

Operation 180

Session 3: The call to repentance

Home Group Edition

Session 2 review

- ❖ Daily meditations
 - Did any of the readings stand out to you?
- ❖ Spirituality of the Psalms Life Cycle Chart
 - Are any cycles in your life becoming apparent? Where are you now?
- ❖ Homework: Life moments snapshot worksheet and timeline
 - Did completing the timeline reveal any insight into your life story? Where was God during the good moments? The bad moments?

Review

Let's look at our theme passage for this series:

44 He told them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled." 45 Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.

46 He also said to them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, 47 and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And look, I am sending you what my Father promised. As for you, stay in the city until you are empowered from on high." (Luke 24:44–49)

Let's unpack this passage and see how it provides an outline for this series:

- ❖ Verses 44-45: Here we see Jesus “opening their minds to understand the Scriptures” in such a way that the disciples see the Old Testament as being *fulfilled* in Him. As we will see in this session, *hope*, as defined in Old Testament terms, was seen as *waiting* for God to act. With Jesus being the fulfillment of Scripture, the *waiting was over*. This is cause for great hope!
 - These verses correspond to Step 2 of a 12-Step program.
- ❖ Verse 46: Here, Jesus teaches that Scripture foreshadowed that He, as God's chosen agent on Earth to make all things new (the Messiah), would be a suffering servant and resurrected from the dead. This is the centerpiece of hope in the New Testament - the Resurrection Power. We will see the Apostles preaching the power of the resurrection as proof of Jesus as Messiah throughout the Book of Acts.
 - This verse corresponds to Steps 2 and 3 of a 12-Step program.
- ❖ Verse 47: This verse forms the center for the bulk of this series- the healing power of repentance and forgiveness *for all*. Luke, a physician, makes a great effort to document how Jesus had the authority to forgive sins on Earth and how much of that healing involved forgiveness. We will begin to do the hard work of repentance in this session, and through this hard work, we will reap the benefits of hope and healing that only Jesus Christ can provide.
 - This verse corresponds to Step 1 (powerlessness over sin, our “bottom”), Steps 4 (a sin inventory), Step 5 (confession), Steps 6 & 7 (sanctification), and Steps 8 & 9 (forgiveness and amends).
- ❖ Verse 47-49: These verses describe discipleship under the Lucan Commission. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have a message to proclaim to all nations: *The Good News of forgiveness in the repentance of sins*. We are to proclaim and witness this message to all *under the power of the Holy Spirit*. Of the four Gospels, the Gospel of Luke speaks most about Jesus and the disciples operating under the power of the Holy Spirit. In the Book of Acts, the Apostles are seen operating under the power of the Holy Spirit as the new church is expanding against resistance. We will end this series by seeing how God has gifted each of us in different ways through the Holy Spirit to carry the message of Good News to different people in different places.
 - These verses correspond to Step 10 (perseverance and resisting temptations), Step 11 (desiring the gifts of the Holy Spirit), and Step 12 (carrying the message).

Session 2 review

“*But what does this all mean?*” - Peter was asked this question in our reading last session.

We saw Peter answer the question this way:

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” (Acts 2:36)

Jesus Christ's resurrection proves that Jesus is Lord and Messiah.

In other words, Peter is saying - *THE WAIT IS OVER!*

The hope in waiting we saw in the Psalms in the first session is now over. “*But what should we do now,*” Peter was asked by those gathered in the Upper Room.

In response, we saw Peter lay out our action plan for the next several sessions::

“When they heard this, they were pierced to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what should we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:37–39)

It is here we begin this session.

Introduction

We begin this part of the series with a *call to repentance*. The process of repentance involved in this call will be the subject of the next several sessions.

Peter highlights the hope behind this call and makes an important connection - he ties *the forgiveness of sins to the receiving of the gift of the Holy Spirit*. And this gift is available to *all*, including you, today! Peter says this promise is for you *no matter how far away you are*.

However deep the chasm between you and God, Peter says *there is hope*.

The arrival of the Messiah brings a new season to creation, one of renewal. Renewal of all creation, including us that *only the Messiah can bring*. *Creation is being revived*. God is

beginning the process of restoring creation to where it was in the Garden of Eden, back to a place of *rest and shalom*. Jesus wants to lead you into the next season of your life, free from fear, and give you *rest for your soul*.

