



## **Return To God**

Sermon Small Group Questions  
Speaker: Pastor Joseph Zwanziger

### USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

- This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. After considering the needs of your group, you may choose one of the following options:
  1. one section of questions
  2. one or two questions from each section
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, add Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- Personal application is key to everyone's growth and should be included in every discussion. When asked how he or she intends to apply a certain principle a group member may say, "I need to spend more time in the Bible and in prayer." It is important for you to help group members make applications that are more specific and commit to a specific plan of action by asking, for example, "How are you going to begin?" An example is to get up 30 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- As the leader your goal is to help bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their need for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.

### INTRODUCTION

To repent is to turn from sin and turn to God. God is interested in calling us to Himself. We will be looking into the book of Joel and seeing what God has to say about returning to Him.

### MESSAGE

[Joel 2:1-3, 6-7, 11-13]

*Sound the alarm in Jerusalem! Raise the battle cry on my holy mountain! Let everyone tremble in fear because the day of the LORD is upon us. It is a day of darkness and*

*gloom, a day of thick clouds and deep blackness. Suddenly, like dawn spreading across the mountains, a great and mighty army appears. Nothing like it has been seen before or will ever be seen again. Fire burns in front of them, and flames follow after them. Ahead of them the land lies as beautiful as the Garden of Eden. Behind them is nothing but desolation; not one thing escapes. Fear grips all the people; every face grows pale with terror. The attackers march like warriors and scale city walls like soldiers. Straight forward they march, never breaking rank. The LORD is at the head of the column. He leads them with a shout. This is his mighty army, and they follow his orders. The day of the LORD is an awesome, terrible thing. Who can possibly survive? That is why the LORD says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.*

But there is hope...

[Joel 2:12-13]

*That is why the LORD says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the LORD your God.*

This "returning" is to **repent**.

Repentance = to turn away from sin & sinful patterns and turn TOWARD God

Some of us have spent years investing in our sinful ways, the act of repentance is not a slow process but happens in an instant. We need to adjust our focus off of sin and on to God to overcome our sin nature

### **Why repent?**

#### **1) We All Need To!**

[Prov. 24:12]

*"He will repay all people as their actions deserve."*

[Rom. 3:23]

*"For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."*

[Rom. 3:10]

*"No one is righteous – no not one!"*

It is clear in Gods Word that ALL of us are in need of repentance.

#### **2) He is KIND!**

[Joel 2:13]

*“Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish.”*

[Rom. 2:4]

*Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?*

It is in Gods heart that we should enter into Gods Kingdom and all the benefits that come with that. His great love and kindness, when revealed, draws us to Him.

### **3) It Brings us NEAR to God!**

Before Christ, to draw close to God you had to go to the temple and enter the holy of holies where the ark of the covenant and the manifest presence of God was. But now, with Christ sacrifice, his presence is accessible to everyone who wants to access it.

[Malachi 3:7]

*“Return to Me, and I'll return to You”*

[James 4:8]

*“Draw near to Me and I'll draw near to You”*

[1 John 1:9]

*“If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive”*

Read Psalm 51 to see the greatest example of a repentant heart as King David repents for his sinful response to Bethshiba.

### **Why?**

#### **1) Repentance Leads to Living in the Blessing of God**

[Joel 2:25-26]

*The LORD says, “I will give you back what you lost to the swarming locusts, the hopping locusts, the stripping locusts, and the cutting locusts. It was I who sent this great destroying army against you.*

*26 Once again you will have all the food you want, and you will praise the LORD your God, who does these miracles for you. Never again will my people be disgraced.*

#### **2) Repentance Qualifies us for an Outpouring of His Spirit**

[Joel 2:28-29]

*28 “Then, after doing all those things, I will pour out my Spirit upon all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your old men will dream dreams, and your young men will see visions.*

*29 In those days I will pour out my Spirit even on servants—men and women alike.*

[2 Chronicles 16:9]

*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.*

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How hard was it for you to find the book of Joel?**
- 2. What is, or has been, your definition of "Repent"?**
- 3. What does it mean; to live a repentant life?**
- 4. Have you ever tried to conquer sin in your own strength? Why is it important to get your eyes off of your sin and focus on God?**
- 5. What are our reasons for not repenting?**
- 6. Has Gods love and kindness motivated you to return to Him? What did that look like?**
- 7. Have you seen the blessing of God since you repented? What is that blessing?**