



Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

Repent and Believe the Good News

Preached by Daniel Grothe

August 23, 2026

Summary

Have someone in your group read the following summary aloud.

Pastor Daniel unpacks repentance, arguing that it is not a shame word but a *joy* word. Using the vivid story of Jon Bon Jovi helping a woman step back from the edge of a bridge, he shows that repentance simply means turning away from destruction and walking back toward life, love, and hope. Likewise, Jesus launched His public ministry with this call: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

The sermon outlines three practical disciplines for living a repentant life. First, keep prayers of repentance always on your lips and in your heart, practicing daily "micro-repentances" with the people closest to you. Second, take the state of your heart seriously and keep it soft before the Lord, refusing to let bitterness and cynicism harden over time. Third, do whatever it takes to deal with sin in your life, because freedom has a cost but so does staying stuck, and only one path leads to genuine life. Repentance is not an attempt to earn God's love. God has always

loved us. Repentance is coming out of agreement with the enemy's plans to steal, kill, and destroy, and returning to the fullness of life that Jesus gives.

Key Passages

- Matthew 4:17
- Psalm 51:1-12
- Proverbs 4:23
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Colossians 3:15

Opening Prayer

Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own

Heavenly Father, we come before you today with open hands and open hearts. Quiet every distraction and every worry that followed us into this room. Holy Spirit, we give you permission to move among us. Help each of us to hear not just the words of a sermon, but your voice speaking directly to them. Where there is hardness, soften it. Where there is shame, replace it with grace. Where there is confusion about who you are and how you feel about us, bring clarity. We do not want to leave this time the same as we came in. Have your way in us today. In Jesus name, **Amen**.

Getting Going

Allow time for each member to answer the following questions before moving on.

What is one word that comes to mind when you hear the word "repentance," and where do you think that association came from?

Discussion Questions

Answer as many of these questions as time and interest allow.

1. Pastor Daniel said that repentance is a joy word, not a shame word. How does that reframe the way you have thought about repentance in the past?
2. The Jon Bon Jovi bridge story was used as a picture of what repentance truly looks like. What stood out to you most about that story, and how does it change the way you see God's posture toward us when we turn to Him?
3. Pastor Daniel described repentance as coming out of agreement with the devil's plans rather than trying to change God's mind about us. How does that distinction affect the way you approach confession and repentance?
4. Pastor Daniel challenged us to practice "1,000 micro-repentances" rather than waiting for one massive moment of reckoning. What does that kind of daily practice look like in your closest relationships, and where do you find it most difficult?

5. Proverbs 4:23 says to guard your heart above all else because everything flows from it. In what areas of your life do you feel your heart has grown hard or cynical, and what do you think contributed to that?
6. Pastor Daniel said that, at 80 years old, you can see what someone has done with their heart over a lifetime. What kind of 80-year-old do you want to be, and what choices today are shaping that future version of you?
7. Whether you stay stuck in sin or pursue freedom, it will cost you either way. Have you experienced that tension personally? What helped you (or is helping you) choose the path that leads to life?
8. In what area of life do you sense God inviting you to turn around? What is one practical step – whether counseling, a recovery group, a trusted friend, or a daily prayer practice – that could help you take that step this week?

Making It Personal

Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.

This week, commit to practicing at least one "micro-repentance" every day. This could mean going back to a family member, roommate, or coworker and saying, "I was wrong. Please forgive me." It could mean spending a few minutes each morning praying through Psalm 51, asking God to search your heart and keep it soft. Choose one relationship or area of your life where you have been letting things stack up. Take a step toward to clear the air. Write down what you did and bring it back to share with the group next time you meet.

Key Takeaways

Commit to memory one point from the message before dismissing.

- Repentance is a joy word. It simply means to turn away from what is destroying you and walk back toward life, love, and hope in Jesus.
- Practicing daily "micro-repentances" with the people closest to you keeps your relationships clean and prevents small offenses from growing into deep fractures.
- Guarding the state of your heart is a lifelong discipline. People who keep short accounts and stay tender before God become a blessing to everyone around them as they age, while those who refuse to repent grow hard and cynical.
- Repentance is not an attempt to earn or manipulate God's love. God has always loved us and always will. Repentance is breaking away from the enemy's schemes and returning to the fullness of life Jesus died to give us.
- Freedom from sin has a cost, but so does staying stuck. Choosing the path of repentance is the only choice that leads to genuine life, peace, and joy.

Closing Prayer

Have someone from your group close your time in prayer, using the words below or your own.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that you are not waiting to shame us. You are the one who walks toward us with purpose and compassion, who wraps his arms around us and will not let go. As we leave, we ask that the truth we have discussed would not stay in our heads but would travel down into our hearts. Where any of us have been standing at the edge, give us the courage to climb back over. Where we have let our hearts grow hard, soften them again by your Spirit. Remind us this week that your thoughts toward us have always been good, that you chose us before the foundation of the world, and that your invitation is to always come back to you. May we be a people of 1,000 micro-repentances, quick to say sorry, quick to forgive, and quick to return to you. We renounce every agreement we have made with the enemy and we choose life. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, **Amen**.