

STUDY GUIDE



WEEK 3: 10.22.2017 “REPENT”

[set up]

Take a minute and offer each person a chance to share one insight from last week’s UNLEASH message or Personal Study from week two. Are there any points of application that you put into practice?

Reflect on one of the darkest times of your life. How did God sustain you through that time? How did you sense God’s presence? How has that time been used to change you?

[digging deeper]

Jonah 2 is Jonah’s 3-day prayer while in the belly of the fish. This is most likely a summary or condensed version of Jonah’s sermon. He probably prayed the entire time! Read through Jonah 2 at least two times. Can you break down the prayer into topics or emphases? Is there a progression in Jonah’s prayer?

If you were to summarize Jonah’s prayer in one word, what word would you choose?

Read Matthew 4:17, Luke 5:31-32, Acts 3:19-20, Romans 2:3-4.

Jonah repented in the belly of the fish. Charles Spurgeon defines repentance as “a discovery of the evil of sin, a mourning that we have committed it, a resolution to forsake it. It is, in fact, a change of mind of a very deep and practical character, which makes the man love what once he hated, and hate what once he loved.”¹ Martin Luther, the 16th century Reformer, said “When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said “Repent,” he intended that the entire life of believers should be repentance.”² The New Testament was written in Greek, and the Greek word for repentance is *metanoeo*, which literally means “to turn around.” It assumes a turning away from something and a turning toward something.

On a separate sheet of paper or a large Post it-note, make two columns. In one column, write “What is repentance?” and in the other, write, “What repentance is not.” Go around the group and fill in the columns. As you look over these columns, can you identify an attitude in each one of them that you have most personally experienced? What has been the outcome of a time where you chose repentance or when you didn’t choose repentance?

What is the difference between belief and repentance?

Do you think Jonah’s repentance was legitimate or not? In the following chapters, we see Jonah frustrated and angry at God for having mercy on the Ninevites. Jonah wanted the Ninevites to pay for their sin even though God delivered Jonah from the consequences of his sin. Do you think Jonah was faking his repentance? Or do you think he was legitimately repentant but, again, fell into disobedience?

How do we know when we are truly repentant rather than just being ashamed or sorry we got caught?

¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-repentance>

² <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/luthers-first-thesis-and-last-words>

Psalm 51:7-12 is a psalm written by David after being caught in adultery and arranging a murder. From this passage, what are components of repentance? Does David's response differ from Jonah's? In our lives, what is true of us when we truly are repentant instead of being sorry we got caught or letting ourselves down?

It took being confined to the dark, wet, foul-smelling belly of a huge fish for Jonah to finally repent of his disobedience of God. How can we grow in repenting of our disobedience long before we have to be in a dark place that provokes surrender?

Jesus never sinned and never needed to repent. Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to take on our sin on the cross so that we could repent and be saved. Jesus never turned His back on God but was willing for God to turn His back on Jesus so we can be saved. Jesus "Unleashed" us from our sin, from a debt we could never pay on our own. How does the gospel help us to live a life of repentance? How does believing the gospel help us to have genuine repentance?

Turning from our sin and toward God is what it means to put your faith and trust in Jesus. It's a powerful pointer to the gospel when Christians publicly and/or personally repent of sin. Sometimes people think that Christians have perfect lives, but we know that is not true! How does hearing a Christian publicly and/or personally repent of sin help a nonbeliever understand the gospel? When you share your testimony/new life story, are you articulating the moment of your repentance well (Who you were as you walked in disobedience. How God met you in that place, perhaps a dark place, where you finally surrendered. How you were freed from that old and dying self that was trapped in sin)?

Do you notice how what we do with our bodies and what we do with our money are significant indicators of whether we are repentant or not? Why is that?

Two of the most personal aspects of our lives are money and sex. But, these are also two aspects of our spiritual lives that need the most work. What principles can we learn about how to honor God with our money and our bodies from the story of Jonah?

Because UNLEASH is about freeing up resources for more of God's work, when the topic of money comes up, it can reveal areas of unrepentance in our finances. Repentance brings freedom! We are free to experience joy again! We are free from shame and guilt! We are free to pray boldly! We are free to share openly! We are free to give generously! Jesus said in Matthew 6:21, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Many of us need to repent of greed. Greed is present when we assume that all or most of our money is for our own consumption. What is true of a person who has repented of the sin of greed and lives generously? Would you say that is true of you? If not, what steps do you need to take to repent of greed and turn toward generosity out of a changed and repentant heart?

[living it out]

Pair up. Have each person take a minute or two to share a time where God brought you to a place of repentance and you confessed and moved on to freedom. It's wise to select a time that you share in your testimony/new life story.

Gather back together. As you did this study, did God reveal an area in your heart that you need to repent of? If you feel comfortable, share in your LifeGroup.

As you prayerfully consider your involvement in UNLEASH, what is a next best step to take as an investor in God's work to express your new life in Christ and the freedom you have because of your repentance and Christ's forgiveness in your life?

Close your group time praying out of confession and repentance as a group. As a group, how do you need to confess and repent of disobedience, greed, spiritual slothfulness. Continue to pray for your neighbors, the nations, and the next generation.

