

Repentance Study For Teens

A Resource from
Repentance: A Cosmic Shift of Mind and Heart

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Purpose

The response to the gospel is to repent and be baptized for forgiveness of sins (*Acts 2:36-38*). The Greek word for repentance, *meta-noia*, means “after – mindset.” With this gift of a new mindset or worldview, we see clearly to take the right path... the path of living for God rather than for self. Be careful to discern an outward compliance to parental or church expectations vs. an awakening to come to our senses and live the way God had always intended for us. It is more than a decision and more than conforming to the teen ministry; it is God providing a new worldview, which *always* results in the fruit of a turned, changed life. Every teen faces the temptation to give the “right” answers rather than “real” answers as they pursue repentance. They also face the great challenge to fear God rather than man (even good men and women). This study is designed to first assess their “real” *-noia* and guide them towards the “right”-*noia*.

- **Romans 12:2.** The first step in changing your worldview (or *noia*) is to assess your current worldview. Take a ruthless and candid inventory of how you make sense of the world. It’s time to be raw rather than right:
 - How do you win at the game of life? By what rules do you play the game? What’s your strategy for winning? How do you know whether you are winning or losing? (ex: “my parents aren’t hassling me” or “the teen ministry thinks I’m committed” or “my grades are good enough for college admission” or “my classmates think I’m all that and a bag of chips”)
 - The world has invested countless hours to effectively conform or shape your mind to its mold. How have television shows, movies, friends, and teachers influenced the way you view: your purpose, morality, truth, God, sin, dating, family, community, and the meaning of life? Does your mindset more closely match Jesus’ mindset or the mindset of your culture? How do you need to transform and renew your mind (*meta-noia*) in these areas?
- **Luke 3:7-14.** John confronts a religious crowd (and you are part of a religious crowd!). What did the crowd want John to do for them? Why were their motives for getting baptized off track?
 - Have you ever had questionable motives for getting baptized... what were they?
 - Based on John’s remarks, the crowd had pointed to their relationship with Abraham as a source of security; what’s wrong with “playing the game of life” by those rules? Have you ever put your trust in your family or in your participation in the teen ministry rather than in your repentance? What would John say about that strategy? What needs to happen instead?
 - How will John know that people in this crowd have repented? How will you and I know that you have repented? What’s the difference between *metanoia* and the fruit of *metanoia*? How are they inseparable?
 - Notice that John tells seekers what the fruit of their repentance should be – in some cases he tells them to start doing something, and other cases he tells them to stop doing something. If you were to ask John, “What should I do?” - what one thing would he tell you to both start doing and stop doing to prove your repentance? Why would that be good evidence of your *metanoia*? What rules in the “game of life” would need to change if you started bearing this fruit?
 - Have you really repented if you change your behavior without changing your heart and mindset? Said another way, have you really repented if you simply change the way you play the game without changing the rules to game? Repentance changes all the rules (i.e. living for Jesus rather than for self, pleasing God rather than people, fearing God rather than man, etc.). When those rules change, your life cannot help but show it.
 - What’s the consequence of not bearing the good fruit of repentance? What’s the consequence if you do repent and bear the good fruit of that repentance? What would keep you from that sweet reward?

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- **Mark 10:17-27 vs. Luke 19:1-10.** Two rich men seek out Jesus. Read both stories and then consider the contrast between these two seekers:
 - What did the “rich young ruler” do right in seeking Jesus? What have you done right? What was wrong about his approach “to inherit eternal life?” Why didn’t he repent? What keeps you from repenting? Can you repent by trying to “check the next box” or “jump through the next hoop” – why not? When Jesus perceives this approach to repentance in this seeker, what challenge does He issue? What were the limits to this seeker’s trust? What are the limits to your trust in Jesus? As Jesus looks at you with love, what challenge does He issue to you? If you walk away sad, what will you lose? If you lose all for Jesus, what will you gain? What keeps you from letting go of that anchor that will sink your pursuit of Jesus?
 - What did Zacchaeus do right in seeking Jesus? How can you imitate him? (Get practical, even talk about implementing these applications today.) If the Rich Young Ruler had a minimalist attitude (“how much must I do to inherit eternal life” – i.e. what’s the minimum requirement for eternal life), then how would you characterize Zacchaeus’ attitude? Do you picture his face as fallen or uplifted? What makes him appear to be so zealous and joyful? Both men were rich, what separates them as they both encounter Jesus? Which man is better off today?
- **Acts 4:32-37 vs. 5:1-11.** Another contrast... Barnabas vs. Ananias&Sapphira. All seek to support the cause of Christ through the His church. However, God can always spot a poser:
 - Describe the church you encounter in this passage. Would you like to be part of the church you see in Acts 4; how about Acts 5 - why or why not? Joseph gains respect through his sacrifice; have you ever been praised for something that you’ve done for the ministry? How did that make you feel? How do you think Ananias&Sapphira felt towards Joseph? Have you ever felt competitive toward another teen? Tell me about that. What were the rules of the game that caused you to get competitive? How can you rewrite those rules?
 - What were the rules of the game for Ananias&Sapphira? How do your rules for playing the game of life share similarities with their rules? What sacrifice did they make for the church? How have you made sacrifices for the church? Why didn’t they “win” at the game they were playing? How can you win the real game that God wants you to play?
- **2nd Corinthians 7:8-11.** Paul helps the Corinthian church to repent by sharply reproofing them through a confrontational letter. God wants everyone to repent; thus, He will also reprove, expose, and rebuke you. The big question... how will you respond? One response leads to death while the other leads to repentance and salvation! (Chapters 8 & 9 - “Worldly Sorrow Brings Death” and “Godly Sorrow Produces Repentance” - of *Repentance* are useful as a reading assignment for this study.)
 - Of the characters that we’ve just studied, who have exhibited worldly sorrow? Have you ever been sorry for something? Have you ever been sorry and not changed? Beware of these symptoms of worldly sorrow: self pity/victimized, damage control, selective change, defensive (i.e. excuses). Discuss these within the context of a recent reproof. It’s vital to expose all excuses and victimization strategies that undermine repentance. How could you respond differently?
 - What are the characteristics of godly sorrow? (The definitions in Chapter 9 are quite helpful for this study). How have the characters (and other great examples that you can share) whom we’ve studied exhibited godly sorrow? Where did this response lead them? How long does godly sorrow last (see. Verse 8)? How does (discuss each one in the list separately) _____ [*earnestness, eagerness, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, readiness for justice*] produce repentance?
- **Acts 3:19-20.** What’s the beauty of repentance? It’s time to return to your Father. He’s waiting!