

TEN  
SMALL GROUP  
(BIBLE TALK)  
DISCUSSION  
LESSONS ON  
REPENTANCE

## BEAR FRUIT THAT PROVES YOUR REPENTANCE

Luke 3:7-14

### BIG IDEA:

Metanoia and the Fruit of Metanoia are distinct yet inseparable. So if we want to change our behavior, we should focus on the cause rather than the symptoms. And if we change our heart and mind, we should expect to see fruit of that change in our life.

### ICE BREAKER(S):

1. Play Doctor. Pick a volunteer to be a physician. Each person has an appointment and describes an ailment that you provided on a slip of paper. Instruct the doctor to only treat the symptoms rather than the cause for: a back that aches when sitting, for a head that aches when reading, for a knee that aches when running. For each the doctor plays out the old joke – Patient says, “Doctor, Doctor, it hurts when I do this.” Doctor responds, “Don’t do that.” Discuss the competence of the doctor.
2. Play John the Baptist. Wear a ragged robe; bring some “gummy” insects in a Ziploc bag, etc. Have a member begin the bible talk by asking someone to read from Luke 3:7-9. Just as the volunteer begins to read, have John enter, shouting and quoting that very passage. Stay in character, but stand to the side as the bible talk leader begins his discussion of this passage.

### QUESTIONS:

- What’s a viper? Is that a compliment? Why does John level this charge against the crowds seeking baptism? What was their motivation to seek his baptism? Why is that not a good thing?
- John tells them to produce fruit that proves their repentance (NET). What does repentance mean? [Explain *Metanoia* if necessary]. Why is it necessary to repent prior to being baptized?
- What is the fruit of *metanoia*?
- What is the distinction between *metanoia* and its fruit? Why is this distinction important? Is John targeting behavior or the heart behind the behavior? What does John expect from a changed our heart and mind?
- In your attempts to repent, have you focused on your behavior or your mindset that produced the behavior? Have you been treating the symptoms or the cause?
- What excuse does John anticipate from the crowd (see v. 8)? What excuse have you made to dismiss your lack of repentance and its fruit?
- How does John associate repentance with judgment?
- To what does the “good fruit” in v. 9 refer? How will you produce this good fruit?
- How does the crowd respond (v. 10)?
- In three interactions with the crowd, John describes the fruit of their repentance:
  - Example A’s good fruit: share food and clothing – what is the *metanoia* that produces this fruit?
  - Example B’s good fruit: stop fraudulent tax collection – what is the *metanoia* that produces this fruit?
  - Example C’s good fruit: stop abusing one’s own authority to bolster income – what is the *metanoia* that produces this fruit?

- In some cases, John described fruit that involved starting something in other cases he described fruit that stopped a behavior. Do you think that the people who asked John “What should I do?” had a pretty good idea what he would tell them? Why is that?
- Well, we have John the Baptist with us right now (if you chose to include him in the ice breaker – if not, ask the group to imagine John, a prophet of God, with us right now). If you were to ask him “What should I do?” (that is, “what fruit of repentance should I bear?”) do you have a pretty good idea what he would tell you?
- So... what one thing would he tell you to *start* doing and what one thing would he tell you to *stop* doing?
- How must you repent – *metanoia* – in order to bear that fruit of repentance?

## FINAL CHARGE:

Repent and bear the fruit of repentance! Don't claim repentance without the accompanying fruit. And don't just address your behavior (fruit) – change your mind and heart so that you can produce the desired behavior.

# IF EVEN MANASSEH CAN REPENT, THEN...

2<sup>nd</sup> Chronicles 33:1-18

## BIG IDEA:

No one is beyond the power of repentance. Even the vilest of offenders can repent AND be used by God to do great things for his kingdom.

## ICE BREAKER(S):

Questions: Who is the most wicked person you have ever studied in history class? What made this person so wicked? Is there anyone in your family or circle of friends that you've considered to be too far gone to repent and turn to God? What are some sins that most grieve God's heart? We'll consider someone even worse. And his sins are even viler than the ones you have described. His name is Manasseh. He was king of Judah for 55 years.

