

BGCC Community Group Guide



Where It Starts

September 13th

It Starts Here

2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51, Luke 12

Last week, we talked about how our past, upbringing, and family history can help explain some of our tendencies, but they do not excuse our sin. We looked at Joseph and saw how God can give us a new identity and a new path.

But recognizing where our struggles come from is only part of the journey. Once we recognize our sin and remember who we are in Christ, we have to take the next step: **repentance**.

David gives us a powerful picture of what repentance looks like. His story reminds us that we can spend a great deal of energy trying to hide, explain, or fix our sin ourselves. But eventually, we have to stop looking outward and look inward. We have to acknowledge, "I have sinned against the Lord."

And then Jesus gives us an even greater picture in the story of the Prodigal Son. Repentance is not simply turning away from sin—it is **turning back toward the Father**, who is ready to receive us with mercy, grace, and love.

1. Recognize Your Sin

"You are that man." — 2 Samuel 12:7

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'" — 2 Samuel 12:13

Summary

David had spent a significant amount of time running from God rather than running toward Him. In 2 Samuel 11, there is a striking absence of David seeking the Lord. He stayed home when he

should have gone to battle, pursued Bathsheba, committed adultery, attempted to cover his sin, and ultimately arranged for Uriah to be killed. David kept trying to solve the problem himself.

Then Nathan confronted him: **“You are that man.”** David finally stopped looking at someone else’s sin and recognized his own. He didn’t blame his circumstances, his difficult past, his position as king, or anyone else. He simply said, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Repentance begins when we stop making excuses and honestly acknowledge our sin before God.

It is a strange thing, but we tend to judge others by their actions and ourselves by our intentions. Inevitably, that makes us to judge others more harshly than ourselves.

Group Question: Why do you think it can be easier to recognize and condemn someone else's sin than to honestly recognize our own?

Personal Relevance

Our past can explain some of our tendencies, but it does not excuse our choices. We may have inherited unhealthy patterns, experienced painful circumstances, or been influenced by the people who raised us. But eventually, we have to recognize what we are personally choosing.

Sometimes God uses another person, a circumstance, or even our own conscience to say, “You are that person.” The question is whether we will become defensive or humble ourselves before God.

Flow Question: What are some ways people commonly try to explain, minimize, hide, or justify their sin instead of simply admitting it?

Reflection Question: Is there an area of your life where God may be asking you to stop looking outward and honestly acknowledge, “This is mine. I have sinned”?

2. Stop Trying to Fix It Yourself

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” — Psalm 51:10

Summary

After Nathan confronted David, David didn't try to negotiate his way out of his sin. He didn't offer God a list of good things he would do to make up for the bad things. Instead, Psalm 51 shows David coming completely broken before God. “Have mercy on me.” “Wash me.” “Cleanse me.” “Create in me.” David recognized something important: **he could not fix himself.**

True repentance is more than deciding to “do better.” It is surrendering ourselves to the One who can actually forgive, cleanse, heal, and transform us. David's prayer is not, “God, give me a better plan.” It is, “God, change my heart.”

Group Question: What is the difference between trying to “do better” after we sin and genuinely repenting before God?

Personal Relevance

It is easy to approach repentance like a transaction: “I messed up, so I’ll do something good now.” But Christianity isn’t about balancing the scales ourselves. Repentance means acknowledging that we need God. We don’t come to Him because we have figured everything out. We come because we haven’t. The goal isn’t simply behavior modification. It is a transformed heart that increasingly desires what God desires.

Flow Question: Why do you think we are often tempted to fix our sin ourselves instead of bringing it honestly to God?

Reflection Question: When you recognize sin in your life, do you tend to hide it, compensate for it, or surrender it to God? What would it look like for you to pray, “Create in me a pure heart, O God”?

3. Turn Around and Come Home

“So he got up and went to his father.” — Luke 15:20

Summary

Jesus’ story of the Prodigal Son gives us a picture of what repentance looks like from another angle. The son had rejected his father, demanded his inheritance, left home, and wasted everything. Eventually, he came to his senses. He recognized where his choices had taken him and decided to return to his father. Notice the movement: **he turned around and went home.**

That is the heart of repentance. Repentance is not simply feeling bad about what we have done. It means turning away from the direction we have been walking and turning back toward the Father. The son even prepared a speech. He wanted to explain himself and offer himself as a servant. But when he returned, the father wasn’t standing there waiting to say, “I told you so.” He was watching for him. And when he saw his son coming, **he ran to him.**

Group Question: What do you think is the difference between feeling guilty about sin and actually turning back to God?

Personal Relevance

Sometimes we know exactly what we have done wrong, but we remain where we are. We think about it. We feel guilty. We analyze it. We might even talk about it. We may even understand why we struggle with it. But repentance requires movement. The son had to get up and go

home. There comes a point when we have to stop trying to figure everything out and simply turn back to the Father.

Flow Question: What can keep someone from actually turning back to God even after they recognize that they have sinned?

Reflection Question: Is there an area where you know you need to turn around and come back to God? What would taking that step actually look like this week?

4. Trust the Father's Heart

“While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion.” — Luke 15:20

Summary

The most beautiful part of Jesus' story may not be the son's return, but the Father's response. The son comes home expecting to explain himself. He had a speech prepared. He expects to be treated like a servant. But the Father runs, embraces him, restores him, and loves him.

The Father doesn't minimize what the son did. The son really did sin. He really did waste what had been given to him. But the Father's response shows that repentance does not lead us into condemnation—it brings us back into relationship. The Father had been watching for his son to come home.

This is the picture Jesus gives us of God's heart toward us. We don't have to clean ourselves up before coming to Him. We don't have to pay back what we have lost. We don't have to create the perfect speech. We simply come. Jesus has already paid the price.

Group Question: Why do you think we sometimes struggle with *expecting* God's response of Grace?

Personal Relevance

Our understanding of repentance can be shaped by our experiences with people. Some of us may expect God to respond the way an imperfect earthly father, parent, friend, or authority figure would respond.

But Jesus shows us something different. The Father isn't waiting to say, “I told you so.” He is looking for His children to come home. The gospel doesn't tell us that our sin doesn't matter. It tells us that **Jesus has already paid for it**. That means we don't have to run from God when we sin. We can run toward Him.

Flow Question: How might understanding God's grace change the way we respond when we realize we've sinned?

Reflection Question: When you think about coming to God after you've failed, do you picture yourself running toward Him or trying to hide from Him? What does the Father's response in Luke 15 teach you about His heart?

Conclusion

Repentance starts with recognizing our sin, but it doesn't end there.

We **recognize** what we've done.

We **remember** who we belong to.

We **repent** and turn away from our sin.

And then we **return to the Father**.

David shows us what it looks like to stop hiding and say, "I have sinned against the Lord." Psalm 51 shows us that repentance is asking God to create a clean heart within us rather than trying to fix ourselves.

Then Jesus gives us the picture of the Father waiting for His son to come home. The Father isn't asking us to bring Him a perfect record. He isn't asking us to fix the past. He isn't asking us to repay what we've lost. He's asking us to come home. And when we do, we discover that His grace is greater than our sin.

Our past may influence us, but it doesn't have to define what we pass on. We cannot change what was modeled for us, but through Jesus, we can change what we model for others. Come to the Father. Admit your sin. Receive His grace. Let Him change your heart. Then, from that place, we can begin to model something different for the people coming behind us.