

The Call to Return

Turning our hearts back to God

Time:
7-10 minutes
Focus:
Repentance, Change,
Maturity

Scriptures

2 Chronicles 7:14
1 Samuel 7:3
1 Kings 18:37
Daniel 9:13
1 Thessalonians 4:8
Matthew 4:17
Mark 8:33
Matthew 6:33
Galatians 4:9
Philippians 3:12-14
Hebrews 6:1

Parking lot

Write down distracting thoughts here:

Settle in

Take a deep breath. Turn off notifications on your phone. Ask God to help you get rid of distractions and bring your heart back to him.

Thought starter

2 Chronicles 7:14 CEV

If my own people will humbly pray and turn back to me and stop sinning, then I will answer them from heaven. I will forgive them and make their land fertile once again.

Drifting from God usually isn't loud or dramatic. It's subtle—a missed prayer here, a compromised conviction there, and a slow shift in priorities that we may not notice. Before we know it, our hearts aren't as soft, our convictions aren't as strong, and our devotion isn't as focused.

Throughout the Bible, God's message to his people is simple and powerful: Return to me. Not just emotionally. Not just temporarily. But wholeheartedly.

Today is an invitation to turn our hearts back to God and keep them there. That's how we mature and move forward in our faith rather than constantly drifting back into our old ways.

Here's what we'll learn in this Quick Quiet Time:

- Turning back to God means removing idols and following his truth.
- God can help us turn back to him when we pray and keep our eyes focused on Jesus.
- Turning back to God brings spiritual maturity and growth.

Returning to God begins with removing rivals.

1 Samuel 7:3 NLT

Then Samuel said to all the people of Israel, "If you want to return to the LORD with all your hearts, get rid of your foreign gods... Turn your hearts to the LORD and obey him alone; then he will rescue you..."



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Notes:

 **Truth bomb:** A turned heart is a cleansed heart.

- Returning to God means removing anything that rivals him for first place in our hearts.
- A “foreign god” was something other than God that the Israelites relied on for security and protection.
- Returning to God means letting go of any idols or human solutions we rely on rather than God.
- This requires surrender, not just feelings and sentiment.

 **God helps turn our hearts return to him.**

1 Kings 18:37 NLT

“O LORD, answer me! Answer me so these people will know that you, O LORD, are God and that **you have brought them back** to yourself.”

 **Truth bomb:** Returning to God isn't something we do alone.

- Returning to God is not dependent solely on our effort. It is God's gracious work in us.
- Revival begins with asking God to answer our prayers and reveal his character to us again.

 **Returning to God requires alignment with God's truth.**

Daniel 9:13 NLT

Every curse written against us in the Law of Moses has come true. Yet we have refused to seek mercy from the LORD our God by turning from our sins and recognizing his truth.

 **Truth bomb:** Turning back to God includes action, not just emotion.

- Returning to God means turning from sin and turning toward God's wisdom
- This requires “recognizing his truth” and re-aligning our lives with his standards in the Scriptures.

 **A turned heart is an obedient heart.**

1 Thessalonians 4:8 NLT

Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

 **Truth bomb:** Rejecting God's ways is rejecting God.

- God gives us the Holy Spirit to remind us of the truth and guide us in how to live (John 14:26, Galatians 5:16-18).
- Turning to God means we honor the Holy Spirit's leading. It means we do what God says even when we don't want to or understand his ways.

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Notes:

🔄 Jesus calls us to keep turning to God and his kingdom.

Matthew 4:17 NLT

From then on Jesus began to preach, "Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near."

Matthew 6:33 NLT

Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

🕒 **Truth bomb:** Turning to God isn't a one-time event.

- Repentance is often described as "turning from sin."
- It's a lifestyle of continually turning our hearts away from sin and toward God, his kingdom, and his purpose for our lives.

♥ Returning to God means returning to his priorities.

Mark 8:33 NLT

Jesus turned around and looked at his disciples, then reprimanded Peter. "Get away from me, Satan!" he said. "You are seeing things merely from a human point of view, not from God's."

🕒 **Truth bomb:** Turning to God means valuing what he values, not what pleases ourselves or other people.

- Jesus's heart was set on doing God's will.

🔗 ⚡ Returning to God means moving forward, not backward.

Galatians 4:9 NLT

So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world?

🕒 **Truth bomb:** A heart turned back to God refuses to be enslaved again to sin or the world's way of doing things.

- We must not return to the things God freed us from.

🏃 Returning to God means keeping our eyes on the finish line.

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Notes:

Philippians 3:12-14 NLT

I don't mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. [13] No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, [14] I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.


 **Truth bomb:** A heart turned to God is a heart fixed on Jesus, always running toward him.

- Maturity means moving forward toward the goal of being close to God and refusing to retreat into old ways.

Returning to God brings spiritual maturity.

Hebrews 6:1 NLT

So let us stop going over the basic teachings about Christ again and again. Let us go on instead and become mature in our understanding. Surely we don't need to start again with the fundamental importance of repenting from evil deeds and placing our faith in God.

 **Truth bomb:** A mature heart keeps progressing in faith.

- Turning to God every day is how we grow spiritually rather than cycling through the same struggles over and over.
- When we regularly return to our old patterns or cycles instead of turning to God, we have to re-learn the fundamentals of walking with God over and over again. This is how we stay spiritually immature instead of growing into maturity.
- A mature heart keeps moving forward in faith rather than turning back to sins of the past.

Returning to God brings spiritual maturity.

- In what areas of my life have I drifted from God and his will? In what ways is he calling me to turn back to him?
- What idols do I need to remove to keep my eyes focused on Jesus?
- How can I align my priorities with God's this week?

Final thoughts

- We will all drift at times. But when we genuinely turn our hearts back to God, we don't have to keep falling into the same cycles or patterns. Turning to God means removing what competes with him, realigning with his truth, fixing our eyes on Jesus and moving forward. This is how we mature spiritually.

**Humor break!**

What's the best pastry for people trying to make changes?
A turnover.

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