



# breakthroughs

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**finding freedom and true  
fulfillment in jesus**

### Lesson 3: An Honest Heart

Choosing to take steps toward God is often very difficult. Stepping towards God means that we are making a decision to ask God for help in our lives. In order to ask God for help with our lives, it requires us to 1) trust that He will help us and 2) acknowledge that we need His help.

This week and next week's lessons in our workbook will focus on helping us take steps towards God. We will look at things that keep us from trusting God and we will discover why we have such a tough time asking God for His help.

The title of this week's lesson is "An Honest Heart." What do you think of when you hear the words "an honest heart?"

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The word "honest" is defined as "free of deceit and untruthfulness; sincere." Our heart is the place where our emotions, experiences and beliefs connect and form our inner selves. To have an honest heart means that our emotions (feelings), experiences and beliefs are free of deception. In other words, we are honest about how we feel. We look honestly at what has happened in our lives and our beliefs are based on truth.

Being honest about our feelings is difficult. Facing the truth of what has happened in our lives is difficult. Believing what God says about us, our lives, and Him is difficult. Adam and Eve were the first people that God created. Adam and Eve both had honest hearts... before the enemy (Satan) stepped onto their paths. When Satan entered their paths, he introduced Adam and Eve to deception. He told them a lie and they believed the lie. They exchanged the truth that God told them, for a lie that Satan told them. Once they exchanged the truth for a lie, they chose to hide from God. Suddenly their honest hearts became hearts that were

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filled with deception and fear. They did not know how to deal with the deception and fear, so they hid from God. They did not ask God for His help, and instead of stepping towards God, they stepped away from God. This is the story of Adam and Eve, and this is our story too.

In order for us to step towards God, we often wait until we come to the end of our rope. We wait until we have tried every other possible means of rescuing ourselves before we call out for help. You've probably heard the phrase "hit rock bottom." Just what does it mean to hit rock bottom? Is rock bottom a place on our paths in life where we go after making a series of poor choices? Or perhaps rock bottom is a place where we land after experiencing one loss after another in life. There may be more than one way of reaching the destination of rock bottom, but the ground at rock bottom feels the same for all of us when we get there. We feel helpless. We feel alone. We feel afraid and we feel ashamed. We want to hide and we can't imagine anyone wanting to find us.

Take a few minutes and put into words how you feel about where you are in life today. Does it feel like you are at rock bottom? If so, describe the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing.

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Please read the following verses and think about what God is saying to you about your life.

***“You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:6-8 NIV)***

What is God saying to you about your life?

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If you find yourself at “rock bottom” today, then you still have not gone too far from God’s reach. **The truth is we can never take too many steps away from God where He can’t hear us when we call out to Him for His help.** One of the most effective lies from Satan is that we need to get ourselves together, clean up our lives, make these changes and then we will be ready to take steps towards God. The reason that this lie is so effective is that it keeps us from asking God to help us. The lies tell us that we are responsible for making the changes in our lives apart from God’s help. The lies also tell us that God won’t accept us with the dirt in our lives so we better clean it up before we try and approach Him.

Stepping towards God requires that we step away from the lies the enemy has told us about God. We will never trust God to help us with our problems in life, heal our hearts from the pain we feel, and deliver us from the darkness in our lives if we believe lies about God. Remember that Satan’s first lie to Adam and Eve was about God. Satan wanted Adam and Eve to doubt God and not trust God with their lives. Satan’s plan has not changed and his method for accomplishing his plan has not changed... because it works. However, God’s Word, which is truth, is more powerful than Satan’s plan and method. We will learn more about this later in our workbook, but for now we need to focus on what lies the enemy is using in our lives to keep us from taking steps towards God.

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You may be feeling a bit overwhelmed with the idea that you have an enemy that works in your life to keep you from trusting God. Perhaps you've heard things about the enemy that sounded strange and the people you heard it from sounded even stranger. The way we respond to the information we learn in Breakthroughs is very important. We will discover how the enemy works in our lives, so we can spot the lies when we hear them. We can choose to ignore what the Bible teaches about the enemy. We can choose to pay little attention to how the enemy works in our lives, or we can choose to focus most of our attention on how the enemy works in our lives. Each of those choices will be influenced by our past experiences, and can keep us from walking in victory over the darkness in our lives.

**God's plan for our life is for us to walk in truth and to focus our attention on Him.**

The reason that we will be looking at how the enemy works in our lives is to learn how he tries to keep us in darkness. As God exposes the lies Satan has told us about ourselves, about our lives, and about Him, we can begin to be set free from those lies. God will replace those lies with His truth. God will heal our hearts and minds and He will help us rebuild our lives based on truth.

Let's take a few minutes and write a prayer to God. Tell God any fears or concerns you have about learning how the enemy works in your life. Ask God to help you trust Him with this area of your life. Ask God to help you focus on Him and not the enemy. Close your prayer by thanking God that He has called you out of darkness to live in the light of His presence.

