

## Talk It Over

## MASTERMIND (Week 5) ResponsAbility

### SMALL TALK

1. Can you think of a time when you made excuses for what you are/were like, and did not take personal responsibility and work towards change?
2. Do you think people are actually response **able**—that they can take responsibility and change their thinking to change their life? Is self-help enough? Why or why not?

### VIEWPOINT

3. **READ Matthew 3:1-2 and 4:17.** What one word describes the content of John the Baptist's preaching and Jesus' preaching? What is the meaning of this word?

**Matthew 3:1-2 (NIV)** In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea {2} and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

**Matthew 4:17 (NIV)** From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

4. **READ Acts 11:18 and 2 Timothy 2:25.** How is it possible that repentance is something God “gives” but also something for which God holds us responsible (consider for example Luke 3:1-17)? To what degree can a person repent (change his thoughts and his life) apart from God?

**Acts 11:18 (CSB)** ...“So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles.”

**2 Timothy 2:25 (NIV)** Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant [same verb as Acts 11:18: “give”] them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,

### GETTING PERSONAL

5. How does repentance unleash divine power to get us unstuck? How does this work to rewire our minds, our emotions, our wills, and even our bodies?

*This is a good way to review what this series has covered as it relates to “rewiring”,*

*that is, capturing our thoughts (strongholds) (2 Corinthians 10:3-5) and making taking them captive to Christ's truth, (a "stronger hold").*

(The REPENTANCE God grants unleashes Divine Power through our savior Jesus, and the divinely powerful weapons of truth, prayer, and the Holy Spirit whom he gives and all of this... ) REWIRES you...

1. Your Mind:

- Where you enter into a total agreement with God that your sin is utterly wrong and heinous to God.
- That God's way is good and beautiful.
- That sin dishonors God and ruins your humanity.

2. Your Emotions:

- Not just a dread of punishment (you can dread that and still love sin).
- Not just a remorse for being caught.
- But a deep desire to return to God and goodness.

3. Your Will:

- The demand for repentance clearly implies human free will and individual responsibility
- But it is equally clear that God takes the initiative in repentance.
- This paradox reflects the mysterious relationship between people in relationship with a gracious Savior God.
- God will accept no external substitute for the necessary internal change. He will not accept remorse without a desire and effort to change.

4. Your Body:

- Your body is re-habituated by all of this rewiring.
- New habits, patterns, and appetites are formed.

6. How does God "grant" repentance?

**Repentance is God's gift and our responsibility.**

God isn't there to hand out free hall passes to do whatever we want. No. He asks us to Repent, then he graciously enters our lives and helps us walk through the changes that we need, setting us free by grace through Jesus Christ.

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

**μετάνοια (metanoia)** Literally “change of mind.” It is a REGRET that leads to a RETURN to God. It is the state of changing any or all of your attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors concerning the demands of God for right living.

Often the “regret” of one’s old opinion, our thoughts on a matter, comes by hearing God’s word, and acquiring the knowledge of truth. This is one of the reasons Paul writes that “Faith comes by hearing...” (See Romans 10:17 and context). This is why meditating on, and studying God’s Word is so helpful. These “divinely powerful” “weapons” dismantle and replace the old pathways of the brain, with new and helpful true pathways. And this works on our brain the way neuroscience has now discovered, consequently rewiring our minds, emotions, wills, desires, and body (habits).

All this means we that with God’s help we can REPENT, we can change our thinking, WE CAN respond. We are ResponsABLE.

7. What stronghold do you want to rewire?

## MAKING PROGRESS

8. One of our core statements is: “Don’t do life alone.” Is there someone in your life or some way our small group can support you in your efforts to rewire a stronghold pattern in your thinking?

September 29, 2019

## **MASTERMIND**

Change your thoughts. Change your life.

Week 5 (ResponsAbility)

In the biographies of Jesus, all the Gospel writers tell of the ministry of a prophet by the name of John, who was calling Jewish people to be baptized as an act of repentance.

*Matthew 3:1-2 (NIV) In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea {2} and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

Everywhere John goes, the message was the same it was about “Repentance!”

This was Jesus’ message as well.