All we have to do is *come to Him*. The main focus of this session will be to do just that by obeying Peter's call to repentance. But first, let's look at a most perplexing problem in recovery - when and how we hit our "rock bottom."

What is a "rock bottom?"

Let's begin with a quote from the end of session 1:

It was not the light that made this place so horrible, but it was the light that showed how horrible it was before. So let God's grace just open a window and let the light into a man's soul, and he will stand astonished to see at what a distance he is from God. - C. H. Spurgeon

Sometimes, our friends and family can see the light shining into our lives through a cracked window long before we can. They can see the mess of our lives long before we have the power and ability to engage in any self-reflection. Friends and family may wonder how we can "live that way" or ask, "Do they know how much pain they are causing everyone?"

But through God's grace, some of us eventually have that window opened, and the light illuminates our souls. We suddenly (finally!) see the mess that we are in and move forward in recovery.

For some, addiction, unfortunately, plays out as the primary, chronic, progressive, and fatal disease that it is, and we lose them. I pray constantly that this series reaches someone in time to pull them back from the edge and into the light.

Of all the questions I get as a recovery pastor or law enforcement chaplain, a parent pleading with me and asking, "*When will they stop?*" is one of the toughest to hear and answer. Watching a loved one descend in a slow spiral of self-inflicted pain and suffering is heart-wrenching.

While the Bible does not give us a *timeline* of when someone is ready to repent, I believe it does illustrate a set of *conditions* that must be present for someone to finally repent. These conditions manifest differently in different people and are difficult to influence from the outside. Hence, the seemingly random nature of when one person hits bottom versus another.

The Parable of the Prodigal son

To illustrate, take the parable of the Prodigal Son. Luke relates this parable in Chapter 15 of his gospel. Take a moment and re-read the parable.

The story is familiar to all of us; the younger son cuts ties with his father and family business and ends up living in sin, about to eat pig food. Jesus paints the most vivid picture of the absolute rock bottom of a Jewish citizen as one could imagine.

Of interest for this session is the moment that the Prodigal son turns and repents and heads for home. Luke records Jesus stating it this way:

*“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food, and here I am dying of hunger!’”
(Luke 15:17)*

The key phrase is “when he came to his senses,” with the literal rendering being “when he came to himself.” We hit our bottom when we come to our senses and ourselves. What this means, of course, is different for everybody.

But what does it mean to “come to our senses” in the Bible?

Jesus gives us one more clue: The Prodigal son issues a declaration as he gets ready to go home and make amends with his father. Jesus tells us that the Prodigal son engages in some self-talk and resolves to himself to tell his father this:

“I’ll get up, go to my father, and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight.’” (Luke 15:18)

Jesus is telling us that the Prodigal son “came to his senses” when he was ready to confess that his sin was against God and his family *at the same time*.

The Synchronicity of Sin

This moment in time is so important that I have given it a name: The Synchronicity of Sin. In one instant, the worldview of the person experiencing this changes from a self-centered worldview to one where we suddenly have the realization that our actions are outwardly against both *man and God*. Our views of how our sin impacts both heaven and earth are *synchronized*. *We are part of God’s creation, not the center of it.*

Until this moment in time happens, we can fool ourselves into believing that our sin is not “that bad” in one way or another.

For example, we may know deep down that our self-destructive behaviors are sins against God, but we tell ourselves that we are not really harming our family because we provide a roof over their heads and put meals on the table. Worse yet, we may rationalize, minimize and/or justify our behavior toward our family, all the while hiding from God. So we continue.

Conversely, we may know that our actions are sins against our family, but we will not concede that they are sins against God. After all, we ask ourselves, “*Where is God?*” (See session 1). Again, we engage in the deadly addiction triad of rationalization/minimization/justification by declaring that “God doesn’t care about me,” or “God did this to me,” or “God let this happen to me,” or something similar. Again we continue.

In either case, we are working the two levers of God and family against each other as long as we can. Until we have that moment of synchronization where we know in our deepest heart and soul that we are sinning against God and family at the same time, we will keep digging until we reach that bottom.

This is what the Synchronicity of Sin is about - a moment in time when we realize the path that we are on is not working on any level. It is also a moment where we suddenly realize that we are out of all options and begin to look to our Father, just like the Prodigal son.

