Stewards by God's Design: The Three R's of the Christian Steward

Bearing Fruits of Repentance

Facilitator's Guide

Goal: That participants would examine their lives as stewards in the light of their need for repentance.

Key Point: Repentance is the starting place for the Christian steward who is at the same time saint and sinner. Repentance is a complete change of heart and mind that results in a total change of life (fruits of repentance).

Introduction: Ask the participants to consider this question: Are there any situations you have experienced or choices that you have made in your life that you would change if you could? Let participants share their answer if they desire.

Jesus spoke the following words which framed His entire ministry, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."* Matthew 4:17.

Have participants also read Luke 24:46-47. Here Jesus gives his disciples the charge to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations in His name.

King David was a man after God's own heart. One of the characteristics of such a man is repentance. David was a sinner. He needed to repent, and he did. One such story of his sin and his repentance is found in 2 Samuel 11-12 and Psalm 51.

Read 2 Samuel 11:2-5 What was David's sin?
David committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Read 2 Samuel 11:14-15; 22-24 What was David's sin?
David had Uriah killed to cover up his sin with Bathsheba.

Read 2 Samuel 12:1-7 How was David confronted with his sin?

Answer: The Lord sent Nathan to David. Nathan told David a story about a rich man who stole a sheep from a poor man. The story angered David and he said, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

Also read 2 Samuel 12:7-15

In these verses we read the Lord's displeasure over David's sin. David repents and Nathan assures him of God's forgiveness. However, David will still bear the consequences of his sin.

Psalm 51 is David's response to Nathan the Prophet.

Read verses 3-8. What did David acknowledge?

Answer: David knew that he had sinned against God and did evil in His sight.

Read verses 10-13. What did David ask of God?

Answer: David asked for God's forgiveness. He wanted a clean heart and the joy of knowing God's salvation.

Ask participants to identify David's fruit of repentance. Answer: David would tell others about God's ways so that they also would return to Him.

John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus. He was a preacher of repentance. The beginning of his ministry is recorded in Luke 3.

Read Luke 3:1-2 Why does Luke give such detail about the leaders and rulers who were in office at that time?

Answer: Luke was an historian. As such he demonstrated his commitment to historical accuracy by relating the names of the officials in power at that time. This information also helps those who read this account know approximately when the events recorded happened—between AD 26 and AD 29.

Read Luke 3:3 What was John proclaiming and why?

Answer: John was proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

In *Luke: The People's Bible* Victor Prange writes, "John was a preacher of repentance. The word 'repent' is used in two senses in the Bible. Sometimes the word means only: 'to be sorry for sins.' An example of this use is the summary of Jesus' message: 'Repent and believe the good news!' (Mark 1:15). John's preaching of repentance included the call to faith in the coming Savior. This is evident from Luke's statement that John 'exhorted the people and preached the good news to them' Response to John's preaching of repentance included both sorrow for sins and faith in the good news of forgiveness of sins." Pages 34-35

The *Concordia Commentary on Luke* says, "Repentance is a favorite Lukan word, and the genitive defines what kind of baptism, a 'repentance baptism.' John's baptism is a repudiation of the old way of life and a conversion that includes faith that the eschatological era of salvation is dawning. Luke frames the story of John and Jesus with John's preaching of repentance (3:3) and Jesus commission to the disciples to preach this repentance to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem (24:47)." "Attached to repentance is the prepositional phrase 'to the forgiveness of sins," which describes both the purpose and result of the John's repentance baptism." (Footnote: Repentance

throughout Luke-Acts embraces a comprehensive spiritual change that includes sorrow for sin and conversion to a new way of life in Christ. Thus far more is involved than the 'change of mind' suggested by the etymology of the words.) page 149

Read Luke 3:7-9 What did John tell the crowds in…

Verse 7:

John points out to his hearers that their spiritual lives are in peril. Their leaders are leading them astray. Prange writes, "John's words (brood of vipers) are a reflection on the religious leadership which brought forth such spiritual children. They sense the coming judgment but are like sheep without a shepherd. They don't know how to escape the wrath to come." Page 35

Verse 8:

Answer: Those who repent are changed—they have a new way of thinking and acting. Prange writes, "The fruits of faith show the genuineness of repentance. Being the physical children of Abraham is no guarantee that a barren tree will escape the ax and fire of judgment." page 35

Verse 9:

Answer: Judgement comes to those who do not have faith in Christ. Those without faith do not bear good fruit.

Read Luke 3:10-14.
What question did the crowd, the tax collectors, and the soldiers ask John?

Answer: "What shall we do?"

How did John answer them?

Answer: John made clear to his hearers what the fruits of repentance look like:

To the crowd John said, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." In other words, be generous.

To the tax collectors John said, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." In other words, don't be greedy.

To the soldiers John said, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusations, and be content with your wages." In other words, be honest and content.

Prange writes, "The preaching of John moved the crowd to ask: 'What should we do then?' John points out to them some of the fruits of genuine repentance. He urges them to share their

garments and food with the poor and needy. He tells the tax collectors to be fair and honest. Soldiers are directed to refrain from extorting money from people through false accusations; rather they should be content with the pay they receive. Notice that John suggests fruits of faith which bring benefits to other people. Here is preparation for him who gave the commandment: love one another." Page 36

Why is this important?

Answer: John helps the crowd, tax collectors, and soldiers by giving examples of the fruits of repentance that apply to each group. In the *Concordia Commentary on Luke* it says, "But the crowds, tax collectors, and soldiers are the only ones to come asking, 'What are we to do?' showing that they are willing to demonstrate repentance by doing what John asked of them…John will give general guidelines for the crowds, the tax collectors, and the soldiers, outlining how repentance expresses itself in daily life. Each instruction has to do with attachment to things of this world. For the crowds, there is the general exhortation to perform deeds of mercy by stripping down the excess of one's clothing and food and sharing it with others. For the tax collectors this means not taking more than their allotted share. For the soldiers it means not using the power of their office for extortion or violence. Such deeds in daily life are 'fruits worthy of repentance.'"

Why is this question known as the steward's question?

Answer: Stewards manage what is entrusted to them by God. God is and always remains the Owner of what He gives. Stewards, to be faithful, wise, and fruitful, must know what to do with the relationships, responsibilities, and resources God puts into their care. The question, "What shall I do?" prompts the steward to look to God's Word for direction.

Martin Luther echoed the words of Scripture in the first one of the Ninety-five Theses he posted on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, Germany. He wrote, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says 'Repent,' he wills that the entire life of the Christian be one of repentance."

Ask: What does it mean for the Christian's whole life be one of repentance? It means, in part, that we have a willingness to examine every aspect of our lives in the light of God's Word, receive the forgiveness He gives in Christ Jesus, and are eager to turn away from the sin that we discover. This is an ongoing process for the Christian.

Stewardship is the Christian life and the Christian life is stewardship. Stewards manage all of life and life's resources for God's purposes. How does your life, as a steward by God's design, demonstrate the fruits of repentance?

Answers will vary. The beginning place will be intentional, frequent, and continuous study of God's Word.

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