Read **2 Chronicles 33:1-9**; then vv. **10-11**; finally vv. **12-18**

An alternate and more dramatic approach: Read **2 Kings 21:1-18** first (this requires more time). Discuss Manasseh's character, his sins, and his legacy. Then - a la Paul Harvey - tell the rest of the story via **2 Chronicles 33**. (Manasseh's prayer - alluded to in v. 18 - is also provided for you. It is found in the Septuagint version of the OT in the Apocrypha.)

## QUESTIONS:

- **vv. 1-9**...Let's start listing all the horrible sins that Manasseh commits (start a list on large piece of paper).
- What do you anticipate will happen next to Manasseh?
- Have you ever felt as though you've sinned too much to return to God? Tell me more about that.
- Have you ever felt that you've sinned too much to ever be used by God again? What was that sin? Why did you feel disqualified from doing great things for God? Do you still feel that way?
- **vv. 10-11**... What did God do to try to get Manasseh to repent? How has God tried to confront you and your need to repent? How did Manasseh respond? So what did God do next? Has God likewise turned up the volume of his reproof to you? How? Why did you resist?
- **vv. 12-13** ... What did it take for Manasseh to respond to God's reproof? How does God show his love for Manasseh? When Manasseh repented and returned to God, how did God respond? Is that fair? Which description of Manasseh best captures the idea of his *metanoia*? [Read the Prayer of Manasseh at this point to convey his heart and mind change - if time permits].
- **vv. 14-18** ... How did Manasseh bear the fruit of repentance? Was he able to be used to do great things for God and his kingdom? Make a list of the reforms that he completed before he died. What are some things that you would like to do for God and his kingdom before you die? What needs to happen first?
- Compare the two lists. What happened in between the before and after picture? What do want your "after" list to look like?

## FINAL CHARGE:

Let's get started on our second list! No one is beyond repentance. If Manasseh could repent, then so can you! Humble yourself before God and turn your life back to him. He'll use you again!

### THE PRAYER OF MANASSEH

“O Lord Almighty, God of our ancestors, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of their righteous offspring; you who made heaven and earth with all their order; who shackled the sea by your word of command, who confined the deep and sealed it with your terrible and glorious name; at whom all things shudder, and tremble before your power, for your glorious splendor cannot be borne, and the wrath of your threat to sinners is unendurable; yet immeasurable and unsearchable is your promised mercy, for you are the Lord Most High, of great compassion, long-suffering, and very merciful, and you relent at human suffering. O Lord, according to your great goodness you have promised repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against you, and in the multitude of your mercies you have appointed repentance for sinners, so that they may be saved. Therefore you, O Lord, God of the righteous, have not appointed repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against you, but you have appointed repentance for me, who am a sinner. For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of the sea; my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied! I am not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven because of the multitude of my iniquities. I am weighted down with many an iron fetter, so that I am rejected because of my sins, and I have no relief; for I have provoked your wrath and have done what is evil in your sight, setting up abominations and multiplying offenses. And now I bend the knee of my heart, imploring you for your kindness. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. I earnestly implore you, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! Do not destroy me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For you, O Lord, are the God of those who repent, and in me you will manifest your goodness; for, unworthy as I am, you will save me according to your great mercy, and I will praise you continually all the days of my life. For all the host of heaven sings your praise, and yours is the glory forever. Amen.” (*Prayer of Manasseh, NRSV*)

# COME TO YOUR SENSES

*Luke 15:11-32*

## BIG IDEA:

Jesus provides an insiders guide to repentance as he describes what happens inside the mind of the prodigal son. Watch how the son changes the rules by which he will play the game of life, and see the results in his changed life.

## ICE BREAKER:

Play the Game of Life (if time permits) or simply read the rules to the game of life (you can find them at <http://www.centralconnector.com/GAMES/life.html>). Discuss how you would play the game if the rules were changed (to reflect a Biblical worldview). How do rules to a game affect players' strategies?

## QUESTIONS:

After reading *Luke 15:1-2* (to provide background and audience – two main groups: religious and sinners – as represented by the two sons) and *Luke 15:7, 10* (to show that these are a series of parables about repentance), read *Luke 15:11-32*.

