

3. A Pattern for Joy

David has given us a pattern for joy through repentance. Admit your sin, ask forgiveness, receive forgiveness, and rejoice.

Psalm 16:11 ESV - 11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

We don't need to carry the weight of our guilt forever. The price of redemption was paid long ago. Where does Psalm 16:11 tell us we will find fullness of joy? Is there anything keeping you separated from the presence of the Lord?

Take a moment for silence and allow time to confess, repent and receive God's forgiveness. When you finish, spend a some time praising God and rejoicing in His presence.

WRAP-UP

God promises joy in the presence of the Lord. But sin separates us from a just and righteous God. It is only when we own our sin, confess and repent that we can receive God's forgiveness and mercy. Until we do, we will be joyless as we hide and lie to avoid being found out. But when we repent God does the work of cleansing us and restoring our relationship with Him, where we will find joy.

MEMORY VERSE

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and make me willing to obey you.
- Psalm 51:12 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life

Challenge-. Find a trusted prayer partner for a time of mutual confession and repentance. When you are done, take time to share the joy of God's forgiveness and celebrate together.

“The Promise of Joy”

Advent Promises #3

INTRODUCTION

In the third week of Advent, we light the candle of Joy! It is a time of celebration and rejoicing, but the road to joy takes us by way of repentance. Huh? Repenting doesn't sound anything like joy. In fact, just the opposite, it seems somber and reflective. How on earth does repentance lead to joy? The answer to that can be found in Psalm 51. It is a Psalm of David written after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband was exposed. David's sin was “found out” and he knew it, so we see in this Psalm, the pattern for all of us to find our way through repentance to joy.

Ice Breaker

Is there a junk drawer or closet in your house you hope nobody ever finds?

Key Passage

Psalm 51:8-12 NLT - 8 Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me--now let me rejoice. 9 Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me. 11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you.

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Repentance is a Response

Psalm 51:1-3 NLT - 1 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. 2 Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. 3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night.

Who doesn't want joy? But you can't have joy when you are worried that you will be "found out." David experienced this firsthand when Nathan the prophet confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, her husband. Up to that point, he was in denial. It is a little like knowing you have gained weight but refusing to step on the scale, because if you don't see it, you can pretend it isn't there. But even then, you know the truth and it will nag you whether you admit it or not.

When David finally stopped avoiding the inevitable and came to God asking for mercy, what characteristics of God (verse 1) was he relying on as the reason he would be forgiven? This means he wasn't relying on his own good deeds to balance out the wrong he had done. He knew the penalty for his sin was death.

What does David say about his actions in verse 3? What excuses or flat out lies, do you think David may have told himself about his sin?

There might be something right now, or in the past, that "haunted" you the way David's sin haunted him. If you realize that you have been making excuses, or lying to yourself about it, now is the time to make it right.

Psalm 51:6 NKJV - 6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, And in the hidden [part] You will make me to know wisdom.

In this verse the word for "inward parts" is *tuhâ* and means the hidden recesses. David says God wants "gut level honesty".

Are you ready for gut level honesty with God? Ask yourself if there is a conversation like David's you need to have with God.

2. Repentance Requires Acknowledgment

Psalm 51:3-5 NLT - 3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night. 4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. 5 For I was born a sinner--yes, from the moment my mother conceived me.

By the time David wrote Psalm 51 he was done making excuses about his sin, he owned it. In today's culture you won't get much support for recognizing your sin. That's probably because other people don't want to own their sin.

How do you think your friends would respond if you told them you were grieved by your sins?

But David had a clear perspective on the nature of sin. Nathan made that quite clear.

2 Samuel 12:9 NLT - 9 Why, then, have you despised the word of the LORD and done this horrible deed? For you have murdered Uriah the Hittite with the sword of the Ammonites and stolen his wife.

In what way did adultery and murder show contempt for God's word?

To restore his joy David had to repent.

Isaiah 59:2 NLT - 2 It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, he has turned away and will not listen anymore.

The word repentance in the Old Testament is *nōham* and means sorrow. When David took ownership of his sin he was grieved. David realized that sin had broken his relationship with God. In the New Testament we find a different word for sin, the word *metanoia*, which chiefly means a change of mind that involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. That kind of repentance is how we restore our relationship with God. It is how we recapture our joy in the presence of the Lord.

What would you say is the greatest hinderance to repentance; unwillingness to admit fault, a wrong understanding of the gravity of sin, doubting that God either knows or cares about our sin, not trusting God's willingness or ability to forgive, or something else?