

# SPIRITUAL GROWTH RESOURCES



**WEEK 12 |  
JAN 30-FEB 6  
TOPIC:  
REPENTANCE**

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*Spiritual Growth Resources brought to you by the Discipleship & Outreach Ministries of the Carmichael Seventh-day Adventist Church.*

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# **PROLOGUE**

The Carmichael SDA Church is providing spiritual growth resources for individuals, couples, families, and small groups as an extension during this pandemic for a church that is scattered like salt and to indeed be salty; to be light and receive another infusion of power. Pick and choose from these resources for your spiritual growth, whether it's during your time of personal devotions or family worship or small group gathering. The 10 options include:

1. Video
2. Bible Dialogue
3. Prayer Experiences
4. Discussion Questions
5. Application Ideas
6. Sharing Options
7. Bible-In-My-Head, Heart, and Hand
8. Sing-Along
9. Inspirational Music
10. Kids of All Ages

# REPENTANCE

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## INTRO AND VIDEO

This week's topic might be the most unpopular one yet—REPENTANCE. Some would rather line up for a root canal!

Repentance makes it obvious you are wrong. Who wants that kind of humility?

But there's more! It includes admitting it.

And that's not all. Factor in feeling sorrow for what you've done. Unpleasant!

And still more! It also promises a change so you don't do it again.

To get over a wall like that might require an Olympic pole-vaulter.

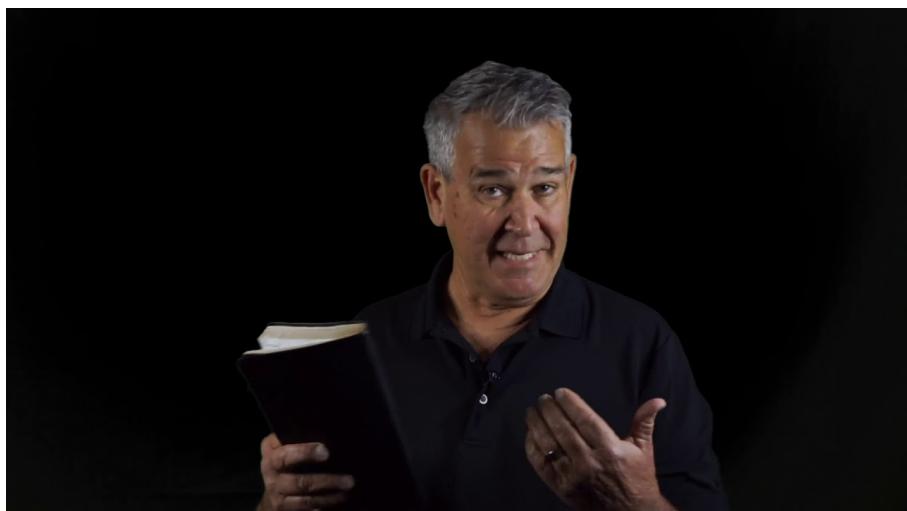
Ironically, when humans mess up, one thing that comes with that is an avoidance of repentance. We choose options like denial, blame, diversion, distraction, or attack. We lack

role models to show us how to repent. Parents might try to train their children to do this, but not do it themselves.

With “tolerance” and “diversity” touted as desirable, it has become easier to cop out and not repent at all. In fact, some people don’t even use the word “sin” any longer; it’s just alternatives. With the disappearance of sin, there’s no need for repentance.

Let’s be honest. Repentance calls for more than what we have. Even if I admit that I’m wrong, I probably don’t feel sorry about it. And I can’t promise that I won’t do it again. That would require a change of heart.

And that takes us to the spiritual nature of repentance. It’s not something we can “work up” or “crank out.” Repentance itself is a gift from God. And what a gift it is! Feeling vulnerable—at the mercy of others—it includes coming clean and trusting God for what happens next. Repentance does engage us with the spiritual!



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# BIBLE DIALOGUE

After spending more than three years interning under Jesus, Peter and Judas had experienced a lot. Both had gone out in twosomes, healing the sick, raising the dead, cleansing lepers, and casting out demons (see Matthew 10:1-8). Both were amazed at what God had done through them. Both anticipated Christ would soon overthrow the Romans and the disciples would be key leaders in the new kingdom. In spite of Christ's repeated instructions contrary to this, Peter and Judas remained steadfast. Obviously, both were wrong. As so often happens, ego got in the way.

