

Discipleship School

Repentance and Forgiveness

A CHANGE OF HEART • FREEDOM IN CHRIST • A NEW BEGINNING

Overview

This week's discipleship school focused on repentance and forgiveness — what true repentance means, why we often struggle to repent, what happens when we refuse to repent, and the freedom that comes when we accept God's forgiveness.

Repentance is more than saying "sorry." It means a **change of heart**, a transformation, and a turning away from sin towards God. Through Jesus Christ, God has already made a way for our sin to be forgiven through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross. When we repent, we are accepting the forgiveness and freedom God has made available to us.

Without repentance, there can be no true growth. Repentance is necessary for us to grow spiritually, mentally, emotionally and in our relationship with God.

1. Why Do Some People Not Repent?

We may resist repentance for many reasons:



Fear, shame and embarrassment

- Fear of consequences or how others will perceive us.
- Shame makes us feel exposed.
- Embarrassment can be especially hard for believers. *Repentance isn't an admission that we are worthless; it's an acknowledgement that we need Jesus.*



An unwillingness to acknowledge failure

- Pride prevents us from admitting we were wrong.
- We may not want to face that we've fallen short. *It's not about being a bad person — it's about recognising where we've fallen and allowing God to transform us.*



Pride

- Justifying our sin ("There was a reason I did it.").
- Shifting blame onto others.
- Believing we can fix it ourselves instead of needing God. *Repentance says, "Lord, I need You."*



Not listening to God

- A busy, noisy life can keep us from praying and reading His Word.
- Sometimes we already know something is wrong but don't want to hear it confirmed.



Ignorance

- Intentional ignorance: choosing not to know God's Word.
- Unintentional ignorance: simply not having learned or understood yet.

We must keep growing in God's Word.

2. What Does Unrepented Sin Cause?

When we refuse to repent, sin affects our relationship with God and with others.



Distance from God

We become less sensitive to His voice and less willing to spend time in His presence or His Word.



Leading others away from God

We can become lukewarm, and others may think our behaviour is acceptable.



Delusion and strongholds

We justify sin, create false beliefs, and even set up a hierarchy of sin, thinking some sins are "less serious." The Bible says, *"You break one commandment, you break them all."*



Losing freedom, purpose and growth

We miss out on God's fullness and experience less peace, freedom and purpose. We can become spiritually dead and even physically unwell. Repentance opens the door to freedom, restoration and a renewed relationship with God.

3. What Does True Repentance Look Like?

Repentance is an action — a complete turnaround.



Make time to reflect and pray

Ask God, "Lord, what thoughts, attitudes or actions need to change in me?"



Turn away from sin

Choose God's way instead of continuing in old patterns.



Accept God's forgiveness

Surrender your guilt, shame and sin to Him. Jesus has already paid the price.



Restitution and restoration

Sometimes we need to make things right — restore relationships with God and others.



An act of humility

Admit, "I cannot do this in my own strength. I need Jesus." Confess to trusted believers in a safe environment.

4. What Happens When We Sin Again?

Falling again doesn't mean we are beyond God's forgiveness. It's a chance to examine our hearts:

- Did I genuinely repent?
- Did my heart change?
- Did I surrender this to God?
- Am I trying to overcome this in my own strength?
- Is there a pattern or stronghold that needs accountability?

God's forgiveness is for the past, present and future — but grace is not a licence to keep living in sin. We are still called to walk the narrow path, pursue holiness and live like Christ.

When we fall, we return to God again.

5. Forgiveness: Why, What and How Much?

There should be joy in repentance — not because we are happy we sinned, but because we are set free.



God rejoices when we repent

The story of the prodigal son shows us that God welcomes us with joy, restores us and celebrates our return.



Releases shame, guilt and condemnation

We must let God take what we have been carrying. We can also learn to forgive ourselves — Jesus has already paid the price.



We must forgive others

The Lord's Prayer links God's forgiveness to our willingness to forgive. Unforgiveness blocks joy, love and freedom.



What is in our hearts comes out

Unforgiveness leads to bitterness, negativity and darkness. If we want love, joy and forgiveness to flow from us, we must allow God to transform what is within us.

*"Forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass
against us."*

Matthew 6:12

The Central Message

Repentance is not about proving we are bad people — it's about recognising that we need Jesus.

Pride says:

"I can fix this myself."

Repentance says:

*"Lord, I cannot do this
without You."*

We are not called to create our own plan and rely solely on our own strength. We surrender the guilt, shame and pride to God, listen to Him, obey Him and allow Him to lead us in practical steps of transformation.

Jesus is our daily bread — not once a week or month, but every day. We need Him to guide, strengthen and teach us how to live.

*True repentance is a turning of the heart,
a surrender of pride, an acceptance of God's
forgiveness and a willingness to be transformed.*

Our freedom does not come from pretending we have never failed.
Our freedom comes from admitting we have failed,
turning back to God, and trusting that Jesus
has already made a way for us to be forgiven,
restored and transformed.

*"When I am weak,
then I am strong."*

2 Corinthians 12:10