- **vv. 11-13**... What are the rules of the game of life for the younger son? What is his strategy for success in the game? How's he doing so far?
- **vv. 14-16**... Why didn't he succeed at the game of life? What was wrong with his strategy? Who really sets the rules to the game of life? What happens when we employ strategies that don't fit the rules? To what degree does the son define failure at this point? Have you ever felt like a failure in life? How? Were you defining success and failure by your own rules or by God's rules? Would you rather have success by your own rules or by God's? Why have you played by your own rules when they contradict God's?
- **vv. 17-19**... Jesus now takes us inside the younger son's head. What's happening inside his mind and heart? Although this is the third parable about *metanoia*, the word isn't mentioned – how does Jesus describe the son's *metanoia*? As he comes to his senses, the son changes the rules to the game of life. How do the rules change? How does that affect his strategy for life success? How will it affect his lifestyle and behavior? Who does the father represent? What's your strategy for returning to God? Can you find support for that in the Bible?
- **vv. 20-24**... How is he playing the game differently now? Is he succeeding or failing? Why is he succeeding? How do you win at the father's game? Is it possible to win any other way? Why are you still tempted to try? The younger son goes back to the serve his father, how can we serve God? Are you serving God in that way? Have you really repented?
- **vv. 25-32**... What are the rules to the game of life for the older son? What's his strategy for winning? How does that contradict his father's rules? Which son do most of us resemble in this parable – the one with worldly rules for success or the one with religious rules for success? Why is it harder for the former to repent? How do you know that you're not blind to a need for repentance? How can you be sure? The end of this story is left open-ended – why?

**FINAL CHARGE:** Come to your senses by rewriting the rules that you have for the game of life. Align your strategy for success with God's strategy for your success. With new rules, you will have new allegiances, new attitudes, new affections, and new success!

# REPENT OR PERISH

Luke 13:1-9

## BIG IDEA:

The way we die has no bearing on our final judgment; however, the way we live does... and if we don't repent we will perish.

## ICE BREAKER:

Deep questions: Does the World Trade Center collapse or the Indian Ocean tsunami indicate judgment by God. Was God chastising Wall Street traders, or Indonesian Muslims, or Indian Hindus through these disasters? How do we find meaning in the midst of these disasters? Someone asked Jesus a very similar question...

## QUESTIONS:

- vv. 1-2... What do you think... were they worse sinners as indicated by this suffering? What was the original incident described by "Pilate mixing their blood with the blood of sacrifices?"
- vv. 4... Were the offenders who were killed by the tower collapse in Jerusalem worse offenders than the others in Jerusalem? Why does Jesus bring up this accident/incident? What other tragedies could you bring up as well? Do any of them provide an indication of the victims' relative sinfulness?
- vv. 3, 5 ... What is the main point that Jesus is trying to make out of these tragedies? What does it mean to repent? What happens if we don't repent? What does it mean to perish? Which of the two paths is the better option? Then why so little repentance in our community... in your own life? What should these tragedies mean to us then? Do you think about 911 the way that Jesus would? How can you best honor those who have fallen victim to tragedies? What specifically needs to happen to show that you've repented? Do you need help?
- vv. 6-9... Why does Jesus tell this parable? What is the context? Who owns the garden? Who is the gardener? Who does the tree represent? What is the fruit that the tree should bear (A: the fruit of repentance)? How does Jesus promote (i.e. fertilize) the fruit of repentance for us? What happens to us if we fail to bear the fruit of repentance? Do you want to bear the fruit of repentance? How will you begin?

## FINAL CHARGE:

Tragedies, catastrophes, and acts of terror take lives indiscriminately. How we die – and we will all die – does not indicate our final destination. However, how we live does. So repent and live for Jesus. What more can he do to promote our repentance? He's shown us his love, and he's offered us his grace – because he knows that if we don't repent (and bear the fruit of repentance) we will indeed perish. Choose repentance – choose life.

# THE RICH MAN IN HADES

Luke 16:19-31

## BIG IDEA:

Everyone will “get it”, that is, they’ll be completely convinced about repentance after they die. Don’t wait until it’s too late to repent. You have all you need for complete repentance now, because we all have the Word of God.