Because of their internal drive for glory, they sold out on Jesus. Judas turned traitor, and Peter denied Christ three times in quick succession. Talk about BIG mess ups! Talk about a need for repentance. How would they respond? One repented; the other didn't. That's this week's Bible study.

# STUDY

# **TWO GUYS IN NEED OF REPENTANCE**

## **READ MATTHEW 26:57 - 27:5**

**How easy/difficult is it for you to repent?**



**1. How would you describe Peter's environment at Caiaphas' house?**

- A. Hostile to Jesus and any of his followers.
- B. Open to hearing Peter's testimony.
- C. Corrupt.
- D. Godly.
- E. Someplace Peter just tried to fit in.
- F. A real "come to Jesus" moment.
- G. Definitely out to kill Jesus.
- H. Other.

**2. Why did Peter deny Jesus?**

- A. To save his own life.
- B. He knew he could be forgiven later.
- C. Jesus wasn't saving Peter when Peter needed it.

- D. He had slept instead of praying in the Garden (vs. 41).
- E. Peter was outnumbered.
- F. Confused when Christ didn't fight earlier that night (vs. 51-54).
- G. He had already denied Christ's prediction it would happen (vs. 34).
- H. He lacked supernatural power after three accusations.
- I. Other.

### **3. What led to Peter's repentance?**

- A. A gradual conviction over time.
- B. Hearing the cock crow.
- C. Comparing notes with Judas.
- D. Comparing notes with John.
- E. When the eyes of Jesus locked on Peter's eyes (Luke 22:61).
- F. Crying bitterly.
- G. Once he got away from danger he could think more clearly.
- H. Realizing what he had actually done.
- I. Other.

### **4. What describes Judas' environment with the priests hours later?**

- A. The same environment Peter experienced.
- B. Jesus was gone.
- C. Daylight is different than night time.

- D. Everyone was filled with remorse.
- E. The leading priests were finished with Judas.
- F. A real “come to Jesus” moment.
- G. Just move on.
- H. Desperation.
- I. Other.

## **5. Why did Judas turn traitor on Jesus?**

- A. Jesus wasn’t doing what Judas wanted him to do.
- B. Judas no longer believed Jesus was the Messiah.
- C. Judas was always open to pocketing some extra money.
- D. After the foot-washing, Judas lost respect for Jesus.
- E. Judas figured Jesus needed a push to behave like the Messiah.
- F. He was tired of putting up with all the rest of the disciples.
- G. He lost his power to heal the sick and cast out demons (Matt. 10).
- H. Satan had gained full control of Judas.
- I. Other.

## **6. Why did Judas hang himself?**

- A. He figured he could never be forgiven.
- B. He refused to repent and ask for forgiveness.
- C. His vision for Jesus fell apart, so he did too.

- D. Judas feared what the other disciples would do to the traitor.
- E. Judas feared what the religious leaders would do to the traitor.
- F. Judas feared what the mob and soldiers would do to the traitor.
- G. His remorse for what he did took him into deep, deep depression.
- H. Satan had gained full control of Judas.
- I. Other.

**7. What makes the difference for people to repent or not to repent?**

**8. What is your life like before you repent? After you repent?**

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# PRAYER EXPERIENCES

Do a graduated prayer this week from one day to the next with the topic of REPENTANCE.

1. On day 1, spend 1 minute in silence, asking God to bring to your mind anything God would want you to repent of in your life.

2. On day 2, spend 2 minutes doing the same thing.
3. On day 3, spend 3 minutes asking God to bring to mind repentance in your life.
4. On day 4, spend 4 minutes, including a request for God to give you the gift of repentance.
5. On day 5, spend 5 minutes, recounting what God has forgiven regarding you, and asking for a spirit of repentance so you will relate to others with humility.
6. On day 6, spend 6 minutes, asking again for the gift of repentance and the power to carry it out right away.
7. On day 7, spend 7 minutes, thanking him for the gift of repentance.

If and when God brings something to your mind, thank God for bringing it to your mind, and then turn it right back to God and ask for him to give you the GIFT of repentance, not just the awareness of it. It requires God's gift because, on your own, you can come up with only a mechanistic, strong-willed, teeth-gritting repentance—the letter of the law without the Spirit of the law. Pray for the change in your heart to be sorry for what you did (or failed to do), as well as the change in your direction to not do it again. All of these require a change in your heart, and power from God. And God wants to do that in our lives.