It truly is a moment of grace where God reveals *there is another way*.

God shows up in our weakness

God often visits us unexpectedly in a moment of weakness, a moment for some when we are not even looking for God. But He was looking for us. The Apostle Paul says it this way:

“And Isaiah says boldly, I was found by those who were not looking for me; I revealed myself to those who were not asking for me.” (Romans 10:20)

It is in this moment that God’s grace is poured out to us, often when we are at our worst. Known as *enabling grace*, this grace refers to the loving action of God, brought to us through the work of the Holy Spirit. Enabling grace is the Holy Spirit’s work in the hearts of all people, which gives them the freedom to say yes to the Gospel.

We, therefore, reach a point where we can accept or reject this choice. Do we keep digging and deepening our bottom? Or do we respond to this grace and come out of the darkness and into the light?

Godly vs. worldly grief

If we truly experience a moment like the Prodigal son, where we experience synchronicity of sin, realizing that our self-destructive behaviors are sins against both God and family, we move to a stage where we experience what Paul calls “*godly grief*.” He explains godly grief this way:

“*For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, but worldly grief produces death.*” (2 Corinthians 7:10)

Note that Paul is distinguishing *godly grief* from *worldly grief*. This is a key point for our recovery.

When Paul talks about worldly grief, he refers to grief directed at things of the world, as is when things do not go our way, or we lose things that we had, or can’t get the things we want. Worldly grief is a result of *idolatry towards the loss of the world's created things, not grief as the result of the loss of a relationship with the Creator*.

When we are living in sin, our full attention is directed toward experiencing the pleasures and acquiring the wealth of the world. We are operating full speed ahead on self-control *independently of God*. When things go bad, or circumstances do not turn out as expected, we are denied these perceived pleasures and wealth, and we get mad.

The things we idolize can often take the form of something expensive. We are angry because we have suffered a perceived loss. Grief is a natural reaction to the loss of something of value. So when we lose something of value, we grieve.

Since idolatry is sin, worldly grief is rooted in sin. *We are grieving for the wrong reason*.

Paul also states a consequence of idolatry, namely that worldly grief *produces death*. Let’s look at this statement in more detail.

Sin produces death

In at least two places, the Apostle Paul connects living in sin as leading to death. In addition to the Scripture quoted above, he also states:

“*For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” (Romans 6:23)

Putting the two statements together, we get that the *wages of sin*, that is, what we earn from our sin, is *death*. But he also said above that if we lose those wages, we will grieve them, which also *leads to death*.

In other words, one way or another, living in sin leads to death.

But what does Paul mean by *death*?

Certainly, addiction is a progressive and chronic disease that ultimately can and will lead to early death.

But Paul says that Godly grief leads to *salvation without regret*. What does it mean that *grief* can lead to *salvation without regret*? Isn't grief a bad thing? The answer to these questions is key to our recovery.

First, let's look at what *salvation* means in this context. The Greek word being translated here, can, of course, refer to our eternal salvation and an afterlife in the presence of Jesus. Salvation in this context is of course of utmost importance and the source of Christian hope.

But to a Jew in the 1st century, *salvation* had a deeper, spiritual meaning. The word brings to mind images of *rescue* and the actions associated with rescue, such as *deliverance*. *Salvation* results in our *safety* and *health*. In other words, the word *salvation* implies *spiritual salvation* in the *here and now*, as well as eternal salvation in the afterlife.

Repentance, on the other hand, refers to the act where *we turn* from our sin and *toward God's salvation*. Biblical repentance always has a *direction* component, indicating our turn *from sin toward God*. There is always a *movement* on our part involved in repentance.

We cannot repent standing still. We must *move*. This movement occurs *in faith*.

Recall how we have defined *faith* earlier in this series:

Faith = risk + direction

Putting this all together, there is always risk in repentance because to move from the darkness into the light means *our deeds will be exposed*. When we move in faith, we are able to take that risk and *move in the direction of God*. This is how we choose to respond to Jesus' call to *come to Him*.

This is why the first two sessions on hope are so important. As can now be seen, *hope* is the ground floor of our recovery, as *from hope springs faith*. In other words, faith builds upon hope in a direction toward God, powering our recovery.

