

Return To God

Opening Questions

- What has been getting most of your attention, focus and heart? Work, what others think/do/feel, your money, who/what you can get or buy next, vacation, etc?
- If you find yourself turning away from God, frustrated or down on yourself or blaming others, this is the study for you.
- It is too easy to go through our busy lives choosing to focus on the myriad of things we have going on and the emotions we feel instead of our relationship with God. But there was a time when you were close to God. Would do anything for Him and worked to be close to him. How do you get there again?

Bible Study

Where are you choosing to turn instead of God?

Mark 4:18-19 (NIV)

18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; **19** but the **worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things** come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **20** Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

- Worries, money/success and desires for many other choke out God's Word and it takes spiritual work to not allow this to happen in our lives.
- We end up physically present, but our hearts and minds are somewhere else. Does this describe you?
- What do you desire more than God? What ends up filling your thoughts?
- This scripture promises that if we turn back to God by hearing his word, believing it and living it we will have a fruitful life.

Understand You Can't Outsmart God

Galatians 6:7-10 (NIV)

7 Don't be fooled. You can't outsmart God. A man gathers a crop from what he plants. **8** Some people plant to please their desires controlled by sin. From these desires they will harvest death. Others plant to please the Holy Spirit. From the Spirit they will harvest eternal life. **9** Let us not become tired of doing good. At the right time we will gather a crop if we don't give up. **10** So when we can do good to everyone, let us do it. Let's try even harder to do good to the family of believers.

- Have you been living to please yourself (doing what you want or feel like) or please God (doing what He commands)?
- We can think that we can live however we want and God's blessings will still come. We can't outsmart God. We reap what we sow.

- We can end up mad at God (Proverbs 19:3) and quitting, not realizing that it's our own actions that leads to destruction in relationships, unhappiness in our own lives and hurting those around us.
- We must not give up, and do good by loving God and those around us.

Why Are You Angry?

James 4:1-4 (NIV)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? **2 You desire but do not have**, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so **you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.** **3** When you ask, you do not receive, because you **ask with wrong motives**, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

4 You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.

- We get angry and blame God and others when we don't get what we want.
- We get angry when we try to use God instead of love him. How have you been using God?
- Why does God choose to use the word "adultery"? This word is specifically used to describe unfaithfulness in marriage. God expects us to have that close of a relationship with Him.

To Turn Back to God, Change from Inside out

Mark 7:20-23 (NIV)

20 He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. **21** For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, **22** adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. **23** All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

- Our thoughts, motives and desires turn us away from God. Before we do anything physical we think, plan, plot, have sinful thoughts and embarrassing thoughts that make us guilty and/or harden our hearts.
- Returning to God starts with being honest about all that's going on in our head and heart in addition to whatever we have done.
- Look at the scripture as a guide. What desires, thoughts, motives, actions/lack of action do you need to confess?

Trust God Will Come Through - He does!

Psalm 37:1-8 (NIV)

1 Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
2 for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.
3 Trust in the Lord and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
4 Take delight in the Lord,

and he will give you the desires of your heart.

5 Commit your way to the Lord;
trust in him and he will do this:

6 He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

7 Be still before the Lord
and wait patiently for him;

do not fret when people succeed in their ways,
when they carry out their wicked schemes.

8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.

- God will give us the desires of heart. We don't need to try and take it.
- What do you truly desire that is good? What's the hardest thing for you to trust God with?
- Decide to pray about it daily while you seek to love God and be as close to him as possible.

Turning to God is Refreshing!

Acts 3:19 (NIV)

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord

- God wants to refresh us and for us to enjoy life.
- Who would be refreshed by your change?
- How can you return to God?
 - **Get 100% honest** - Admit every thought, desire, motive and sin to yourself and confess it to God and to 2 people who will help you spiritually.
 - **Daily time with God:** Study out the Cross in Mark 14 and the following chapters, 1 John on love/honesty, James for faith in action - How do you need to change to follow Jesus example of his relationship with God and action he took? What has God done for you that you can choose to be grateful about? What do you need to apologize to God for? Decide to give your best and love God daily in reading, praying and obedience. .
 - **Ask for help** - Build a team around you of spiritual people who will help you return to God and change your heart and life. Ask them to help you!
 - **Repent** - What good do you need to persevere and do? Who do you need to apologize to? To love? To forgive? Get advice from? Serve?
 - **Gratitude** - Remember all God has done for you through Jesus and throughout your life. Pray about these daily!