## ICE BREAKER:

- ≡ Play Monday morning quarterback with your own childhood. If you could go back in time and give yourself message, what would you tell yourself?

## QUESTIONS:

- vv. 19-25... What did Lazarus do to deserve paradise (*A*: the answer is not explicitly given, so it’s not the focus of the story)? Does living in poverty earn you a place in paradise? What did the rich man do to deserve torment? How do we know that he did not live repentantly? What is repentance? What’s wrong with living life for Self?
- vv. 26... Once dead, do you have any more chances to repent? How often – do you think – does the rich man replay the bad choices of his life while in Hades? What’s a recent time in your life that you wish you could turn back the clock and do something differently? What’s a consequence that you wish you could have avoided? Describe the frustration of not being able to change that consequence.
- vv. 27-28... Knowing that his eternal fate is sealed, what does the rich man now want from Abraham? What would you want if you were in his shoes? What do your deceased relatives most want for you?
- vv. 29-31... According to the rich man’s thinking, what will it take for his brothers to repent? How will a messenger from the dead assure their repentance? Why do you think he holds to that misconception? According to Jesus’ story, what does he say it will take for the brothers to come to repentance? How did the brothers have “Moses and the Prophets?” According to Jesus, which is more effective for repentance – a miraculous sign/message or the Scriptures? Why is that? How does the Bible bring about repentance? If we do not repent before we die, will we have any excuses as we stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Do you want to repent? Do you want to know what repentance is? Let someone help you repent through the Word of God.

## FINAL CHARGE:

Don’t wait until it’s too late to do the most important thing appointed to you to do while on earth – repent. The bible is your guide, so use it. If you need help, get it.

## DAVID AND NATHAN

*Psalm 51 vs. 2 Samuel 11:1-27 ...2 Samuel 12:1-13*

### BIG IDEA:

David presents a radically different “before” and “after” picture between the events of 2 Samuel 11 and the composition of Psalm 51. What happened to effect that change? We’ll see how God intervenes in our life through reproof to bring about radical repentance.

### ICE BREAKER:

Share about a time that you were caught in a lie or some other type of sin. It’s best to keep it light at the beginning – provide a humorous example if possible. Before you begin, let the group know that you’ll be asking about a time that they, too, were “busted” (this will give them time to think of an incident). After your story, open it up for others to share how they were caught.

### QUESTIONS:

- **Psalm 51**... Take note of the introductory material. What is the occasion for David’s composition of this Psalm?
- **vv. 1-19**... How would you characterize David’s state of mind and heart as he writes these words to God? Discuss signs of David’s repentance throughout the Psalm. (It’s easy to spend a tremendous amount of time discussing all the attributes of David’s repentance, because this Psalm is a tremendous testimony to his repentance. However, the focus of this bible talk is on HOW he repented – which we’ll consider in 2 Samuel 12.) It’s best to keep a quick flow around the circle with each person contributing one additional indicator of his repentance. Some clarifying questions (if you have time): Against whom has David sinned? Upon repentance, what does he promise to do? Why do repentant people try to help others to repent? How do you help someone repent? Have you helped someone repent? What is a broken and contrite heart? Why is it pleasing to God?
- **2 Samuel 11:1-21**... Read through the entire chapter. Then go around the group to build a list of David’s sinfulness. How does David retreat into darkness to cover up his initial sin? How does darkness make it worse? Did David successfully hide his sin from the people – (be sure to note Joab’s response)? Have you ever tried to cover up a sin? Did the darkness make things better or worse? From God’s perspective, did it become better or worse? Why? How deep into the darkness does David retreat?
- **2 Samuel 12:1-6**... How much was David able to hide from God? What does God do? Why does God send Nathan? How is Nathan’s mission an act of God’s love? Why does Nathan employ a parable to confront David? How might David have responded if Nathan were more direct? Have you ever responded with pride or defensiveness to a loving reproof? Does David still have a sense of right and wrong as he listens to the parable? In what one area does he lose his sense of right and wrong? Why are we our own worst judge? What blinds us from truth about self?
- **vv. 7**... God now shines the divine light of truth on David (“You are that man!!!”). Does David have anywhere to hide now? What are ways that God reproves us? Have you argued with the truth after having been exposed by it? How? Have you ever surrendered to such a reproof? What happened?

