

## OPEN

Who is a person you find it extremely easy to talk to and hang out with?

## STUDY

For many of us, prayer can sometimes feel a bit intimidating. After all, we are seeking to converse with the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe. Having a holy respect for God is a good thing, but God made us for the purpose of relating with Him. He wants to hear our thoughts, our burdens and our struggles. And, for His part, God wants to speak into the depths our lives. Imagine having a prayer life marked by warmth and openness with God!

Perhaps one of the most open and honest prayers of the Bible can be found in Psalm 51, a prayer offering of David after his sin with Bathsheba. Take some time to process this prayer!

- First off, read through the entire prayer and then think of some words you would use to describe the tone of David's prayer.
  
- What are some examples of how David confesses to God in this prayer? What are some of the things that David asked of God in this prayer? Considering the serious nature of David's sin, why do you think David could be so open and honest with God? How did David come to all the conclusions that showed up in his prayer?

Reflective Prayer is similar to our practice of meditating upon scriptures. But rather than bringing the scriptures before yourself and God in deep focus and prayerful attention, you bring to mind your previous day or two, and ask God to speak to you through this reflection. Read Luke 15:11-32 (the Parable of the Prodigal Son) and meditate on the passage together:

- Discuss the image Jesus describes as the young man "comes to his senses."  
What does it take for someone to come to their sense, to repent, or to change? As the young man processes his life (in the light of who he was, the choices he was making, and the greater truth he knew to be true of him) he demonstrates reflection on the good, the bad, the true, and the lie. It lands him in the arms of his loving father where restoration and transformation can take place.
  
- What about the older brother? Do you think he led a life rooted in true things and in reflection upon his choices, thoughts, and relationships? What resulted?

It seems as though intimacy and change come from a seat of knowing and believing true things about God and ourselves and being willing to reflect on our own choices, emotions, thoughts, and relationships in the light of that truth.

