

Failing Forward

Life Group Questions for May 31, 2026
Count the Stars Sermon Series

Welcome & Check-In

- Icebreaker question: *Have you ever found yourself repeating a mistake or habit you thought you had already overcome? How do you typically respond if someone points it out to you?*
- *Where have you seen God at work in your life since we last met?*

FOLLOWING JESUS: Scripture & Reflection

1. Read Genesis 20:1-18 out loud as a group.
What words or phrases stand out to you?
What questions do you have?
2. Re-read Genesis 20:1-2. After years of walking with God, Abraham fell back into an old pattern of fear and deception.
Looking at Abraham's responses throughout his life, where do you see fear, half-truths, blame, or manipulation showing up in his life?
Which of those patterns are easiest to recognize in yourself?
What does this teach us about spiritual growth and the ongoing work of transformation?
3. Read Isaiah 12:2. Ryan noted that "fear is not the absence of faith; fear is often the arena in which faith is exercised."
How does this statement and Isaiah's declaration challenge the way you normally respond to fear?

IN COMMUNITY: Sharing & Support

4. Abraham's sin affected Sarah, Abimelech, and an entire household.
How have you experienced the reality that personal struggles rarely stay personal?
What impact have they had on you and/or the relationships around you?
5. Ryan described "go-to sins" or deeply ingrained patterns that surface under pressure.
What is one recurring struggle, reaction, or temptation that tends to emerge when life becomes difficult?
How could the other people in your group encourage you in this struggle?
6. The sermon encouraged honest self-examination without shame.
What makes it difficult to bring recurring struggles into the light with trusted Christian community?
What helps create a safe environment for confession and growth?

ON MISSION: Next Steps

7. In his attempt to maintain control, we saw Abraham being ruled by fear rather than faith. He did so with the following patterns:
 - Driven by fear
 - Justified by half-truths

- Deflected by blame
- Sustained through manipulation

Ryan spoke about “counter-practices” - practices that retrain our hearts and bodies.

As a group, brainstorm some “counter-practices” that could help you cooperate with the Spirit's work of transformation in your life?

8. Abraham's story reminds us that failure does not have the final word because God's faithfulness remains.

How can you become someone who reflects that same grace and hope to people around you who are struggling or discouraged?

9. Revisit and add to your prayer list, then pray for one another.

Prayer:

Together, listen to this song by Andrew Peterson as a means of worshipping your God who never lets go.

 [Andrew Peterson - After All These Years \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)

For Further Reflection this Week:

The sermon suggested prayerfully reviewing each day with God.

Commit to practicing The Daily Examen at the end of each day this week:

Step 1: Become aware of God's presence

- Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. Do they seem confusing to you?
- Where have you experienced desolation (feeling that God is distant)? Where have you experienced consolations (feeling that God is close)?
- Ask God to bring clarity and understanding, to show you where He was at work in each situation.
- Remind yourself that God is with you through it all. Allow yourself to experience his presence.

Step 2: Review the day with gratitude

- Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights.
- Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did, the people you interacted with. What did you receive and what did you give? Pay attention to small things — the food you eat, the sights you see, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details.

Step 3: Pay attention to your emotions

- St. Ignatius points out that we can detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day.
- Did you feel boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying to you through these feelings?
- Are you frustrated? If so, perhaps this means that God wants you to consider a new

direction in some area of your work.

- Are you concerned about a friend or loved one? Perhaps you could reach out to him/her in some way.
- In this reflection, God may show you some ways that you have fallen short. Come humbly before your Lord and ask for forgiveness. Praise God for His never-ending forgiveness!

Step 4: Choose one feature of the day and pray about it

- Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling, positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant.
- Look. Pray. Allow the prayer that it provokes to arise spontaneously from your heart, whether it's intercession, praise, repentance or otherwise.

Step 5: Look toward tomorrow

- Ask God to give you hope and energy for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up.
- Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer.
- Seek God's guidance. Ask Him for help and understanding. Pray for strength.
- Ask for God's wisdom, protection and help.
- Do all this with gratitude. Your life is a gift; adorned with gifts from God.
- End your conversation knowing that your God loves you so much! You are his precious child.