- **vv. 7-8**... Romans 2:4 tells us that God's kindness is meant to lead us to repentance; how was God kind to David? How has God been kind to you? Has his kindness always led you to repentance? When kindness fails, what's God's next move?
- **vv. 9-11**... What does it mean to "despise" something? What's something that you absolutely despise – maybe a food, activity, person, etc.? How did David despise the Word of God? What words of God have you despised in the past week? Did you think of it as "despising" at the time? If you had, how might you have responded differently? How did David despise God himself? How have you despised God? Who in this passage describes our sinful activity as an act of despising God (*A: "Thus says the Lord..." v. 7*)?
- **vv. 12-13**... Why does God decide to make a point about David's "secret" sinning? Do you have secrets that need to come into the light? Why does secrecy enslave us? How can we be set free? Does David come into light? Does he repent?
- **Concluding Questions:** At what point do you think he composes Psalm 51? How does he go from a wicked heart to one of repentance? What does God do for David to help him repent? How do we need to view reproofs that God sends into your life? Why? Most importantly, how do we need to respond to God's reproof? Why?

## FINAL CHARGE:

Sin binds us and blinds us. We often retreat into such darkness that we can no longer be reached by God's kindness. However, God loves us and will continue to search us out until he finds us. If kindness doesn't elicit our repentance, then reproof will. Pray for God's reproofs. Rejoicing with God beats hiding every time... no matter how terrible the sin is that you're trying to cover up.

# PAUL'S REPENTANCE

Acts 26:9-21

## BIG IDEA

Just as Jesus opened the eyes of Paul, he can open our eyes so that we may turn from error, self, sin, and darkness to God.

## ICE BREAKER

Play pin the “goad” on the donkey. Take the classic birthday party game’s tails and cut them into long arrow shapes to approximate a sharp goad. Get a really good blindfold so that you cannot see at all. Pick a few volunteers to play with blindfolds. Then take off the blindfold and have them play again. Make sure they position the goad behind the donkey in such a way that you can later explain what it means to “kick against the goads.” After playing, ask an obvious question: why was it easier to play without the blindfolds?

## QUESTIONS

- **vv. 9-12**... Describe how Saul was sincerely wrong about following God. Was he good at what he was doing? How does being good at being wrong make it harder to see that you are wrong? In what ways have you been sincerely wrong about following God?
- **vv. 13-14**... What does it mean to kick against the goads? How does the image of a horse kicking against a sharp prodding stick relate to Saul persecuting Jesus? Given the fact that Saul and his companions have been knocked to the ground by a bright light from heaven, what’s he now thinking as he hears that he is persecuting the one whose voice he hears from heaven? Did you have some strong clues that you were wrong about following God – what were they? Did you pursue or ignore them?
- **v. 15**... Saul asks a question; the answer to that question will forever change his life. Do you think that he had a suspicion about the identity of the person speaking to him? What might have been going through Saul’s mind as he waited for the answer to his questions? Why would the answer change his life? Jesus answers in the Hebrew language... what would be the first words that Saul hears from Jesus (A: Yahweh... Jesus[Yeshua])? How does the answer re-write all the rules for following God for Saul? What were the rules – both before and after this answer? How has Saul experienced *metanoia* here? Now back to you... What helped prove you wrong? Did you repent after you saw that you were wrong?
- **vv. 16-18**... What’s the commission that Jesus gives Saul? How will Saul be able to open sinners’ eyes so that they may turn to God? How were your eyes opened? How did open eyes help you turn from darkness to light and from the domain of Satan to the kingdom of God?
- **vv. 19-20**... Jesus told Saul to go to both Jews and Gentiles and to “open their eyes so that they may turn... to God.” Does Paul preach this message? Do you notice a parallel between Jesus’ commission and Paul’s preaching (A: “open their eyes” = “repent” and “turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God” = “turn to God”)? How does “open their eyes” better help you understand “*metanoia*”? How does one prove his repentance? What proof do you have that you repented? What are deeds that prove that one has turned to God? How are *metanoia* and its resultant deeds both distinct and related? Why is the distinction important? If you don’t have deeds that prove your repentance, what do you need to do?

