



No Filters | Nick Nilson | 11.11.18

LG Weekly

## START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following question:

**Which season (spring, summer, fall or winter) fits your personality best? Why?**

## SHARE

**How was your week? Take some time to check in by telling the group about the highs and the lows.**

**Before you begin, think about the filters you have in your own life and the “why’s” of that particular filter.**

## GROW

**Read Mark 3:1-6**

Jesus didn't perform most of his miracles in synagogues. Why do you think this one does take place in a synagogue?

Verse five is one of the rare moments Jesus feels anger in the Gospels. Why do you think he got so frustrated with the people?

As followers of Jesus, one of the healthiest things we can do is allow the Holy Spirit to shine a light on the “not-so-great” parts of our life. This week, Nick Nilson talked about a man in the Old Testament named Naaman. Naaman was a mighty warrior, and everyone knew it. The problem was, he was hiding behind his amazing gift. He was using it to cover up what was actually going on inside. To use modern day language, he was using a filter to convince everyone he had it all together, but inside he was dying. It wasn't until he finally found the strength to take off his armor (to stop using filters) that he found true freedom and declared, “now I know that there is no God beyond the one of Israel” (2 Kings 5:15).

Mark 3 is an excellent parallel to this story. As you just read, Jesus healed the man's hand, but first, He asked him to stop hiding it. There is so much we can learn from these stories, but the big idea for this week is that true freedom is found by taking off the filters and being content to be our true selves. The best way to bring healing to our mind, body, and soul is to bring light to it.

What does that mean for us? It means we do not need to be afraid to come to God with everything because He knows the very depth of us and still invites us to Himself. *Your prayer life does not need a filter!* Think about Jesus as He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. He doesn't sugar coat anything. Instead, He was in complete anguish, crying out to His heavenly Father to “take the cup from Him” because He knew the cost of what was ahead. In this moment Jesus was vulnerable and exposing His humanity and very need before His Father. Just as this was not a surprise to God, coming to Him with our true selves does not surprise or shock God either. He knows every part of us; the good, the bad, and the ugly, and He still loves us, there is always a seat at His table. There's no reason to try to hide from God; He is inviting us to come and sit with Him, as we then invite Him into every part of our lives. This is the true, scandalous grace of Jesus.

**God knows everything and doesn't condemn us. However, we still tend to run and hide from Him. This goes all the way back to Adam and Eve hiding from God in the garden and can be traced all through history. Why do you think we try to hide from God? What does that tell us about humans? What does it tell us about our image of God?**

## M O V E

### Read James 5:13-18

As a general rule of thumb, humans don't have very much depth in most of their relationships. Why do you think that is?

In this passage, James takes things to the next level. He invites us to not only be honest with God but also with each other. According to James, a tremendous amount of healing can and will take place the moment we let others into our lives. The freedom we are searching for is on the other side of filters!

Of course, this is way easier said than done. Especially in today's world where the pattern is to stay connected with people via our highlight reels on social media. As Nick reminded us, we've never been more CONNECTED as a culture, yet we feel completely DISCONNECTED from one another. It's difficult to take the filters off our life because we don't realize everyone else is using filters too. Sometimes it feels like we are the only ones struggling with life, but nothing could be further from the truth.

One of the beautiful things about meeting together in a group like this, is you are combating against the pattern of the world. Life Groups create space where real, authentic community can happen. In this space, you have the opportunity to be vulnerable with one another and help each other experience real, lasting freedom!

## P R A Y

As you spend some time praying for each other this week, consider taking the filter off your request. What is really on your heart? What do you really need help with? How are you really feeling about God and about life?

If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

James 5:16

“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.”

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