And now we see that from faith springs the ability to repent *without regret*. This happens because when we turn and move from our past toward God's salvation, we experience the grace that only God can provide. As the distance between God and us decreases, the peace we experience in

God's presence increases. We then realize that the things we used to grieve are no longer as important as our renewed relationship with God. In this realization comes *repentance without regret*. And this repentance leads to *salvation*, not *death*.

Spiritual life vs. death

When Paul speaks of *worldly grief leading to death*, what does he mean? Let's take a look.

A definition for the Biblical concept of death is this:

|Death = the misery of the soul arising from sin

This definition captures the essence of *spiritual death* and the despair that living in sin causes us; our soul is in *misery*. What a terrible place to exist.

We experience spiritual death as the misery of our souls. When our souls are in misery, they can never truly rest and experience the *shalom* peace as God intended. Godly grief enables us to respond to Jesus' call to *come to Him*, and receive His promise of giving *rest to our souls*. This is a powerful and hopeful promise, indeed.

And what is our *soul*? For purposes of this series, I will define the soul as follows:

|Soul = the seat of our Purpose, Appetite, and Will

It is from the soul that our *purpose* arises, for example, what is our purpose upon waking in the morning? The soul is the seat of our being. Our soul drives our *appetite* - what do I do next? It drives our appetite - what am I craving right now? Together, our purpose and appetite drive us in the here and now throughout the day. A temptation can satisfy our appetite and change out entire purpose in a moment.

And from the soul springs our *will*, that is, how we prioritize and make long-term decisions. Am I following the will of a secular worldview, seeking wealth and pleasure through idolatry? Or am I following God's will, as we made a decision to do in the last session?

A soul in misery leads to addiction

When our purpose, appetite, and will are all contrary to the will of God, we distance ourselves from the presence of God. As we saw in the first session, we also begin to distance ourselves from those around us. We are *fig-leafing*, just like Adam and Eve in the Garden.

We find ourselves in the cycle of *fear->hiding->shame*.

To cope, we engage in self-destructive behaviors to manage the despair and misery that eventually become compulsive. We seek relief in (and from) our self-destructive behaviors instead of from (and in) the presence of God. This is the very nature of the sin of idolatry.

When these behaviors become *compulsive*, we enter the cycle of addiction. Compulsive behaviors take over our life. Our purpose, appetite, and will are all centered around self-seeking behavior. As Step 1 says, our lives become *unmanageable*.

Step 1, as modified for this series, reads:

“We admitted we were powerless over our compulsive, self-destructive behaviors, our lives had become unmanageable.”

To sum everything up, our Biblical bottom occurs at the moment we experience Godly grief. We experience this Godly grief as the grace of God. This grace is experienced as a revelation, illuminating in an instant that our behaviors are sins against both God and others. We are instantly convicted of the fact that our self-destructive behaviors have become compulsive, and our lives have become unmanageable. This grace, freely given, produces hope that there is a better way. Moving in faith, we are willing to take a risk, come out of the darkness, and leave shame behind. We repent and move toward the salvation of God, without regret.

Our biblical bottom is when we finally respond to the call from Jesus to *come to me*.

We believe in our soul this Scripture:

“For the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on him will not be put to shame” (Romans 10:11)

Because we believe this in our soul, we are able to move toward Jesus and receive the *rest for our souls* He promises. Rest, not shame. And then is when recovery happens, and our restoration begins.

The components of sin

Before we begin the process of repentance, let's do a deeper dive into what the Bible says about sin, and what God wants to do about it.

The prophet Jeremiah declared that a *new covenant* was coming for Israel in this Scripture, in which the Lord declared:

*“For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.”
(Jeremiah 31:34)*

Jesus, as the mediator of the New Covenant through His finished work on the Cross, fulfills this declaration when He forgave our sin for those who believe in His name.

But notice that this declaration doesn't say that Jesus will generally just *forgive sins*. This declaration includes two separate statements - *forgiving iniquity and not remembering sin*. The distinction between the two is important in how we repent and will become central in our process of making amends and offering our own forgiveness to others later in this series. There is a distinction with a difference in the Biblical language being used. Let's take a look.

Let's define some language for this series. I will use an analogy from the field of law to illustrate what I mean.

The definition of a crime is laid out by statute. The statute lists the various elements of the particular crime that the prosecutor must prove beyond a reasonable doubt to obtain a conviction of a defendant.

