

2 Corinthians 7:8-13 (NLT) - ⁸I am not sorry that I sent that severe letter to you, though I was sorry at first, for I know it was painful to you for a little while. ⁹Now I am glad I sent it, not because it hurt you, but because the pain caused you to repent and change your ways. It was the kind of sorrow God wants his people to have, so you were not harmed by us in any way. ¹⁰For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There's no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.

¹¹Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you! Such earnestness, such concern to clear yourselves, such indignation, such alarm, such longing to see me, such zeal, and such a readiness to punish wrong. You showed that you have done everything necessary to make things right. ¹²My purpose, then, was not to write about who did the wrong or who was wronged. I wrote to you so that in the sight of God you could see for yourselves how loyal you are to us. ¹³We have been greatly encouraged by this.

Sorrow - luke- sadness, grief, heaviness.

Repentance – metanoia – reversal of decision

Root word – metanoeo – to think differently afterward

1 John 1:8-10(NLT) - ⁸If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. ⁹But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

James 5 13-18 (NLT) - ¹³Are any of you suffering hardships? You should pray. Are any of you happy? You should sing praises. ¹⁴Are any of you sick? You should call for the elders of the church to come and pray over you, anointing you with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵Such a prayer offered in faith will heal the sick, and the Lord will make you well. And if you have committed any sins, you will be forgiven.

¹⁶Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results. ¹⁷Elijah was as human as we are, and yet when he prayed earnestly that no rain would fall, none fell for three and a half years! ¹⁸Then, when he prayed again, the sky sent down rain and the earth began to yield its crops.

Repentance changes sorrow from condemnation to catalyst.

Study Guide

This last Sunday we talked about how repentance transforms sorrow from condemnation into a catalyst. We explored the truth that God wants us to use our grief and sorrow over how we have lived to motivate us to return to Him—not to drive us away. As you think about repentance in your own life, what comes to mind? Is it easy for you or difficult? Why? What difference has it made, or could it make?

Take a moment to read Acts 3 together. As you read this in light of our conversation about repentance, what stands out to you? It is interesting that Peter does not shy away from the truth that many of the people he was speaking to had either a direct or indirect role in the execution of Jesus. He unapologetically highlights their part in harming God's Son, but he doesn't leave it there. He immediately turns it into a call to return to God—a call to repent and find relief and restoration in the arms of God.

For many of us, shame can feel toxic, but that may have more to do with our past experiences than our present truth. Before we knew God or understood what Jesus had done for us, shame told us who we were. Now it highlights how we can change. It all comes down to whether I receive forgiveness and choose a different way, or whether I sit in my sorrow and allow it to define me.

So, what areas of your life are ready to become a catalyst for change? Where could you repent and turn to God to move in a different direction? Take some time to pray and share with each other.