- vv. 21... Some suggest that the Jews tried to kill Saul because of his preaching to Gentiles. Others suggest that the Jews were offended that he preached that they (the Jews) needed to turn to God and prove it. Who would be more offended today if you preached that they needed to turn to God and prove it: sinful people or religious people? Who would be more likely to persecute you for preaching to them their need for repentance? Why? Would you be offended if someone noticed your need for repentance – either because you were wrong or because of your sin - and brought it to your attention? Well, then that's your final charge...

## FINAL CHARGE

Let Jesus open your eyes to your need for repentance – either because you are wrong about how to follow him or because you are in sin. Ask someone to open the Bible with you so that your eyes may be open to your error. Pray that open eyes will result in a changed life for Christ.

# WORLDLY SORROW

2 Corinthians 7:6-10

## BIG IDEA

There is a sorrow that does not lead to repentance. The bible calls it worldly sorrow. Many so-called Christians tragically confuse this sorrow for repentance.

## ICE BREAKER

Hold a press conference. Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the politician/athlete/celebrity caught in a sin (you can pick one from the recent headlines or choose one of the more infamous ones: steroids in baseball, infidelity in the White House, betting scandal in baseball, rape and adultery charges against a basketball player, televangelist who solicits prostitutes, paternity suits against politicians, etc.). The volunteer is allowed to recruit two to three others to be his or her speech writers who will help spin this problem in such a way to minimize the damage. Instruct them to craft a “typical” speech delivered in like circumstances. Discuss whether or not the accused displayed sorrow. Did the accused really repent? Discuss other press conferences that you’ve seen over the years – what did they all have in common? [This Bible Talk can be combined with the Godly Sorrow Bible Talk. At the end of the Godly Sorrow Bible Talk, instruct the same team to re-enact the press conference, but this time with godly sorrow!]

## QUESTIONS

- *vv. 6-10...*
- Ask for a definition of repentance from various members of the group. If you receive a definition that sounds like worldly sorrow, stop and tactfully explore (e.g. “Tell me more about that.” “What does that look like?” “If you had to make a movie of that, what would be on the screen?”) that definition. If you don’t receive this mistaken definition, ask “How did you formerly define repentance?”
- Have you ever been sorry about something that you’ve done – and yet you still did that same thing again? Have you ever been pulled over for speeding? Did you mention to the officer that you were sorry? What were you most sorry about? Have you broken the speed limit since that incident? Did that sorrow lead to repentance? What kind of sorrow is that?
- What are some other indicators of worldly sorrow? Suggest: damage control, excuse making, minimizing, self pity, self focus, pride, defensiveness, etc. Pick a few of these indicators and ask why they undermine true repentance.
- Do you battle with a chronic sin? How have you exhibited worldly sorrow in this battle? What would happen if you had godly sorrow? We’ll explore godly sorrow that leads to repentance next time - - be sure to come back!

## FINAL CHARGE

If you entered this study of repentance with a misconception about sorrow and repentance, then you may be headed toward death rather than toward salvation. Please join our study on godly sorrow that produces repentance. Please don’t base your salvation on a tragic misconception.

# GODLY SORROW

*2 Corinthians 7:8-11*

## BIG IDEA

The bible draws a sharp distinction between worldly sorrow and godly sorrow. Only godly sorrow leads to repentance. It is marked by earnestness, eagerness to clear yourself, indignation, fear, longing, zeal, readiness to see justice done. It is both powerful and rare.

