



RECOVERY

Recovery Groups welcome the weak, the wounded, the strayed, the lost, the addicted, the afflicted and the abused. We provide gospel-centered support, care and counsel to those inside and outside our church. We carry a message of true hope and freedom from the otherwise enslaving interplay of sin and suffering.

SUFFERING AND SIN

Where there is sin, there is suffering and where there is suffering there is temptation to sin. Regardless of how this interplay presents itself in our lives, there is a safe place to come honestly and pursue redemption in Christ. There is a place within Recovery Groups for those who are struggling, whatever the degree or type of trouble. Because this all matters to God, it matters to us.

Suffering can come as the result of our own actions. It can come at the hands of another (abuse). It can also come from living in a fallen world (death, disease and disabilities). There can also be suffering that results from the unseen spiritual realm. During different times in our lives, the source of our suffering may be more acute in one area than another, but we all suffer in each of these ways. God sees and is compassionate toward our suffering.

We are a “come as you are ministry”, meaning “it is okay to not be okay”. But just as Christ did not come to leave us enslaved to our sin and suffering, we provide pathways toward healing in Christ.

GOSPEL-CENTERED COMMUNITY

We offer a loving gospel-centered community to provide support and specialized care by offering issue specific groups and resources. These groups would include men’s groups, women’s groups and co-ed groups that address specific issues. We address individual issues, relational issues (marriage and family), spiritual issues (prayer ministry) as we seek God in aligning our hearts with His.

Groups typically meet for 2 hours every week (6:30 – 8:30 pm, Wednesdays in the Chapel). These groups serve as an open door to the community and an entry point to group life at Citizens Church.

GOSPEL-CENTERED COUNSEL

We are a heart-focused biblical discipleship ministry. We offer counsel that is rooted in the scriptures, aimed at the heart with the gospel of Jesus Christ exhorting the greatest command (loving God and loving others as yourself). The bible offers a more robust way to understand our problems. Without understanding our problems biblically, we will settle for symptomatic relief. We believe that the scriptures are sufficient and the gospel is relevant to address the deepest issues of our lives.

RECOVERY GROUP GOALS

We hope in your time with us you would (1) connect relationally with God and others, (2) begin to understand your problems biblically, (3) be able to apply the gospel specifically and (4) walk in wisdom and accountability with others as we follow Christ’s example. Our ministry is for both believers who are troubled as well as those who are more skeptical of the claims of Christ but have honest questions.

GROUP DYNAMICS

- Expect to be challenged in a healthy way
- Counsel must be biblically rooted
- Expect leaders to pursue your heart
- It is okay to not be okay, but not okay to stay there
- Be intentional about using the group to make relational connections that can continue in doing life together outside of the group
- We are not a professional counseling center, but a church and therefore our leaders and pastors are not acting as licensed professionals but ministers of the gospel

GROUP GUIDELINES

These scriptural (rather than therapeutic) principles help provide a safe, nurturing and orderly environment as we pursue redemption in Christ.

- Let the leaders lead
- Practice honesty and humility by speaking the truth in love
- Do not monopolize the group
- Practice confession, ask for prayer
- Share evidences of God's grace
- Honest questions are encouraged, but not always addressed directly
- Do not gossip

NOTE: Though we do not betray confidences, we do not offer confidentiality in the traditional therapeutic sense. If warranted we will move beyond the walls of the group to love and lead our people in the following instances:

- Potential harm to self or others
- Reports of abuse to a child, disabled or elderly
- Severe unrepentant sin within our community (This would be a professing believer in Jesus affirming what the Bible says, but refusing to listen (Matthew 18:15-19). This is different from someone who is warring against their sin, struggling and confessing, i.e. "struggling well".)

ENGAGING CULTURE

While communicating with sensitivity, we are not shy about engaging the popular ideas of our culture, particularly the realms of secular psychology and the non-gospel recovery culture.

Though there are many good things these therapies and programs offer, they are often missing the main thing, which ends up being everything, as Jesus is the wisdom and power of God. In engaging the culture, we want to affirm what is true, ascribe it to God and oriented that truth in the context it was borrowed to ensure that truth is applied within a gospel context and does not become a misapplied truth.

DISTINCTIVES

Our distinctives exist to engage ideas of popular culture that may hinder freedom rather than bring it. They flow from a gospel message that should align us with Christ and distinguish us from the world.

PROGRAMS DON'T HEAL PEOPLE

Rather than giving our lives to a program, we want to offer ourselves to the One who has the power to heal. Christ has demonstrated His power and authority over all things even death. We offer ourselves and become slaves to what we worship.

When you give yourself to a program, you enslave yourself to a program. Only Jesus Christ can deliver us from bondage and reconcile us to God. We are not here to exalt a program. We are here to exalt a person, Jesus Christ.

RECOVERY GROUPS AREN'T JUST FOR ADDICTS

If we understand our problem biblically, we understand that we are all in need of Recovery. Though there may be diversity in the manifestations of our struggles, they have a common origin. Because every aspect of life has been fractured through sin, we are all in need of redemption that can only come from Him. Jesus came to recover what was lost through the sin that emanates from within.

RECOVERY CAN'T BE REDUCED TO A PROGRAM

To say that those in Recovery Groups are "in Recovery" and those that aren't, are not, is a misunderstanding. If we say that we begin to think that recovery is confined to a program. For thousands of years the distinction is that there are those delivered from the bondage of sin by Jesus and those who remain enslaved to sin. His work did not start with a program, and His work is not confined to a program.

SOBRIETY IS A BYPRODUCT

Sobriety (or reconciliation to a spouse) is not the goal, but the byproduct of the goal. These goals are not bad, but somewhat short-sighted. Reconciliation with God is ultimately the goal. As our hearts are reconciled to His, it changes how we relate to other things and other people. It is a matter of order. Idolatry is putting something before God or using God as a means to an end.

IT'S NOT ABOUT A SINGLE ISSUE

It is dangerous to reduce our walk with the Lord to one issue. If we haven't sinned in a particular way, we then believe that we are "OK" with God. Abstinence is not the way to God - Jesus is!

IT IS A MINISTRY OF MOVEMENT

Our hope is not that you would spend the rest of your life in Recovery Groups. We want each person to experience the healing and freedom that comes from knowing Christ, so you can live on mission for the Kingdom of God. To that end, we encourage those in our ministry to consider STEPS, our intensive discipleship program that helps get traction in our relationship with God.