

Love God: repentance discussion guide

based on **James 4.4-10** (Linked to sermon from 8/9/19)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was the first part of a series looking back over James through the lens of our church purpose statement: Love God, love each other, reach the world.

Intro: Word association. When you hear the word 'repentance', what words does it make you think of?

Summary of sermon:

- It's God's kindness which leads us to repentance (Romans 2.4) – we shouldn't see repentance as a negative thing
- We tend to think of sin as sweet but actually it leaves a bitter taste (guilt)
- We tend to think of repentance as sour but actually it leaves a sweet taste (forgiveness)
- Repentance isn't just for the beginning of the Christian life; it's an ongoing process
- 5 Rs of repentance:
- Recognise your sin for what it is – something that grieves God. Take responsibility for your sin, rather than pretending it doesn't matter, or blaming it on other people. If the devil condemns (in sweeping statements), remind him of the cross. If the Holy Spirit convicts (of specific sins), repent.
- Repent of your sin, remembering what your sin cost Jesus. v9. Remorse = being sorry at being found out. Repentance = being sorry for doing the wrong thing.
- Receive God's forgiveness. If it seems too simple, that's because Jesus has done the hard work for us. 1 John 1.9; Isaiah 1.18; James 4.10 etc.
- Rebuke the devil for his lies. Dig under the surface: what lies did you believe which made you think the sin was ok? Resist the devil and he will flee.
- Replace the devil's lies with God's truth. Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

To think through / discuss with others:

1. Would you describe repentance as a regular part of your Christian life? Why / why not?
2. Saying a 'confession' together at church can easily be a words-only exercise (ie not genuine repentance from the heart). What would help your repentance to be more heartfelt
 - (a) when you're alone?
 - (b) corporately?
3. Which of the '5 Rs' do you need to work on most?
4. Dan gave some worked examples of steps 4 and 5. eg ignoring a homeless person because we're too busy indicates we've believed the lie (which needs to be rebuked) that our time is more important than the homeless person. The truth is that God is just as interested in him/her as in me. What is the lie (or lies) to be rebuked and truth (or truths) to be affirmed in the following scenarios:
 - a) you tell your boss a lie to get him off your back
 - b) if you're married, you start flirting with someone other than your spouse
5. Now think through some of your own, real-life scenarios. Reflect on some recent sins. Have you genuinely repented? Have you received God's forgiveness? What were the devil's lies you believed, to make you think the sin was ok? What is God's truth to counter the devil's lies?