While there might be anxiety about moving from repentance to confession (actually telling the person/people you wronged), there is also tremendous freedom when released from the bondage of sin that clings to us when we're unrepentant. Continue to release the results, whatever they end up being, to God and take action to follow through on the repentance God gives you by confessing regardless of the consequences. You're in God's

good hands regardless of what the human response might be. Keep in mind that those you have wronged might be surprised by your repentance. You're at their mercy about whether or not they forgive you. They might need time, just like you did to repent.

Another prayer experience appropriate when you are dialoguing with God about repentance is reading Psalm 51 and meditating on it as you make this your dialogue with God. David wrote this psalm after conviction from God through Nathan the prophet regarding David's "secret sin" of sleeping with Bathsheba and then arranging for her husband's murder while in the service of the king. Even though you might not place your need for repentance to the same extreme as David's multiple sins, God still dishes out repentance to all who turn to him. Don't stumble about the degree of repentance needed; instead, just ask the source of repentance to give it to you.

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Select from these questions, or let them prompt your own questions. You can reflect on these by yourself, or discuss them with another person or group of people.

Select from these questions, or let them prompt your own questions. You can reflect on these by yourself, or discuss them with another person or group of people.

1. How often do you repent?
2. Why do you repent?
3. Why don't you repent?
4. How do you go about “repenting”?
5. Is repentance really necessary? Why or why not?
6. Why does sin incapacitate us to repent on our own?
7. Who is a good role model for you when it comes to repentance?
8. What is the result when you don't repent?
9. What is your part and what is God's part when it comes to repentance?
10. When have you sinned?
11. When have you needed to repent?
12. What make repentance difficult?
13. What makes repentance easy?
14. What do you do when you don't feel like repenting, even though you need to do so?
15. What happens to you when you repent? What happens when you don't?
16. When and where has God asked you to function like “Nathan the prophet” and let someone else know they need to repent? Have you applied repentance to yourself first?

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# APPLICATION IDEAS

REPENT. It's much easier to say than to do. See the "Prayer Experiences" above for ideas on how to apply this to your life.

Usually we associate repentance with trying to undo something we shouldn't have done. But it could just as easily be a failure to do something we should have done—a "sin of omission" rather than a "sin of commission."

Repentance is necessary and helpful for both. As you reflect on putting repentance into practice in your life, be open to repenting of something you didn't do (and you should have), in addition to repenting of something you did do (and shouldn't have).

Take a moment to consider being on the opposite end of repentance. What will happen if someone comes to you and repents, asking you for forgiveness? Are you ready to do so? Some people are, while others remain stuck in a broken or superficially nice relationship. When you forgive a person, you are releasing them of their guilt and letting them go free. While they might be able to provide some type of restitution (such as replacing a stolen item), frequently it's not something that can just be replaced (gossip or a social media post that tarnished one's reputation). The person who forgives often absorbs the loss and pain; so sometimes we would rather not do that. Instead, we just keep a record of those who have wronged us. They we dole out payback

when we've earned enough interest on what they owe us.  
What a horrible way to live!

Be a support to someone who still needs to repent.  
Frequently it is obvious, even if they think it is hidden. Take  
them to Jesus and rely on his mercy, realizing that human  
responses can be unpredictable, slow, vengeful, or  
conciliatory.

Be a support to someone who has repented, but the  
repentance wasn't accepted. Sometimes releasing  
forgiveness is difficult because we release a power over the  
other person that some would rather continue to wield.  
That's when your support can help in affirming their attempt  
at reconciliation and for giving what God has given them.  
They might need encouragement to continue to repent in  
the future rather than drawing back the next time they are  
faced with it.

You will always be able to come up with excuses and finger-  
pointing about what others have done wrong, even when  
they repent. Change the focus to God's forgiveness of you.  
Let that be your guide in asking for, and in giving  
forgiveness. Both repentance and forgiveness are gifts from  
God. He loves to have them flow through his erring  
children.

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# SHARING OPTIONS

Testify about someone who is a positive role model for repentance. Be careful that this doesn't become a gossip session about somebody's misdeed(s), but rather, about what they did to follow through on repentance. This usually highlights restoring a relationship that got broken in some way and for some reason. It often requires two or more people to let the past be resolved. It may involve restitution in some form(s). There will be humility and possibly tears. Often you'll see lots of relief as well.

Can you testify about a time you repented? Don't make this about you, but about the gift of repentance that God gave you. Testify about receiving that gift, and about the change in your heart that God wrought. Your place in the spotlight is that you agreed to pass on what God gave you. You followed through instead of stubbornly refusing the gift God gave to restore broken relationships. Also in the spotlight is the person who forgave you (if indeed they did forgive you).