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- ❖ **We are going to look at things that keep us from asking God for His help. If you need to take a break from this week's lesson, then take a break. Remember that you need to work at a pace that is not rushed. There is a lot of material in each week's lesson that can be mentally and emotionally challenging. Take time to absorb what you are learning. It's also very important to take time to be quiet and listen to what God is saying to your heart.**

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We've already learned that after Adam and Eve exchanged the truth of God for a lie from the enemy, they tried to hide from God. God could have left them hiding in the dark, but He called them out of the dark and into His light. He helped Adam and Eve by leading them to deal with the deception in their lives. Just as God knew all about Adam and Eve, He knows all about you and your life. God's Word tells us that God is "all-knowing" and that He even numbers the hairs on your head (Luke 12:7).

How does it make you feel when you consider that God knows everything about you... all of your thoughts, your feelings, and your past and present struggles?

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**An honest heart is a heart that is not lying or pretending that things are okay, when things are not okay. An honest heart is not a perfect heart because a perfect heart does not exist. Instead, an honest heart is willing to look at mistakes, failures and weaknesses without trying to cover them up with deception.**

How does looking at your mistakes, failures and weaknesses make you feel?

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Looking at our mistakes, our failures and our weaknesses can be very scary. It can also be very painful and difficult. Remember that we are bent on hiding, but there is more to our stories. We all have experiences with people in our lives that have impacted us. Many of us learned at a young age that it is better to hide our mistakes than to face them. A lot of us grew up in homes where we learned to hide our pain and our struggles.

It is possible to ignore or deny things that have happened in our past, especially in our childhood. However, if we want to be healed from the pain in our lives and freed from the darkness, we need to give God full access to our hearts. This includes giving God permission

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to show us anything from our past that is keeping us from trusting Him today. The most significant factor that impacts how we view God today will be the relationship that we had with our parents, especially with our fathers. Children develop their view of God based on how they view their earthly father. For example, if a child's father is present, loving and encouraging, a child is more likely to view God as present, loving and encouraging. If a child's father is absent, does not demonstrate love and is critical, the child will likely view God in the same manner.

This week's lesson calls us to glance in the rearview mirror. We will take a look at our relationships with our parents and how those relationships are affecting our view of God today.

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Prayerfully answer the following:

Please check the adjective which best describe the way your **father** relates/related to you.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
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Gentle

Stern

Loving

Unpredictable

Just

Sensitive

Encouraging

Disapproving

Distant

Close/Intimate

Kind

Angry

Caring

Passive

Protective

Strong

Unreasonable

Impatient

Compassionate

Demanding

Interested

Gracious

Harsh

Wise

Approving

Affirming

Leader

Forgiving

Joyful

Trustworthy

Thoughtful



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Please check the adjective which best describe the way your **mother** relates/related to you.

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Seldom</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
Gentle						
Stern						
Loving						
Unpredictable						
Just						
Sensitive						
Encouraging						
Disapproving						
Distant						
Close/Intimate						
Kind						
Angry						
Caring						
Passive						
Protective						
Strong						
Unreasonable						
Impatient						
Compassionate						
Demanding						
Interested						
Gracious						
Harsh						
Wise						
Approving						
Affirming						
Leader						
Forgiving						
Joyful						
Trustworthy						
Thoughtful						

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Note: If looking at your relationship with your parents stirred up painful emotions, don't try to hide your feelings. Talk to someone about how you are feeling, like a trusted friend, mentor or counselor. It is very helpful to journal (write) your feelings on paper. You can write God a letter and tell Him about your feelings and any painful memories you may be experiencing.

How do you think your relationship with your father affects your view of God today?

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How do you think your relationship with your mother affects your view of God today?

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Can you think of any other experiences that have either positively or negatively affected your view of God?

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We need to ask God for His help in answering the next question. This question is about the lies that the enemy has told us about God. Please begin by praying and asking God to reveal to you the lies that you believe about Him, about your relationship with Him and about how God sees you. Write your answers in the space provided.

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How do you think those lies are influencing your ability to step towards God?

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When we begin to believe and accept that God loves us, deeply and unconditionally loves us, it changes our hearts. We begin to move towards Him in times of trouble instead of away from Him. We begin to feel His presence, His peace and His love with each step, making the next step and the next step easier to take. There are so many verses in the Bible that tell us how much God loves us. We need to read and hear those truths every day of our lives. However, there is nothing that can replace what God does when we simply choose Him. Our hearts may be telling us all sorts of lies, but when we cry out to God and ask for His help, we will find Him. God is the One who pursued us when we were at rock bottom. He sent His Son to die on a cross for us so that we could be rescued from darkness. **God has not, and will not ever stop pursuing you. He will go to the deepest, darkest place to rescue you.**

You cannot go too far and it is never too late. If you want desperately to believe this is true and just can't cross over the line into believing it to be true, then do this one thing: Ask God to help you believe that He loves you. Ask God to take away the lies, the pain and the darkness that is separating you from believing that He loves you. If your heart is anywhere close to being as stubborn as mine, you will ask God and He will show you... and then you will need to ask Him again, and He will show you again. I assure you that He does not give up on the most stubborn of hearts. You are loved.

***"I love the LORD, for He heard my voice; He heard my cry for mercy. Because He turned His ear to me, I will call on Him as long as I live."***  
*(Psalm 116:1-2 NIV)*



