

THE POWER OF WITH

Part 3

ICEBREAKER: Have you ever had someone that you really admired and respected experience some sort of a moral failure? How did that personally affect you?

1. Authenticity unleashes the power of God.

DISCUSSION: Hypocrisy denies the power of God. How are you being a hypocrite when it comes to your walk with the Lord? What steps do you need to take to stop that?

And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NASB

DISCUSSION: Who are some people in your life that you look up to as Christian celebrities? Why do you put so much faith in them and emphasis on the things they say?

When we are real with each other it takes the attention off of the personalities of people and places our faith squarely on God.

DISCUSSION: How have you seen the above statement play out in your life, and in a practical way?

DISCUSSION: Looking back at that person you thought of earlier who had moral failure, how do you feel you would have

responded if that person would have been authentic about the deeper issue that was buried within their heart, especially if it would've meant avoiding their moral failure?

2. Weakness is strength in Christianity.

DISCUSSION: Why are we afraid to be real with our self and others about our weakness? What's the truth about what will happen, if we're real about our weakness?

*Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for **when I am weak**, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:10*

When I am at my weakest, I am at my strongest with God and my fellow Christians at Sandals. It is in that moment of desperation that God will begin to move in me through others.

Will you choose to be **REAL**, will you choose to be **WEAK**, will you allow the power of **WITH** to be unleashed?

DISCUSSION: Exactly what is it in your life that you need to be real about, right now? What choice will you make, right now? Will you follow yourself by protecting your weakness so that they can continue to fester inside your heart, or will you confess your weakness so that you and others can allow God's strength to be made evident?

DISCUSSION: Answer the below questions that Matt asked and think about the people who are really there for you in these areas.

Who prays for you?

*Now I urge you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to strive together **with** me in your prayers to God for me. Romans 15:30*

Who encourages you in your faith?

*...that is, that I may be encouraged together **with** you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.*

Romans 1:12

Who will suffer with you in your heartache?

*Suffer hardship **with** me, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus.*

2 Timothy 2:3

*And if one member suffers, all the members suffer **with** it.*

1 Corinthians 12:26a

Who will rejoice with you?

*...if one member is honored, all the members rejoice **with** it.*

1 Corinthians 12:26b

Without a church committed to small group life, the power of **WITH** will be squelched!!

PRAYER PROJECT: Take 5-7 minutes to sit alone with God, and ask Him to show you what has happened in your life that causes you to want to hide your weakness from others? Now take another 5-7 minutes and ask Him to reveal to you in what ways you make decisions about everyday life that are affected by that event and/or circumstance.