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# **BIBLE-IN-MY-HEAD, HEART, AND HAND**

At the start of his ministry, the message Jesus gave for his introduction was simple. It started with repentance, and followed with a reason for repentance. Choose which version of Matthew 4:17 you like best and memorize it:

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” (NIV)

“Turn back to God! The kingdom of heaven will soon be here.” (CEV)

“Change your life. God’s kingdom is here.” (MSG)

At the start of the Christian Church, shortly after Jesus ascended to heaven, the message was similar: Repent. Notice what follows repentance in Acts. Here’s how Peter proclaimed it on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38):

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (NIV)

“Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit.” (CEV)

“Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (MSG)



**“Repent, for the kingdom of  
heaven has come near.”**  
**Matthew 4:17**

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# **SING-ALONG**

**" Create in me a clean heart  
oh God "**

**by  
Maranatha Singers**

**when sin runs deep, Your grace is more  
where grace is found is where You are  
and where You are Lord I am free**

**Holiness is Christ in me  
yes, where You are Lord I am free  
Holiness is Christ in me**



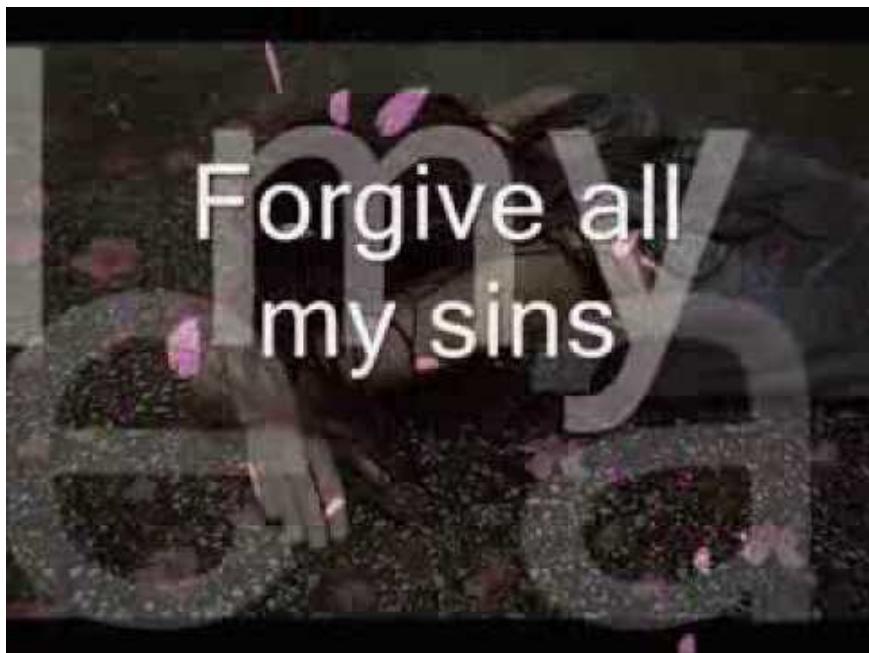
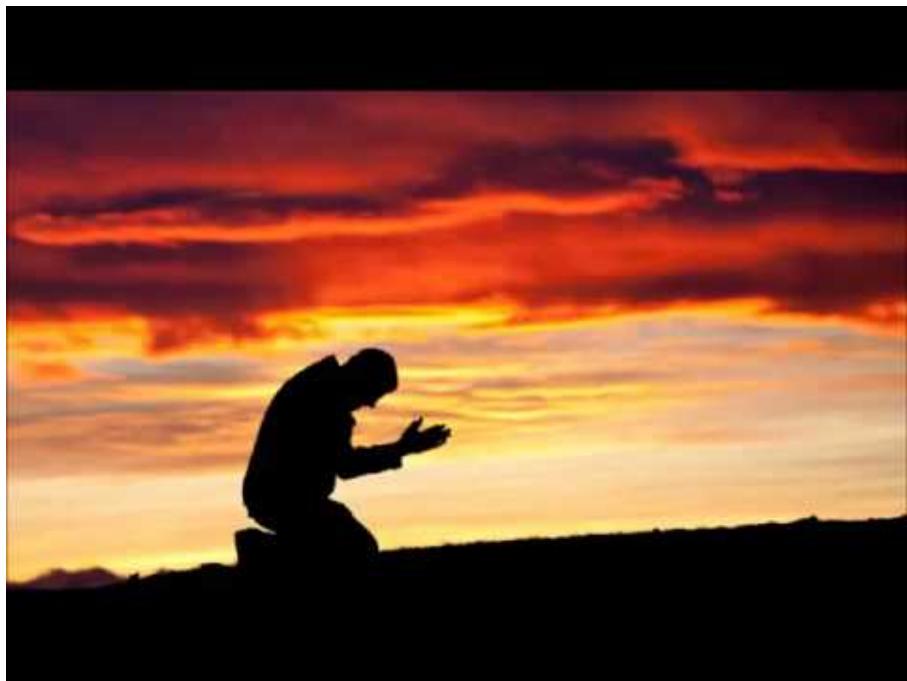
# INSPIRATIONAL MUSIC



