



Foundations Leaders' Guide

Lesson 2 – Repentance from Dead Works

Objectives

- Continue to get to know group members
- Understand the Biblical definition and importance of repentance
- Help group members discern God's call for repentance in their lives

Preparation

- Establish a meeting place and time
- Pray for the members of your group, that throughout the semester they would “be filled with a knowledge of God's will so they may live a life worthy of the Lord” (*Colossians 1.9-12*)
- Print a notes sheet for each student
- If you are co-leading, determine who will lead which parts of the meeting

Meeting Notes

1. Welcome Jesus

Matthew 18.20: “For where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.”

- ✓ Lead the group in prayer by welcoming Jesus as Lord, and asking Him to teach and transform each member of the group.

2. Welcome Each Other

- ✓ Lead the group in a personal discussion about how each member is doing, how God is working in the group and lives of each member, or any other topics. It can also be helpful for the group to share a funny story or personal story relevant to the day’s lesson.

3. Receive From the Lord

3.1 Review

Spend time reviewing the content from lesson 1, including Standing in the Gap’s mission, the four chairs of discipleship, and the content from any previous lessons.

Teacher’s Note: *Group members should already be familiar with this content. To help them remember and memorize it, ask questions. For example, rather than stating “The purpose of Standing in the Gap is to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ,” ask “What is the purpose of Standing in the Gap?”*

3.2 Repentance

As the first Foundational teaching, **repentance from dead works** (or “acts that lead to death”) is crucial for all Christians to understand. It is one of the most important teachings in the Christian church. In fact, Jesus himself begins his ministry by calling the people to repent:

📖 *Mark 1.15*

- ? What is your experience in hearing about repentance?
- ? If you heard Jesus say this today, what would you think he meant by “repent”?

The Greek word for repentance in the New Testament is “metanoeo” (pronounced meh-tah-noh-eh-oh), which means, “to change one’s mind.” To repent can also be described as a **180-degree turn**; in other words, one who repents completely turns their back on their old ways.

Repentance is important because all of humanity has fallen to sin.

📖 *Romans 3:22-23*

- ? What is your understanding of the word “sin”? Do you agree with Paul’s statement that “all have sinned”? Why or why not?

Sin is more than just “doing bad things.” Sin is anything that causes us to fall short of God’s perfect design for humanity. The effects of sin can be seen in mistreatment of others, imperfect governments, suffering, oppression, our own thoughts and hearts, and so much more.

According to these Scriptures, if we are to have life in Christ, we must **change our mind** about sin and **turn away from** it. Repentance is often thought of as simply being sorry or expressing remorse, but true repentance is much more.

📖 *2 Corinthians 7.10-11*

📖 *Ephesians 4.20-24*

- ? Have you ever had to “put off” a bad habit, unhealthy relationship, or some other kind of problem, and replace it with something good? What was that experience like?

Emotions such as sorrow hopefully accompany repentance, but the act of repenting is **an action, not a feeling**. In *Ephesians 4.20-24*, Paul instructs us to “put off our old self” and to “put on the new self,” just as we remove dirty clothes to replace them with clean ones. This is the essence of repentance, to replace the old self – our earthly nature and desires – with the new self – the heavenly nature and desires of Jesus Christ. Paul helps clarify this in *Colossians 3.5-17*. The first half of the passage describes the old self that we are to put off, and the second half describes the new self we are to put on.

📖 *Colossians 3.5-17*

- ? This passage is packed with lots of difficult instruction. What is your initial response to it?

Jesus himself preaches not of self-gratification or self-fulfillment, but of **self-denial**.

📖 *Luke 9.23-27*

- ? Why do you think the Bible speaks so strongly about self-denial and the cost of following Jesus? Do you agree?
- ? How does this compare with the message of the world around us?

We must also note the Bible’s instruction to repent of religious practices that are worthless or hypocritical.

📖 *Optional passage: Colossians 2.16-23*

📖 *2 Timothy 3:1-5*

- ? What do you think Paul means by “having a form of godliness but denying its power”? Have you witnessed or experienced this in your own life?

Repentance is not just a turning away from the ungodly; it also involves actively turning toward God. When you want to change your diet, you must replace unhealthy foods with healthy ones. We will discuss this next week when we study **faith**.

Even when we repent, the old self still struggles against the new self. This part of the Christian life has been described as a battle between two dogs: one dog represents the old self, with its sinful behaviors and desires; the other dog represents the new self, made in the image of Jesus Christ. The dogs constantly fight for control, and the one you feed the most will always be the one that wins.

- ? What is something you plan to take away from this study?

4. Offer Response to the Lord

- ✓ Lead the group in prayer by thanking the Lord for his presence, and asking Him to continue to teach and transform the group through the power of the Holy Spirit.