Session 1: We're All Driving Ourselves Crazy!

Have someone read this out loud:
Welcome to Crazy-Making*! We're excited for this group to start exploring what crazy-making cycles are, what they look like in our lives, and how to step into the freedom and joy Jesus offers us within them. All of us have these cycles, and we all have unique stories about how our cycles started. Even if two cycles look the same on the surface, our personal history with them is different.*

These conversations take courage, and we are proud of your bravery to start. This first week, we'll start by explaining these cycles, how we've experienced them in our own lives, and how these cycles are a universal experience.

CONNECT

This section will take about 30% of your time together today.
As a group:
Pray:
Have someone pray to open this study. Invite the Holy Spirit to prepare your hearts to experience more of God's love and freedom.
Connect questions:
What is one thing that's been relaxing or rejuvenating to you in the last three months?
What hopes and/or concerns do you have for doing this study?

LEARN

This section will take about 20% of your time together today.

Watch the "We're All Driving Ourselves Crazy!" video.

LIVE

This section will take about 50% of your time together today.

Discuss: *What does this mean for me personally?*

As the roundtable discussed, every single one of us has crazy-making cycles. After you watch the video, **choose a few questions** from the following list to process together. You don't need to get through all of them. It can be tempting to give the "right" or "expected" answer to these questions. Resist that urge! Try to be as honest and real as you can.

What stood out to you about the video?

Many of us feel like we should be better than having these repeating patterns, so we beat ourselves up about them and try to hide what is going on. Why do you feel the pressure to be better than your cycles?

When you imagine exploring your cycles, what are some of the thoughts that first go through your mind?

On a scale from one to ten, with one being unaware and ten being completely aware, how aware do you feel of your own crazy-making cycles?

How does the need to control show up in your life? What are the things in your life you care deeply about controlling?

While guilt is thinking, "I did something wrong," shame is thinking, "I *am* wrong." As Wendell explained, it's the feeling that no one can bear our

true selves. How often do you feel this way in your own life?

When you sin, what is your gut reaction? Do you justify yourself, hide from others, seek out counsel, spiral into shame, bring it to God, pretend it didn't happen, or something else?

Apply: *What faith step is God inviting me to take?*

As followers of Jesus, we are called to let his truth and grace transform our real, here-and-now lives. Especially with our repeating patterns of destructive behavior, we tend to jump into "fix it" mode before we understand what is really going on with us, and we often try to "fix" our cycles without God's help. Instead, use the questions below to explore how we can invite God into our cycles in our everyday lives.

Spend one minute of silence as a group and individually pray this prayer:
God, show me the patterns and cycles that you want to free me from.

What is one practical, tangible way you can invite God into your cycles this week? Some ideas are below:

Read through the list of attraction and aversion addictions in Digging Deeper 1, Section 5 (available for free at **trueface.org/crazymakingcontent**) several times throughout the week. Ask God to help you identify the addictions you connect with.

Write out the people in your life who know you well enough to help you identify your cycles. Ask your closest friends, family, or coworkers what behavior patterns they notice. If they trust

you enough to share, receive it with humility and bring it before God.

Any time you notice that you're beating yourself up about a repeating cycle, stop and turn to God in prayer instead.

List out the sins you subconsciously find more acceptable—these might be overworking, compulsive people-pleasing, gossip, controlling through perfectionism, or something else. Then, list out ways these might be destructive, even if they aren't as obvious to outsiders.

Does anything else come to mind? Be creative, but practical. Try to make it an actionable step in order to help integrate your actions with your beliefs.

How I'm going to live it out (yes, try writing it down to help you remember—it's a useful trick!):

How can the group come alongside you in this? All these applications require courage, so we need en*courage*ment from others. Letting other people love you and walk with you is a foundational piece of any grace-filled relationship.

NOTE: Many of us struggle to identify who is safe to share with and who is not. Your group may have built deep trust over time, or you might just be getting to know each other. Here are a few things to look for to determine if someone is safe:

You have experienced their integrity. They are consistent in what they say and how they live.

They model vulnerability. One way to evaluate this is whether they have other people that they openly share within a trusting relationship.

They do not try to fix you, belittle you, or preach at you.

They will maintain confidentiality. One way to evaluate this is by their tendency to gossip or talk about others.

You trust that they would respond with gratitude that you shared and be able to walk alongside you moving forward.

This study includes Digging Deeper sections that introduce this cycle in greater detail. These sections aren’t mandatory to engage in the group, but they are very helpful for processing your cycle more deeply. Access them for free at **trueface.org/crazymakingcontent.**

Pray to close out this time together.

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6300 Henneman Way
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www.rightnow.org

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