

Repentance

Bible Study at a Glance:

Repentance is at the heart of the Christian life. God repeatedly calls us to repentance, not for his sake, but for ours. Repentance brings us back into a life of communion with God. We are all sinners that need to repent.

(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**
 - *A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.*

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

(Explain to the Group) Explain that we'll read a couple of passages from the Catechism and then some verses from the Bible that talk about repentance, and then get into the discussion questions.

CCC 1431: *Interior repentance is a radical reorientation of our whole life, a return, a conversion to God with all our heart, an end of sin, a turning away from evil, with repugnance toward the evil actions we have committed. At the same time it entails the desire and resolution to change one's life, with hope in God's mercy and trust in the help of his grace. This conversion of heart is accompanied by a salutary pain and sadness which the Fathers called *animi cruciatus* (affliction of spirit) and *compunctio cordis* (repentance of heart).*

CCC 1452: *When it arises from a love by which God is loved above all else, contrition is called "perfect" (contrition of charity).*

Matthew 3:1 - 3: *In those days John the Baptist appeared, preaching in the desert of Judea [and] saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" It was of him that the prophet Isaiah had spoken when he said: "A voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.'"*

Luke 5:31-32: Jesus said to them in reply, "Those who are healthy do not need a physician, but the sick do. I have not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners."

1 John 1:9: If we acknowledge our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from every wrongdoing.

- **Q: From the first Catechism quote (CCC 1431), can you identify some key characteristics of repentance based on what the Catechism said?**
 - A:
 - *A turning away from the sin*
 - *A hating of the sin (repugnance)*
 - *A desire and commitment to change*
 - *A trust in God's mercy and grace to help us change*
 - *A grief over the sin*

- **Q: Why is repentance important?**
 - A: *Repentance draws us back into a right relationship with God, back into communion with him. God made us to be in relationship with him. When we sin, we break that bond. Repentance opens the door for our reconciliation with God, and reunion with him.*

(Explain to the Group): CCC 1452 talks about "perfect" contrition, in other words, when we're sorry for our sins primarily because of the effect, or injury it had on our relationship with God, or on God himself, as opposed to just because we know it was wrong. We feel how it must have grieved him and we ourselves grieve how we hurt him. It's all about our love for him.

- **Q: Have you ever experienced perfect contrition? How did it feel? You don't have to share the sin!**
 - A: *We can ask God to give us grace for perfect contrition. He can help us get there.*

- **Q: Reading the verses of John the Baptist and Jesus talking about repentance, what "ways" and "paths" is he even talking about? And what is it that makes them straight?**

- *A: The paths are in our hearts, and the crookedness is our sins. Our repentance is what makes his path straight, his path to have our heart.*
- **Q: What happens if we sin the same sin over and over again? Can we still repent of it?**
 - *A: Yes, as long as we're sincere, God would forgive us (see Matthew 18:21-22).*
- **Q: When you go to confession, how is the experience for you? How do you feel?**
- **Q: If you want to do a better job of repenting or going to confession, what might you consider doing? For example, we can ask God to show us our sins so that we can repent of them (we're not always very aware). Other thoughts?**
- **Q: Does repentance make you sense God's approval or disapproval? Does it lead you closer to him or further away?**