



## **WEEK FOUR: Owning Up – Study Guide**

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It's time. You're probably asking yourself, time for what? It's time to move forward and take a step. It's time to move past the things that have us looking in our rearview mirror, plaguing us with guilt and causing us to attach labels to ourselves. In this study, we will take a look at how to examine ourselves, confess sin to God and others, and be liberated from our past.

### **Where Am I Today?**

- 1) Why is it difficult to open up about a mistake or failure in our life? Explain your answer.

### **Into the Bible**

- 2) You may not realize it, but sin and guilt can have a tremendous affect on both your spiritual and physical life. In the following verses, take a look at David's experience of dealing with his sin and guilt in **Psalm 38:3-12**. What are some of the ways sin had an effect on David's life?

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- 3) Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." Thankfully, God has made it possible for us to be made clean and enable us to inherit this promise of seeing Him. Read **Colossians 2:13-14** and **1 John 1:7-9**. What do these verses tell us is the way to become clean?
  
- 4) Realizing we have sin in our lives isn't always necessarily the problem. It's owning up to it, and actually telling someone. One other helpful step is to bring someone along on your journey. While you don't need to tell everyone, it's good to find someone you can trust. Read **James 5:15-16**. What does James tell us that confessing our sin to one another does for us?

### How Does This Apply?

- 5) Just like David, we can get caught up in sin, and let our past failures haunt us and continue to fill us with guilt. Guilt robs us of our joy, confidence, and relationships. What are some ways you can let go of your guilt and let God lead you into a better future?
  
- 6) Let's get real. We all have things we have failed at in the past. You cannot alter your past, but you *can* allow God to start changing your present and look to Him to guide your future. It's good to examine our own lives. If you can't shake the guilt of past failures, how have you possibly attached labels on yourself, and what are they? What would it take for you to let go of them?

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- 7) In Christ, you are forgiven, you belong, and you are accepted. We no longer have to be stuck in our guilt and identity crisis. That's the good news Jesus wants you to know. Those words may even strike you as undeserving. As a Jesus follower, He stands on your behalf, and gives you a new and far better identity than we could ever imagine. Why is it so hard to forgive yourself even when you know Christ has forgiven you?
- 8) Your Life Group is a great place to start helping you get past your guilt and labels. As James tells us, we should look to find someone to come alongside us. How are you allowing God to use the people around you to help you leave your past behind, and to stay focused on God?

### Continue Learning on Your Own

- 9) There are seasons in life where we lose focus and sight of the purpose God has for us. It can cause tremendous guilt and can make you think that you blew your chance to be used by God. That thought couldn't be further from the truth. God wants to, and can, use us no matter what we've done. We just have to know what to focus on. Paul had great advice when he faced the same struggle we all face—to place our focus in the right direction. Read **Colossians 3:1-2** and **Philippians 3:12-17**. What indicators do these references give?