## ICE BREAKER

If this bible talk is a continuation, of the Worldly Sorrow bible talk, no ice breaker is needed. If not a continuation, then ... hold a press conference. Ask for a volunteer to play the role of the politician/athlete/celebrity caught in a sin (you can pick one from the recent headlines or choose one the more infamous ones: steroids in baseball, infidelity in the White House, betting scandal in baseball, rape and adultery charges against a basketball player, prostitute seeking televangelist, paternity suits against politicians, etc.). The volunteer is allowed to recruit two to three others to be his or her speech writers who will help spin this problem in such a way to minimize the damage. Instruct them to craft a “typical” speech delivered in like circumstances. Discuss whether or not the accused displayed sorrow. Did the accused really repent? Discuss other press conferences that you’ve seen over the years – what did they all have in common? At the end of the Godly Sorrow Bible Talk, you will instruct another team to re-enact the press conference, but this time with godly sorrow!

## QUESTIONS

- v. 8-9... Why is Paul happy that he caused the Corinthians to sorrow? Can sorrow do harm? How? Why doesn't godly sorrow do harm?
- v. 10... What does godly sorrow produce? What does worldly sorrow produce? What's the difference between these two sorrows? Who feels no regret in this passage [A: the person who confronts and convicts the person in sin.]?
- v. 11...
  - What is earnestness? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is eagerness to clear yourselves? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is indignation? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is alarm? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is longing? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is zeal? How does it indicate repentance?
  - What is readiness to see justice done? How does it indicate repentance?

Tell me about a time that you exhibited a godly sorrow that produced repentance in you.

## FINAL CHARGE

Re-enact the press conference with the response of godly sorrow rather than worldly sorrow. How would the public respond? Would you need to be “caught” in order to call the press conference? Have you ever seen such a press conference? Have you ever really had this sorrow? Decide today to study the bible to learn how to have a godly sorrow that produces real repentance and leads to real salvation.

# JESUS' LOVING REPROOF

Revelation 3:14-20

## BIG IDEA

Jesus loves us and wants us to repent (especially of lukewarm mediocrity in our commitment to him)... so he gives us a startling wake up call by exposing our sin.

## ICE BREAKER

[Ask these questions *before* you open up to the passage] Describe college football fans who are hot for their team. How many games do they attend? What do they wear? What is their behavior during the games? What do they talk about throughout the season – and the off-season? Do they know the teams' statistics, history, schedule, etc.? How thoroughly? Now use this same line of questioning for someone who is cold toward the team. Lastly, ask the same questions of a lukewarm fan. Now shift gears. Ask similar questions for someone who could be described as hot in his or her commitment to Christ. What does their faith/prayer life/bible study/worship/fellowship/repentance/ evangelism/sacrifice/ purity/ holiness/ etc. look like? Ask the same questions of one who is cold toward Jesus. Finally ask the group to describe a lukewarm Christian. Ask which broad category they most resemble. Now open up the Bible to read the passage.

## QUESTIONS

- vv. 14-16... How would you respond if Jesus told you today, “I know your deeds?” Why? What does the “faithful and true witness” see when he observes the last three months of your life? Have you seen yourself the same way? Do you have the same attitude toward it that Jesus does? Why would Jesus prefer you to be cold rather than lukewarm? What does he mean when he says that he will spit the lukewarm out of his mouth? Why is it more dangerous and more damaging to be lukewarm rather than cold?
- vv. 17-18... How does the Laodicean Church view itself? How is that different from the way Jesus sees them? Why the difference? How can you have a warped perception of self? What keeps us from realizing our true condition? What's the prescription for complacent Christianity?
- vv. 19... How does Jesus feel about complacent lukewarm Christians? Since he loves us, what does he do for us? Has anyone rebuked you out of love? When was the last time? What were the circumstances? What would have happened if they neglected to rebuke you? What is the rebuke (or *reproof* as in most non-NIV translations) designed to do? How does God help us repent? Can you think of characters in the Bible who repented after a strong reproof? How does God reprove us today? Have you ever allowed God to use you an instrument for a reproof? Why is it important? What's the difference between simple fault-finding a godly reproof? Why is it dangerous to ignore a godly reproof?

## FINAL CHARGE

Jesus loves you and wants you to repent; therefore, he is trying to give you a wake up call through the scriptures, through the godly example of committed Christians, and through the loving rebuke of a concerned friend. Don't ignore God's knock on your door. He knows your deeds; he knows what you need.