vevo

Give us clean hands  
Give us pure hearts  
Let us not lift our  
souls to another





# KIDS OF ALL AGES

I didn't notice when she took the ladder away. Not at first. Not for a long time, actually. My sister and I were picking plums on the garage roof one summer morning. Our neighbor's tree hung over into our yard and she said, "Pick as many as you want, they'll all just go to waste!"

So every summer, we would choose a day for plum picking. We leaned Dad's metal work ladder against the lowest part of the garage roof early in the morning - before it was as hot as fire - and we climbed up one-handed carrying buckets. The plum tree branches made sort of a tent over the roof, and we could crawl underneath them for shade. Underneath those branches, we would sometimes pick and eat plums for hours.

That's what we were doing on this summer day. We had only been picking plums for about half an hour when my sister suddenly announced, "I'm going down - be right back!"

Her bucket was full to overflowing with beautiful red and purple plums, and I knew she would empty it into the boxes in the kitchen, and come back to pick more.

"Okay!" I called, "Maybe bring us some water!"

"Sure!" She agreed.

I heard her flat footsteps echo against the metal rungs of the ladder, cross the grass, and then she opened the back door and ran inside. I kept myself busy picking plums and eating plums and picking more plums and eating more plums for another 15 minutes before I realized - hey, she's not back yet!

"Maybe she went to the bathroom?" I wondered, "or got stuck helping with something inside?" I didn't worry. I knew she'd be back soon.

But she wasn't back soon.

In fact, she didn't come back EVER. When all my buckets were full, I decided not to wait for her anymore and just take them down the ladder. Carrying my heavy loads, I walked to the edge of the garage roof, peered down - and that's when I realized my sister's evil plan. The ladder was laying silently against the bushes across from the garage. She had moved it without a sound, crafty and quick, and trapped me up on the garage roof.

"Help!" I shouted towards the house, "somebody help me! I'm trapped up here!!" The sun got hotter and my buckets got heavier and boy did I ever get ANGRIER as I called and called for help. How long do you think I yelled and waited up on that roof? Does time go faster, or slower when you're mad?

My little brother finally came to rescue me. But of course, first - he laughed at me. A LOT. And when my parents found

out what my sister had done, of course they made her apologize. And of course she got in lots of trouble, and wasn't allowed to pick plums for the rest of the summer. I was angry about this event for days and days.....hey, you know what? I think I'm still angry about it! Because when my sister apologized - she did it with a smile on her face and a gleam in her eye. She wasn't sorry. Not even a little bit!

Have you ever been forced to say you're sorry? Do you find it hard to say you're sorry, even when you really DO feel bad (unlike my sister)? Even grown-ups sometimes have a very hard time saying, "I'm sorry." It's not because the words are big or hard. It's because when we feel embarrassed, ashamed, or guilty, we don't want to talk about it! It can be painful and hard to admit when we're wrong.

In the Bible, we find a story about a boy who ran away from home with all his father's money. You can read it with your family in Luke 15. Even when the money ran out and he was living with the pigs, he was afraid to go home and say he was sorry! But his father welcomed him home with a great big hug and a giant feast. Jesus told this story to teach us how God feels when we say we're sorry to Him - He is so happy to forgive us. In fact, when anyone comes back to Jesus who has been away for a long time, heaven throws a party! Read the boy's story together with your family. Then, answer the questions below.

### **Family Talk Time:**

1. What have you recently had to apologize for? Was it easy or hard? How did you feel?
2. Read The Prodigal Son in Luke 15. How many things did the son need to repent (say sorry) for? Why did he wait so long?
3. How did his father react? What does this teach us about Jesus?
4. How did his brother react? What might this teach us about ourselves?
5. Are there things from this past week that some people in our family need to say “I’m sorry” for - To each other? To others outside our home? To God? Let’s do that now...

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