

# **Bible Study Guide: Return to Me – A Heart That Truly Repents**

 Source Transcript:

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## **Big Idea**

**God desires not outward religion but inward transformation—a genuine return to Him marked by repentance, surrender, and a changed heart.**

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## **Theme**

**Lent begins with a call to return to God wholeheartedly, moving beyond empty rituals into a deep, authentic relationship with Him.**

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## **Core Scripture**

### **Joel 2:12–13**

“Return to me with all your heart... rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and compassionate...”

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## **Introduction: The Call to Return**

Joel speaks:

- During a time of crisis
- With urgency and clarity

### **Key Insight:**

“God is not after your performance—He is after your heart.”

### **The Invitation**

- Return
  - Repent
  - Be renewed
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## **Main Point 1: God Calls Us to Return**

### **Explanation**

God says:

- “Return to Me”

### **Spiritual Truth**

We often:

- Drift away
- Lose focus

“Return to God with all your heart.”

### **Application**

- Where have I drifted from God?
- What is pulling me away?

### **Sticky Quote:**

“God’s call is always to come back.”

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## **Main Point 2: True Repentance Is From the Heart**

### **Explanation**

“Rend your heart”:

- Means inner change

### **Spiritual Truth**

God desires:

- Authentic repentance
- Not outward display

“God cares about your heart, not rituals.”

### **Application**

- Is my repentance real or surface-level?
- What needs to change inside me?

### **Sticky Quote:**

“Real repentance starts within.”

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## **Main Point 3: Ritual Without Heart Is Empty**

### **Explanation**

“Not your garments”:

- External actions are not enough

### **Spiritual Truth**

Religion without transformation:

- Has no power

“Lip service is not enough.”

### **Application**

- Am I going through the motions?
- Where am I lacking sincerity?

### **Sticky Quote:**

“Empty rituals cannot change the heart.”

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## **Main Point 4: God Is Gracious and Merciful**

### **Explanation**

God's nature:

- Loving
- Patient
- Kind

## **Spiritual Truth**

God:

- Wants to forgive
- Welcomes us back

“God receives you with open arms.”

## **Application**

- Do I believe God is merciful?
- Am I afraid to return?

## **Sticky Quote:**

“God's mercy invites your return.”

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## **Main Point 5: Repentance Requires Action**

### **Explanation**

Joel calls for:

- Fasting
- Weeping

- Mourning

## **Spiritual Truth**

Repentance involves:

- Emotion
- Action
- Commitment

“Move away from what separates you.”

## **Application**

- What actions show my repentance?
- What do I need to stop doing?

## **Sticky Quote:**

“Repentance moves you to act.”

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## **Main Point 6: Lent Is a Time of Reflection**

### **Explanation**

Lent invites:

- Self-examination

## **Spiritual Truth**

We must:

- Look inward
- Be honest

“Look inside your heart.”

### **Application**

- What is God revealing to me?
- Am I listening?

### **Sticky Quote:**

“Reflection leads to transformation.”

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## **Main Point 7: Letting Go Is Essential**

### **Explanation**

We must:

- Release worldly habits

### **Spiritual Truth**

You cannot:

- Hold onto both God and the world

“Move away from the world.”

### **Application**

- What do I need to let go of?

- What is holding me back?

**Sticky Quote:**

“Release what keeps you from God.”

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**Main Point 8: God Wants a Relationship, Not Routine**

**Explanation**

God desires:

- Connection
- Not ritual

**Spiritual Truth**

Faith is:

- Relational
- Personal

“God wants your heart.”

**Application**

- Is my faith relational?
- Or routine?

**Sticky Quote:**

“Relationship over routine.”

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## **Main Point 9: Lent Leads to Discovering Jesus**

### **Explanation**

Through returning:

- We encounter Christ

### **Spiritual Truth**

Jesus:

- Is the center
- Is the goal

“Discover the beauty of Jesus.”

### **Application**

- How am I pursuing Jesus?
- What does that look like daily?

### **Sticky Quote:**

“Lent leads you to Jesus.”

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## **Main Point 10: Transformation Begins Today**

### **Explanation**

Ash Wednesday marks:

- A beginning

## **Spiritual Truth**

You can:

- Start fresh
- Begin again

“Begin your journey today.”

## **Application**

- What step will I take today?
- Am I ready to begin?

## **Sticky Quote:**

“Today is the day to return.”

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## **Discussion Questions**

1. What does it mean to “return to God” in your life?
  2. Where have you been going through the motions spiritually?
  3. What needs to change in your heart?
  4. What are you holding onto that you need to release?
  5. How can you make this Lenten journey meaningful?
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## **Practical Application Steps**

### **1. Reflect Honestly**

- Examine your heart

### **2. Repent Fully**

- Turn away from sin

### **3. Let Go of Distractions**

- Remove what pulls you away

### **4. Seek God Intentionally**

- Prayer, Scripture, worship

### **5. Begin the Journey**

- Take your first step today

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## **Closing Prayer**

Father,  
We return to You with all our hearts.

Search us,  
change us,  
and renew us from within.

Help us to move beyond routine  
and into true relationship with You.

Lead us through this Lenten journey  
and draw us closer to You each day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

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### **Final Takeaway**

**God is calling you back—not to religion, but to  
relationship—so return to Him with your whole heart  
and begin again today.**