In general, every crime has two parts. First, there is the actual physical crime, the transgression that constitutes a crime. This is referred to in the law by the Latin word *actus reus*. This is the *what happened* of the crime.

In Latin, *actus reus* means “guilty act,” and *mens rea* means “guilty mind.”

Thus a crime is defined in the law as:

Crime = guilty act + guilty mind

It turns out that the Bible lays out a similar definition of sin, especially in the Old Testament.

When we study Psalm 32 later in this session, we will see King David referring to his own sin in a similar manner to how modern law defines a crime.

We see Scripture refer to the “guilty act” of a particular sin as a *transgression*. This term focuses on the actual physical component of the sin apart from the mental component. The Hebrew word we see translated as “transgression” can also be translated as “rebellion” - this is precisely what sin as a whole represents, a state of mind coupled with an act of rebellion against God.

Depending on the context, we see the “guilty mind” referred to by a Hebrew word that can be translated as *iniquity*, *guilt*, or *wickedness*. Typically, *iniquity* and *wickedness* are used to refer to

the state of mind before and during the transgression, while *guilt* refers to the state of mind after the transgression is committed.

This makes sense as we feel guilty after a sin is committed. Guilt leads to fear of punishment (the Hebrew word is very similar), which leads to hiding, and, ultimately, shame for *what* we have done and, importantly, *for what we were thinking when we committed the sin*. As we will see later in this series, this *what was I thinking* aspect of all sin makes self-forgiveness so difficult.

This concept of confessing the *what were you thinking* part of all sin is central to a full and proper Biblical repentance and will take center stage in our work of making amends. We must come to terms with the *why* behind our making amends as much as the *what for* part. Only then can we truly make amends for the right reason.

Accordingly, I will use the following definition for sin in this series wherever possible:

Sin = Transgression + Iniquity

As we will see shortly, we will handle both aspects of all sin separately to be complete in our repentance process. To make a complete turn toward God and away from our past, we must address both the “guilty act” *and* the “guilty mind.”

This requires hard work, which Step 4 calls a “*searching a fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*” It is also the step where many stumble in their recovery and some never finish this step.

But I believe that the Bible lays out a process for repentance, a process that is achievable for all who come to the process with humility and faith.

God knows that we all turn away from Him at times, and He has designed a process for us to turn back. Not only is the Bible full of stories of those that have repented and turned back to God, but we see in the Lucan Commission that this is the *very message we are sent to proclaim: Repentance and forgiveness of sins for all.*

A transformed life

At this point in the series, you have completed the Life Moments snapshot worksheet and timeline. Perhaps the Holy Spirit has begun to give you some insight into the seasons of your life and where you were in relation to God during those times. These activities were designed to give you a top-level, 35,000-foot view of your life. Now, we are going to get down to the details.

Part of the healing process for past trauma is *transforming* our old negative thoughts and self-talk by *reframing* these negative thoughts with God’s truth about how He sees us. To not transform

old trauma is to leave it unresolved. And unresolved trauma will never let us be who and what God wants us to be.

A fundamental truth in Biblical healing is this:

Whatever is not transformed is transferred

The Apostle Paul states this very clearly to the Christians in Rome:

“Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.” (Romans 12:2)

Either we are being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit and working in and through God’s perfect will, or we are living in our past sins, transferring our unresolved issues down the line, and even to the next generation.

Paul knew this was no easy matter. Only a few verses later, he encourages them by stating:

“Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.” (Romans 12:12)

As we begin this process, I encourage you in a likewise manner. Always rejoice in the hope of forgiveness proclaimed by Jesus, and be patient in the afflictions you are suffering at the moment. You can trust in Jesus’ promises. As we saw last session, *Jesus will do what He said He would do*. By the power of the Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, *what God has done before for others, He can and will do in your life if you draw near to Him*.

Let’s get started.

King David repents

We will learn much from David in this series. In this session, we will unpack how David went about the process of repentance in his own life.

Next session, we will see David experience the power and healing of confession.

David’s process of repentance is most directly laid out in Psalm 32, reproduced in full here:

Psalm 32

THE JOY OF FORGIVENESS

Of David. A Maskil.

