

Study Series: Running from Mercy

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 Lesson Title: “True Repentance” (pp. 49-62)

Session 4

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The main point of this lesson is: Repentance is necessary for deliverance from our sin.

Focus on this goal: To help adults express repentance as a starting point in moving from misery to mercy

Key Bible Passage: Jonah 2:1-10

Before the Session

1. Review the accounts of John the Baptist and King Herod in Mark 6 and David’s sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11–12). (Step 4)

2. Have a board or large piece of paper and marker visible to learners. (Step 7)

During the Session

Step 1. Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

**Invite** learners to share a some of their bucket list items. **Select** two or three learners who shared and **ask** each one: *If this is something you want to do in the near future, what are some necessary steps you should take before you set out?* (For example, if you want to hike the Grand Canyon, you need to train for long hikes, arrange travel there, and perhaps take off work.)

**Say:** *In fulfilling a bucket list, career plans, and many other circumstances, certain things are necessary before something else can happen. We’re going to look at what is necessary in our spiritual lives when we are seeking deliverance; Jonah will be our example.*

Step 2. Repentance

**Ask:** How important is repentance in the life of a Christian?

After a few minutes of discussion, **point** learners to the collection of Scriptures at the bottom of page 49. **Invite** one or more volunteers to read the verses. **Say:** We get a consistent message from Jesus and His disciples: repentance is integral for deliverance and salvation.

**Ask:** So what is repentance, then? **Use** Day One content (pp. 49-50), specifically the paragraph (p. 50) that begins, “Simply put, repentance is . . .” to **formulate** a definition together.

Step 3. Acknowledge Your Sin, Part 1

**Invite** a volunteer to read Jonah 2:1-10.

**Read** the first Day Two paragraph (p. 51). **Use** Day Two content (p. 51) to remind learners that Jonah knew he was at fault for the storm (Jonah 1:12), and from the belly of the fish he confessed that God had ordained that he be thrown into the sea (2:3).

**Invite** a volunteer to read Psalm 38:3 and Psalm 51:3, either from a Bible or from the Day Two content (pp. 51 and 52, respectively). **Use** those verses to **bring** learners to the truth that each person’s sin causes that person’s misery.

**Say:** *We must take responsibility for our sin, and confess it to the Lord. However, that’s not our first instinct.*

Step 4. Acknowledge Your Sin, Part 2

**Use** Day Three content (p. 53) to **point out** how quickly and naturally we tend to blame others for our sin, starting with Adam and Eve.

**Share** a time when you were confronted in your sin by someone who loved you. **Admit** if your feelings clouded your ability to hear truth.

Briefly **recount** the events of John the Baptist and King Herod and contrast that with the account of Nathan’s confronting David over his sin with Bathsheba.

**Challenge** learners to not blame or cut off people who confront them in their sin; they are the grace of God!

Step 5. From Misery to Mercy

**Ask:** *Has anyone here ever been in a miserable physical situation, but you were slow to admit it?* (Examples might include an undiagnosed health issue, an injury you thought you’d just shake off, or a sickness you misdiagnosed.)

**Say:** J*onah’s story helps us see the danger of not being able to properly assess our spiritual sickness and misery.* Use Day Four content (p. 55) to drive home this point.

**Direct** learners to look at Jonah 2:1-10 in their Bibles. **Invite** volunteers to call out Jonah’s examples of misery coupled with God’s mercy (see vv. 4,6).

Step 6. Acknowledge the Savior

Invite a volunteer to read Jonah 2:9 and Romans 11:36. As a group, use Day Five content (pp. 58-59) to consider how salvation is from Jesus, through Jesus, and to Jesus.

Read the three-sentence paragraph from Day Five (p. 59) that begins with the phrase, “You know what happened to Jonah in that fish?”

Challenge learners to consider how we picture Jesus in the middle of our own tough times: is He standing stock-still, arms crossed, disapproving of our behavior? Or is He reaching down to help us?

Encourage learners to read through the verses in Day Five to get an accurate picture of Jesus in our times of rebellion.

Step 7. Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

**Say:** *Let’s consider the flow of Jonah’s life up until the passage we studied today.* On a board or large piece of paper **write:** *Command. Rebellion. Misery. Mercy.* As a group, **consider** how these four words summarize the first two chapters of the book of Jonah as well as our own lives.

**Challenge** learners to contemplate the gladness that has come from their own repentance and share it with someone this week.

**Close in prayer.**

