

DMJ 101 – Lesson 4: Turning at the Cross

Small Group Bible Discussion Guide (SALT Method)

Objective: To help participants understand that genuine repentance is a heartfelt response to Jesus and His sacrifice on the Cross, demonstrated by turning away from sin and beginning a transformed life of obedience to Christ.

Main Scriptures: Matthew 7:21–23; Luke 3:7–14

Big Idea: At the Cross, we see both the seriousness of our sin and the greatness of God’s mercy. Genuine repentance means turning away from sin, surrendering to Jesus, and walking in a new direction with Him.

S — START

Icebreaker

Ask the group: "Have you ever made a wrong turn while traveling and realized you were heading in the opposite direction from your destination? What did you do?"

Allow participants to share briefly.

Introduction

Many people believe that being a Christian simply means believing in God, attending church, or doing good works. However, Jesus warned that some people may claim to know Him, yet their lives do not reflect genuine faith. Today's lesson will help us understand the difference between merely claiming to follow Jesus and truly surrendering our lives to Him through repentance.

Opening Question

Ask:

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word "repentance"?
2. Is repentance simply feeling sorry for sin?
3. What evidence would show that a person has truly changed?

Illustration: Wrong Direction

Display or describe a person driving confidently down a road, only to realize he is going the wrong way.

Ask: "What is the best response when you discover you're headed in the wrong direction?"

The answer is not simply admitting the mistake but turning around and heading in the right direction.

Transition: In the same way, biblical repentance involves more than admitting sin—it involves turning away from sin and moving toward God.

A — ALIGN

1. Calling Jesus “Lord” Must Come From a Surrendered Heart

Read: Matthew 7:21–23

Jesus describes people who:

- Call Him "Lord."
- Perform religious activities.
- Appear spiritual.
- Yet continue living in disobedience.

Discussion Questions

1. What was missing in the lives of these people?
2. Why is obedience important to God?
3. Can religious activity replace a relationship with God?

Key Principle: Genuine faith is more than speaking Christian words or claiming to know Jesus. It is shown through a surrendered relationship and a life that seeks to obey Him.

2. Religious Activity Cannot Replace a Real Relationship with Jesus

Read: Luke 13:24–27

Some people believed they were accepted because:

- They attended religious gatherings.
- They participated in spiritual activities.
- They associated with God's people.

Yet Jesus called them evildoers because they continued to live in sin.

Discussion Questions

1. What religious activities do people sometimes rely on for assurance?
2. Why can church attendance never replace obedience?
3. What does God truly desire from His followers?

Key Principle: Religious accomplishments cannot save us. We must personally respond to Christ, surrender our hearts, and enter through the salvation He provides.

3. The Cross Calls Us to Turn Away From Sin

Read: Luke 3:7–8

John the Baptist challenged people to:

"Bear fruits in keeping with repentance."

Repentance is not merely remorse.

Judas felt sorrow after betraying Jesus, yet he did not turn to God.

Biblical repentance (Greek: *metanoia*) means a change of mind and heart that results in a change of direction.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between remorse and repentance?
2. Why do some people feel sorry but never change?
3. What are some examples of true repentance?

Key Principle: Genuine repentance begins with a changed heart but produces visible changes in our attitudes, choices, relationships, and behavior.

4. Repentance Leads to a New Way of Life

Read: 2 Corinthians 7:9–10

Paul teaches that godly sorrow leads to repentance and salvation.

Read: 1 John 2:3–4

One evidence of knowing Christ is obedience to His commands.

Discussion Questions

1. What does godly sorrow look like?
2. How can we tell if our repentance is genuine?
3. What role does obedience play in the Christian life?

Key Principle: Repentance is more than regret, shame, or fear of consequences. Godly sorrow leads us to confess our sin, receive God's forgiveness, and change our direction.

L — LIVE

Illustration: The U-Turn

Imagine someone receives directions to a destination but keeps driving the opposite way.

No matter how sincere they are or how fast they drive, they will never arrive unless they make a U-turn.

Similarly, repentance is a spiritual U-turn.

It is choosing to leave behind sinful patterns and begin following God's direction.

Real-Life Reflection

Ask participants:

1. What are some sins people tend to excuse today?
2. Why do people find it difficult to change old habits?
3. How does God's grace help us overcome sinful patterns?
4. What areas of life most often compete for control of our hearts?

Examples:

- Anger

- Dishonesty
- Pride
- Addiction
- Materialism
- Unforgiveness
- Gossip
- Immoral behavior

Personal Inventory

Invite everyone to reflect quietly:

- Is there any area of my life where I am resisting God's authority?
- Are there habits that I need to surrender to Jesus?
- What evidence of transformation can I see since becoming a follower of Christ?
- What step of obedience is God asking me to take?

T — TRANSFER

Personal Application

Ask:

1. What truth challenged you most today?
2. What area needs repentance in your life right now?
3. What practical step can you take this week to pursue righteousness?
4. Who can help keep you accountable in your walk with Christ?

Action Challenge

This Week:

- ✓ Spend time in prayer asking God to reveal areas that need repentance.
- ✓ Read Matthew 7 and 1 John 2.
- ✓ Confess any known sin to God and seek His forgiveness.
- ✓ Choose one specific area where you will intentionally obey God.
- ✓ Share with a trusted believer one area where you need accountability.
- ✓ Pray for someone who needs to experience God's transforming grace.

Group Accountability Question

For the next meeting, ask: "What step of repentance and obedience did you take this week, and how did God help you follow through?"

Gospel Reminder

Repentance does not earn salvation.

Salvation is God's gift through faith in Jesus Christ. However, genuine salvation produces a life that increasingly turns away from sin and follows Christ.

Wrap-Up Summary

Four Key Truths About Repentance

1. **Not everyone who claims to know Jesus truly follows Him.**
2. **Religious activities cannot replace obedience.**
3. **Repentance is more than remorse—it is a change of direction.**
4. **A transformed life is evidence of genuine faith.**

Memory Verses

James 2:10

"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."

Revelation 3:20

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me."

Lesson Summar: Repentance is a decisive turn at the Cross—from sin to forgiveness, from self-rule to Christ's lordship, and from the old life to a new walk of obedience.