

***“Ways of Minimizing Sin Versus Maximizing Jesus” (Growth in Grace II)***  
***(Study 4 of “Spiritual Processing Group: Sonship B” Series)***

**Scripture Passage (Parable of the Two Sons)**

*English Standard Version Translation (ESV)*~ Matthew 21:28-32

<sup>28</sup>“What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup> And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. <sup>30</sup> And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. <sup>31</sup> Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. <sup>32</sup> For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.”

*New Living Translation (NLT)*~ Matthew 21:28-32

<sup>28</sup>“But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup> The son answered, ‘No, I won’t go,’ but later he changed his mind and went anyway. <sup>30</sup> Then the father told the other son, ‘You go,’ and he said, ‘Yes, sir, I will.’ But he didn’t go. <sup>31</sup> “Which of the two obeyed his father?” They replied, “The first.” Then Jesus explained his meaning: “I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do. <sup>32</sup> For John the Baptist came and showed you the right way to live, but you didn’t believe him, while tax collectors and prostitutes did. And even when you saw this happening, you refused to believe him and repent of your sins.”

**Spiritual Exercise:** “Naming Our Sins More Honestly and Telling the Whole Truth about Jesus”

**Noticing and Naming: “6 Ways We Minimize Sin”**

1. Defending: I struggle to receive feedback. I can’t hear criticism. When confronted, I explain things away or make excuses. I justify my decisions or actions. People find me hard to approach.

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2. Faking: I keep up appearances. I maintain a respectable image. My behavior is driven by what people think of me. People find it hard to know the real me.

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3. Hiding: I conceal or don’t ever mention the bad stuff about me. I am driven by shame and fear of rejection. I think when people really get to know me, they won’t accept or love me.

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4. Exaggerating: I tend to highlight myself in a conversation. I emphasize my good traits, and point them out- directly or indirectly. Or I can seek attention by (over-)emphasizing the bad things going on in my life. People can't handle a boring version of me.

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5. Blaming: I'm quick to blame others: it's always someone else's fault or just my situation. I struggle to own my faults and role in a conflict. I worry people will reject me, if it's my fault.

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6. Downplaying: I'm just normal, not that bad. Everyone else struggles with whatever I struggle with- and often times, worse. Things can mount for me until they are overwhelming all-at-once. People need me to be calm, cool, collected, and in control. I can't be stressed, anxious or messy.

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### **The Invitation to Rest: "3 Truths about How Jesus Sees Us Whole"**

*"You get your self-image from Jesus- he's the only one who will tell you the truth and he loves you...God chose to be my friend, because he wanted to be my friend. He asked to hangout. He will never leave or forsake me. I can't get behind. You're good enough. You don't have to pretend to be good. There's nothing to protect, no potential you haven't lived up to. What if being human was okay? What if I could admit to you I'm a sinner, and the statute of limitations hadn't run out because I committed the sin this morning? Let God's love go to your head! Jesus would have still come and died, even if you were the only person on earth. The Father would and has given everything for you...Jesus is fond of us!*

*Therefore, 1. We don't have to pretend to be good, 2. We don't have to pretend to be right, and 3. We don't have to fight a battle that's already been won by Jesus (perform)."*

(Steve Brown)

### **Group Prayer**

#### Ideas for Communal and Personal Prayer

1. Reflection Question: *What about my heart-attitude or life-choices does this gospel of big sins and a bigger Jesus challenge?*

- (Is there a related question or comment that is sticking with you?)
- Is there a praise, a confession, a word of thanks, or a request you'd like to make about what you're processing?

2. Is there something else going on that what can we pray about for you?