*1 How joyful is the one
whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered!*

*2 How joyful is a person whom
the LORD does not charge with iniquity
and in whose spirit is no deceit!*

*3 When I kept silent, my bones became brittle
from my groaning all day long.*

*4 For day and night your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was drained
as in the summer's heat.*

Selah

*5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not conceal my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,"
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.*

Selah

*6 Therefore let everyone who is faithful pray to you immediately.,
When great floodwaters come,
they will not reach him.*

*7 You are my hiding place;
you protect me from trouble.
You surround me with joyful shouts of deliverance.*

Selah

*8 I will instruct you and show you the way to go;
with my eye on you, I will give counsel.*

*9 Do not be like a horse or mule,
without understanding,
that must be controlled with bit and bridle
or else it will not come near you.*

*10 Many pains come to the wicked,
but the one who trusts in the LORD
will have faithful love surrounding him.*

*11 Be glad in the LORD and rejoice,
you righteous ones;
shout for joy,
all you upright in heart.*

Let's begin with a general outline of the Psalm:

- Opening in gratitude (verses 1-3)
- David's report (verses 3-5)
- David's process (verse 5)
- Warning of urgency to others (verses 6-7)
- God's voice says "Trust Me" (verses 8-9)
- Closing in gratitude (verses 10-11)

I encourage you to meditate on Psalm 32, paying special attention to the Holy Spirit's inspiration in David's order and outline. Prayerfully consider each point and how it applies to your life today.

For our purposes in this session, we will focus on David's process in verse 5, which states:

"Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,' and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah" (Psalm 32:5)

Notice the different and distinct words being used, as we discussed above.

David states that he "*acknowledged*" his "*sin*." He did not "*conceal*" his "*iniquity*." He then confesses his "*transgressions*" to the Lord. As a result of this process, God "*forgave the guilt of [David's] sin*."

By confessing his "transgressions" (acts of rebellion) *together with* "not concealing" (confessing) his iniquity (state of mind), we see David laying out the formula for our own confession. David declares for us that the result was God forgiving the *guilt* of his sin. Therefore, to relieve God's forgiveness, we also must confess both our transgressions *and* iniquity.

Note that David's process mirrors the New Covenant promised by the Lord and declared by Jeremiah as discussed above:

*"For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin."
(Jeremiah 31:34)*

Both Jeremiah and David place great emphasis on getting our *iniquity* out into the open. We must come to terms with and confess our "stinking thinking" to fully receive God's forgiveness. This is because *God wants to forgive your iniquity. This is how He removes our guilt.*

Having forgiven our Iniquities, *He then chooses not to remember our transgressions*. He blots out our acts of rebellion. It is like a criminal record that has been expunged. In God's eyes, *the rebellion never happened*. And that is how He sees us - we are a new creation in His eyes! And in this process of *re-creation*, He has a new season appointed for us, a season we will experience as *reviving*.

Sin acknowledgment worksheet

David states that he “acknowledged” his sin to the Lord. In acknowledging his sin, David makes a point to show us that means confessing our transgressions *and* iniquity.

To accomplish this, we will use a Sin Acknowledgment Worksheet to do the same thing.

The worksheet is divided into five columns. To fill it out, I encourage the following process:

First, I encourage you to be in prayer and rely on the promise that:

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Set aside a quiet time, and know that you are taking the first step that the Apostle Peter told us to do - *repent*. Also, know this is what Jesus means when he says, “*come to me*.” Through this process, Jesus *teaches us and gives rest for our souls*. There is no shame, this is not a punishment, but a teaching exercise.

Begin by working down Column 1 only. Simply brainstorm what the Holy Spirit puts on your mind. Give the sin that comes to mind a name, whatever that is. Declare the name of the sin and take dominion over it. Bring it into the light. There is no wrong answer, Jesus knows what you mean. There is relief and joy in this process, think of the Lady at the Well who came away saying:

“Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?” (John 4:29)

Yes, Jesus is the Messiah (see session 2), and he knows everything you have ever done. *But he wants you to acknowledge that as well*.

Work straight down Column 1 declaring sin after sin until you run out of steam. Then, and only then, move to Column 2. The Lady at the Well experienced the joy of freedom from all the things she did, and you will, too!

Now move back to the top, and complete each row for each sin that you have named. Like Psalm 32, first, you will acknowledge the *transgression*. Two possibilities are common here. First, name

the physical act of rebellion associated with the sin that you declared in Column 1. What did you actually do? Write it down here.

