

NEW MESSAGE SERIES

# THE SECRET LIVES OF ALMOST EVERYONE

Talk It Over—Discussion Guide for Growth Groups or Personal Study

Week 1 // Apr 18 & 19 // I Enable Bad Behavior

## OPEN IN PRAYER

## WARM-UP

1. Introduce yourselves and tell a little about you. Then share what you were like as a kid... A trouble maker, angelic child, miniature adult...
2. Think about a time when pain actually ended up being a positive thing and share that. (i.e. I dreaded my job but was afraid to leave, I finally did and now I love my new career.)

## WATCH THE GROUPS VIDEO SHORT(OPTIONAL)

## TALK IT OVER (HOSTS: CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE 4 OR 5 QUESTIONS FROM THE NEXT SECTIONS)

3. This week's message was about enabling bad behavior. Pastor Ben defined enabling as "offering the wrong kind of help". Talk about the differences between helping and enabling. How do consequences factor in? Or our desire to show Jesus' love?
4. Ben used the account of Eli the priest/judge and his sons. Eli's failure to deal with their bad behavior ended in all their destruction. The message fill-ins gave the process, 1. He was aware of a problem; 2. He allowed it to get worse; 3. He took solace in half measures; 4. He was surprised at the eventual outcome; 5. He ended up as collateral damage. You can see the same pattern played out sometimes even today. Talk about any similar experiences you've had or maybe have watched others go through (protect any confidentiality please!)
5. If we want to take a different (healthier!) path, we were given some courageous choices: Acknowledge the open secret; 2. Don't let fear make our decision; 3. Identify where helping has hurt; 4. Believe that God can make a difference. Which is most difficult for you and why?

## DIG DEEPER

6. God's Word gives us wisdom for every situation... even this! Together look up and read aloud [Proverbs 19:19](#) and [Galatians 6:7-8](#). What insight do you find?
7. Now read the account of the Prodigal Son in [Luke 15:11-23](#). How do we see these principles play out in this story?
8. Ultimately, we learn from the father's response what God our Heavenly Father feels about us, His children. How does that assure you for the ones you care about that you're tempted to help in the wrong way? **God's Word is specific. Bad actions have painful consequences, even when our friends, kids or loved ones are involved. Thankfully, God can use those consequences for His purposes - if we don't get in His way.**

## LIVE IT OUT

Read the quote from Henry Cloud. If there's anyone you're enabling in some way, spend some time in prayer. Make an action plan to stop.

\*If the bad behavior is ours, Jesus wants to respond to us the same way as the father of the prodigal—but we have to own up... Don't let another day go by without dealing with it. For confidential care and resources contact the church: [groups@timberlakechurch.com](mailto:groups@timberlakechurch.com) or 425.869.4400.

## PRAYER REQUESTS // CLOSE IN PRAYER

“

When we begin to set boundaries with people we love, a really hard thing happens: they hurt. They may feel a hole where you used to plug up their aloneness, their disorganization, or their financial irresponsibility. Whatever it is, they will feel a loss. If you love them, this will be difficult for you to watch. But, when you are dealing with someone who is hurting, remember that your boundaries are both necessary for you and helpful for them. If you have been enabling them to be irresponsible, your limit setting may nudge them toward responsibility.”

— [Henry Cloud, Boundaries: When To Say Yes, How to Say No](#)