



## Week 4 – Group Discussion Questions

### JONAH 1:17-2:10

Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. <sup>8</sup> So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?” <sup>9</sup> He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” <sup>10</sup> This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.) <sup>11</sup> The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” <sup>12</sup> “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.” <sup>13</sup> Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. <sup>14</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” <sup>15</sup> Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. <sup>16</sup> At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Eric mentioned three observations about Jonah’s prayer and about counterfeit repentance.

- Jonah’s prayer is focused on self rather than God.
- Jonah’s prayer is focused on circumstances rather than eternity.
- Jonah’s prayer includes no confession of his disobedience.
- Counterfeit repentance is self-focused; true repentance is God focused.
- Counterfeit repentance is circumstance focused; true repentance is eternity focused.
- Counterfeit repentance lacks honest confession of sin.

1) How would Jonah have responded if he were truly repentant?

2) What are some ways we fake repentance today?

3) Despite his disobedience, Jonah continues to experience the unceasing mercies of God. Today, you and I enjoy that same love of God through faith in Jesus Christ. How does the good news of God's patient love encourage you today?

## Week 4: The Practice of Repentance: UP

God is preparing our church for a significant move of his Spirit, and it will be revealed by people having a greater hunger and thirst after God and his Spirit over anything else this world has to offer. From cover to cover, the Bible introduces us to a God who is faithful when we are faithless. Scripture contains countless examples of individuals who walk in disobedience—we see it in our own lives as well—yet God remains gracious and committed, introducing opportunities for repentance that His people would return to Him. Those who have spent a significant portion of their lives in church often grow accustomed to Christian language without a deep reflection on its meaning. “Repentance” is one of those words we talk about in church and see in Scripture, but we don’t always understand its significance to our relationship with God. The primary Hebrew term used to describe repentance in the Old Testament is *shub*, which literally means, “turn around” or “turn back” (see Isa. 30:15). The Greek equivalent used in the New Testament is *metanoeo*, meaning, “change one’s mind” (see Matt. 4:17; Lk. 24:46–48; Rom. 2:4). Repentance involves both the mind and behavior. It is a transition away from ungodly ways to that which pleases God.

It is interesting that in the book of Jonah, Jonah never repents but the people of Ninevah do! Many times in walking the way of Jesus we go through “counterfeit repentance.” Sin loves secrecy. That’s why Jonah ran from God and hid under the boat in the storm! Nurture a secret sin long enough and you will have an addiction— a habitual pattern of hiding, lying, denial and self-deception. We can recognize sin and deal with the shame but never repent and turn from it.

We often take the genuineness of our repentance for granted, as if feeling sorry for our sin is proof enough. But just after Paul preaches repentance, he commands his listeners to “prove their repentance by their deeds” (Acts 26:20). Sin’s strategy is to produce a kind of counterfeit repentance within us. Our broken way of dealing with sin is to magnify our inner remorse, to feel badly about ourselves and our behavior and to cover ourselves in shame. Rather than appropriately dealing with our guilt, we cover ourselves in shame until the storm has passed. We consider that these bad feelings toward ourselves somehow cover the cost of the behavior. Soon the cycle resets and the process repeats itself.

Proverbs 28:13-14 says *“Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.*

Real repentance and confession breaks patterns. It stops the cycle. The greatest news for those who are repentant and confess sin? They receive mercy and their heart becomes even more sensitive to the Holy Spirit. Repentance drives hunger for God!

Over the coming weeks, we will be going through Psalm 51 to help us process together what true repentance looks like as it relates to God, to fellow believers, and to the people around us. This week we will work through the “UP” dimension as it relates to God.

1. There are two categories of sin: Sins of commission and sins of Omission
  - Sins of commission: Things that you SHOULD NOT do but do anyway.
  - Sins of omission: Things that you SHOULD DO but don't do.
2. Open your Bibles or devices to Psalm 51. Read through the entire passage.
3. Read through this list together of UP questions. What are the questions that God might be leading you to? What is getting your attention? Ask God to search your heart to see if there is anything He wants to show you.
  - As I read the Bible, am I seeking knowledge or transformation?
  - Am I growing, staying stagnate, or regressing in my pursuit of God?
  - Am I aware of the Spirit's promptings in my heart, and am I responding?
  - Am I protecting my day off, resting enough, exercising, and eating right?
  - Am I experiencing the Father's love or am I trying to earn it? Do I sense he is proud of me?
  - Is there an area of sin in my life that needs to be exposed?
  - Am I seeing God move through the power of prayer?
  - Do I still feel passion about living for Jesus, or am I going through the motions and feeling spiritually dry?
  - Do I have rhythms in my life of regularly spending time in the word, prayer, and worship? Am I abiding like John 15 speaks of?
4. Spend several minutes in silent prayer acknowledging that The Holy Spirit is present and ready to work. Go through this process as a group identifying, discussing, and confessing to each other.
  1. Define the sin
    - a. “Lord, I have not been practicing a Sabbath Day.”

- b. "Lord, I have been placing my relationship with my family above my relationship with you."
- c. Lord, I have been watching Netflix instead of seeking first your Kingdom"
- 2. Appeal to God's mercy (v.1) Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love.
- 3. Don't be defensive. (v.4) against you, and only you, have I sinned...
- 4. Look to Jesus' Work for you! (v.7) cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean...
- 5. Feel the brokenness of this sin and ask God to heal you (v.8) let my crushed bones be healed!
- 6. Allow the Holy Spirit to comfort you (v.11) The grief you're experiencing is a sign that the Holy Spirit is working in you!
- 7. Declare truth and celebrate His goodness (v. 12-15)
- 8. Resolve to believe and obey!
- 9. Carry out a plan and be accountable to the group or to someone else!

James 5:16 says *Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

As a closing to your practice of repentance and prayer, it's a powerful statement to remind each other that we are forgiven! One of the enemy's strategies is to make us believe that some of our sins have not yet been forgiven. He does this to keep control over our lives. However, when we confess with confidence that all of our sins have been forgiven by the blood of Jesus, we experience victory. Right now, proclaim that by the blood of Jesus, all of your sins have been forgiven.

Say to each other: You are forgiven by the blood of Jesus!

## Example Schedule for Group Time

10 min.	Welcome time
10 min.	Ice Breaker or Relational time (i.e. Sweets and Sours, a game, etc.)
7 min.	Watch the video
20 min.	Discussion Questions
15 min.	The Practice Repentance: UP

**Weekly videos links and PDF available at [gracegathering.com/groups](https://gracegathering.com/groups)**