

The Gospel Project[®] for Adults

Daily Discipleship Guide ESV, Unit 15, Session 2

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God Receives the People's Repentance

Session in a Sentence: God desires that people repent of their sin and turn to Him in worship and obedience.

Background Passage: 2 Chronicles 29–35

In 1928, Alexander Fleming was experimenting with bacteria that cause staph infections. He left a Petri dish uncovered, and it became contaminated with mold spores. The bacteria grew all over the plate except in the area where the mold had formed. This was Fleming's accidental discovery of penicillin, which would later be mass-produced for use in World War II and go on to save countless lives from bacterial infection.¹

What medical marvel have you witnessed saving the life of a loved one, friend, or acquaintance?

Group Time

Point 1: Repentance involves removing and destroying idols (2 Chron. 34:1-7).

1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. **2** And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father; and he did not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. **3** For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet a boy, he began to seek the God of David his father, and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherim, and the carved and the metal images. **4** And they chopped down the altars of the Baals in his presence, and he cut down the incense altars that stood above them. And he broke in pieces the Asherim and the carved and the metal images, and he made dust of them and scattered it over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. **5** He also burned the bones of the priests on their altars and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. **6** And in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naphtali, in their ruins all around, **7** he broke down the altars and beat the Asherim and the images into powder and cut down all the incense altars throughout all the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

King Josiah served as a godly leader to his people and made tremendous reforms for his land. We can always hope and pray for our leaders to do the same. We also can look at Josiah's life and apply his example of repentance and reform to our own areas of dominion, namely, our lives. Three elements of Josiah's life encourage believers to do so: **1) Josiah's Age**; **2) Josiah's History**; and **3) Josiah's Community**.

How can personal repentance of sin influence a community of people?

Josiah had a great opportunity to honor God as king. He easily could have been overwhelmed, but instead, we see him boldly assault the evil he saw within his sphere of influence. Josiah waged war against the evil in his kingdom because he was humble and repentant before God. Lasting reform only comes from true repentance.

Repentance: A response to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine _____ for one's sin, a turning away from one's sin toward _____, and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation.

Point 2: Repentance involves restoring and resuming worship (2 Chron. 34:8-11).

8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had cleansed the land and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 They came to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites, the keepers of the threshold, had collected from Manasseh and Ephraim and from all the remnant of Israel and from all Judah and Benjamin and from the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 And they gave it to the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD. And the workmen who were working in the house of the LORD gave it for repairing and restoring the house. 11 They gave it to the carpenters and the builders to buy quarried stone, and timber for binders and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had let go to ruin.

Josiah, in his eighteenth year of ruling over Judah, was merely twenty-six years old. He set his heart on honoring the temple of God, following in the steps of the good kings before him: David, Asa, Joash, and Hezekiah. The next step on his mission to weed out all idolatry and evil from his kingdom required God’s temple coming to life once again.

Why was the temple so vital for the cleansing of the promised land?

Josiah had become a wildfire, fueled by his passion for God’s glory, and his calling overflowed to others as he got them involved in the good work he was doing. Josiah enlisted a team of people to restore the worship at the temple: leaders, Levites, carpenters, builders, and more. This was always the purpose of God’s kings—to lead God’s people in worship and obedience to the Lord their God. So too with Christians.

How do you view the fire in your heart for repentance, faith, and obedience?

Repentance

Faith

Obedience

Point 3: Repentance involves recovering and obeying God’s Word (2 Chron. 34:14-15,18-21).

14 While they were bringing out the money that had been brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given through Moses. 15 Then Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the secretary, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan.

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18 Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read from it before the king.

19 And when the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes. 20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam the son of Shaphan, Abdon the son of Micah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asaiah the king’s servant, saying, 21 “Go, inquire of the LORD for me and for those who are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do according to all that is written in this book.”

Penicillin was a life-changing discovery, but some bacteria have become resistant to it. With all human discoveries and inventions, humankind will always be limited. God’s power, however, is unlimited, and His Word will accomplish what He sends it to do (Isa. 55:11). In this case, it convicted the heart of King Josiah over the sins of his people.

When has God's Word overwhelmed you with its truth and power?

Josiah was terrified upon hearing God's word in the book of the law because he understood the wrath of God against Judah's sin and disobedience of His word. Six centuries later, the very embodiment of the Word of God would be sent to earth, but curiously, He was not sent to condemn the world but to save it (John 3:17). Josiah feared God's wrath for his people's disobedience and repented; **Jesus** came to die on a cross so God's wrath would fall on Him and repentant people would be saved.

What are some ways we should respond to the Word made flesh for us?

Voices from Church History

"Not only do we know God by Jesus Christ alone, but we know ourselves only by Jesus Christ ... Thus without the Scripture, which has Jesus Christ alone for its object, we know nothing, and see only darkness and confusion in the nature of God and in our own nature."²

—Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

My Mission

Because we have been forgiven in Christ and have been credited with His righteousness, we seek to turn from all sin and cast aside all else that hinders our worship of the one true King.

- **What step of repentance and faith do you need to take in light of God's wrath against sin and God's grace in Christ?**
- **How can your group/church create a loving and caring environment that encourages, rather than stifles, confession of sin and the grace of forgiveness?**
- **How will you, with boldness from the Holy Spirit, share the good news of Jesus and call someone to repentance and faith?**

Voices from Church History

"The two great graces essential to a saint in this life, are faith and repentance. These are the two wings by which he flies to heaven. Faith and repentance preserve the spiritual life—as heat and water preserve the physical life."³

—Thomas Watson (c. 1620-1686)