ¹¹The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

¹²“Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

Questions

- In what ways do you think the above scripture relates to our topic of “denial” for this week?
- Jonah did not want to do what God had asked him to do, and so he attempted to run away (in the opposite direction, actually)— and to ignore God’s command. How did this work out for Jonah? What does this tell us about the danger of denial?
- What does “denial” mean to you? What is denial? Why do you think denial is such a powerful force in our lives? What is the appeal of denying that a problem exists, or ignoring something you know isn’t right or healthy?
- How can our denial affect the people around us? What does it do to our relationships with people we love? What does it do to our relationship with God?
- Read Romans 3:23 (and keep the Bible open to that page— you’ll be using it again). What does this verse tell us about the human condition? What does it mean to you that every person alive struggles, fails and sins?
- Read Jeremiah 6:14 in the translation you have. Then read this translation from *The Living Bible*: “You can’t heal a wound by pretending it’s not there!” In the message, Pastor Phil quoted Wayne Cordeiro: “You cannot take shortcuts by going through the land of make-believe. Your first commitment must be to discover and accept new truths no matter how difficult or how unpleasant they may seem at the time. You cannot rectify problems if you deny that they exist.” What do you think of this statement? Does it make sense to you? Why or why not?
- Read Romans 3:24. What does this promise mean to you? How can accepting God’s love and forgiveness affect your life?