Alternatively, it is common in recovery to acknowledge *resentments* against those persons or institutions that we have perceived to have harmed us. Since resentment is a rebellion against God and, therefore, a sin, write down the name or object of the resentment.

Next, move to Column 3, and record the *iniquity* of this sin. Trust the Holy Spirit to give you the words that describe the *what you were thinking* or the *why you did what you did*. What is important for this part of the process is that you begin to discern and separate the act from the thinking.

The next portion is Column 4, and here we see checkboxes. As you consider the sin, transgression, and iniquity you have written down in this row, are you able to see whether this is a sin against others, God, or both? Prayerfully consider this question and check the appropriate box(es).

Finally, in Column 5, we look ahead to God's promise of forgiveness for this sin. If you turn away from this self-destructive behavior and turn toward God, how will you feel being cleansed and forgiven of this sin? How will your relationship with God and others deepen?

Prayerfully consider the impact of God forgiving your iniquity and choosing not to remember this sin *forever*. What does a clean record feel like?

This is a chance to begin the process of *reframing* and *transforming* the darkest parts of your life into victories that will become the basis for your testimony later in this series, just like the Lady at the Well when she ran into town full of joy.

Proceed from row to row until you are completed.

Congratulations - you have completed Step 4!

Litany of penitence

As an additional resource, I have included a document entitled "Litany of Penitence," which is a traditional prayer found in many prayer books. It is a prayer of confession and contrition designed to be read in a public setting in church. The Officiant reads the first line alone, and the people together read the line, "For we have sinned against you." It is a powerful experience to hear this in person.

Sometimes, getting started on the Sin Acknowledgement Worksheet is the hardest part of this session. Often, we just don't know where to begin. The whole process seems overwhelming, and we are tempted to procrastinate.

I encourage you to read the Litany of Penitence to kickstart the process. Prayerfully consider each line and how the Holy Spirit is moving on your heart as you read through the words slowly and deliberately. You can circle or highlight words or phrases that convict you as you go along.

Note the language in the Litany about iniquity, and look at your motives in similar situations. Search your soul for your own purpose, and appetite, and self-will in this sin, and record that in your worksheet.

Above all, as the Litany indicates, *ask the Lord for mercy.*

Next session, we will discover the power and healing in the confession.

Daily Meditations

Theme: Beginning the process of repentance.

Day 1

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)

Notes: _____

Day 2

“Rejoice in hope; be patient in affliction; be persistent in prayer.” (Romans 12:12)

Notes: _____

Day 3

“When they heard this they became silent. And they glorified God, saying, “So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.” (Acts 11:18)

Notes: _____

Day 4

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God;” (Romans 3:23)

Notes: _____

Day 5

“For God has imprisoned all in disobedience so that he may have mercy on all.” (Romans 11:32)

Notes: _____

Day 6

“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not conceal my iniquity. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin. Selah” (Psalm 32:5)

Notes: _____

Day 7

“For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.” (Jeremiah 31:34)

Notes: _____

Operation 180 materials Copyright © 2023 Timothy A. Brisson. All rights reserved.

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

Operation 180

Pastor Tim Brisson

Confession and Litany of Penitence

Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For all our unfaithfulness and disobedience; for the pride, vanity, and hypocrisy of our lives;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our self-pity and impatience, and our envy of those we think more fortunate than ourselves;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our unrighteous anger, bitterness, and resentment; for all lies, gossip, and slander against our neighbors;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our sexual impurity, our exploitation of other people, and our failure to give of ourselves in love; Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our self-indulgent appetites and ways, and our intemperate pursuit of worldly goods and comforts;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our dishonesty in daily life and work, our ingratitude for your gifts, and our failure to heed your call. Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our blindness to human need and suffering, and our indifference to injustice and cruelty;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our wastefulness and misuse of your creation, and our lack of concern for those who come after us;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For all false judgments, for prejudice and contempt of others, and for all uncharitable thoughts toward our neighbors;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our negligence in prayer and worship; for our presumption and abuse of your means of grace;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For seeking the praise of others rather than the approval of God;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

For our failure to commend the faith that is in us;
Lord, have mercy upon us: *People For we have sinned against you.*