*Matthew 4:17 (NIV) From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”*

### **I.    RePENTANCE = ReGRET and ReTURN**

#### **DEFINITION**

**μετάνοια (metanoia)** Literally “change of mind.” It is a REGRET that leads to a RETURN to God. It is the state of changing any or all of your attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors concerning the demands of God for right living.

#### **REFLECT**

Repentance is more than saying, “I feel bad.” Repentance is admitting you were wrong, and that you have a change of thinking that leads you to new actions you are ready to move in. It means a turning point. A turning back to God.

### **II.    Repentance is a U-TURN (a YOU-Turn)**

There is nothing simple about a You-Turn. Repentance is more than a self-help program.

... repentance...is not something God demands of you before He will take you back and which He could let you off if He chose: it is simply a description of what going back to Him is like. If you ask God to take you back without it, you are really asking Him to let you go back without going back. It cannot happen.

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

... fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying you are sorry, realizing that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor—that is the only way out of our 'hole'. **This process of surrender—this movement full speed astern—is what Christians call repentance.** Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death. In fact, it needs a good man to repent. And here's the catch.

Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent perfectly. The worse you are the more you need it and the less you can do it. The only person who could do it perfectly

would be a perfect person—and he would not need it.

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Do you see a problem here? The wonderful thing is that God has done something about this problem. Before we focus on what God has done about this problem...

### **III. Repentance is taking RESPONSIBILITY...**

#### **The Common People Responded**

John the Baptist fiery and confronting message connected with their souls, and they came in contact with their sinfulness. They responded. The common people came forward immediately. They didn't resist; they knew they were sinners. **In my experience, I don't have to spend a lot of time convincing people they're sinners.** People these days know that they're wading waist deep in the stuff every day.

#### **The Religious Elite Resisted (because of spiritual pride).**

They no longer thought of themselves as sinners. They saw themselves as devout Jews who had it all together. But John confronted them, and told them they should be more like Gentiles who acknowledge their need for forgiveness and be baptized in repentance to be washed clean. Most of them refused to humble themselves in this way.

Do we think we have arrived at God's standard of Holiness? We still need a savior. We still need repentance. I still need to work on changing my thinking. "Change your thoughts. Change your life." Repentance recognizes that I need a savior's help to change! That's repentance.

### **REFLECT**

This was Jesus message: Take responsibility and repent. I'll help you.

God isn't there to hand out free hall passes to do whatever we want. No. He asks us to Repent, then he graciously enters our lives and helps us walk through the changes that we need, setting us free by grace through Jesus Christ.

C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

#### **IV. Repentance unleashes DIVINE POWER to get us UNSTUCK**

##### **A. Jesus GIVES us repentance...**

*Acts 11:18 (CSB) ... "So then, God has given repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles."*

*2 Timothy 2:25 (NIV) Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant [same verb as Acts 11:18: "give"] them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth,*

##### **B. That REQUIRES you...**

###### **1. Your Mind:**

- Where you enter into a total agreement with God that your sin is utterly wrong, repulsive, and disgusting to God.
- Total agreement that God's way is good and beautiful.
- That sin dishonors God and ruins your humanity.

###### **2. Your Emotions:**

- Not just a dread of punishment (you can dread that and still love sin).
- Not just a remorse for being caught.
- But a deep desire to return to God and goodness.

###### **3. Your Will:**

- The demand for repentance clearly implies human free will and individual responsibility
- But it is equally clear that God takes the initiative in repentance.
- This paradox reflects the mysterious relationship between people in relationship with a gracious Savior God.
- God will accept no external substitute for the necessary internal change, and neither will he accept remorse without a desire and effort to change.

#### **4. Your Body:**

- Your body is re-habituated by all of this rewiring.
- New habits, patterns, and appetites are formed.

#### **C.     *How does this work?***

How does this work. How can repentance be God's gift, and our responsibility?

Let's return to the scene we began with at the Jordan river with John's call to repent. Something very strange happened there. Jesus asked to be baptized. But why? How strange. How bizarre! Jesus has never sinned. Why is he repenting? What is he repenting for? He has nothing to repent of. Why is he being baptized? John is shocked, he says to Jesus, "If anybody is going to baptize anybody here, you're going to baptize me." But Jesus was not deterred from his purpose to be baptized. Why? Jesus gave this answer.

*Matthew 3:15 (NIV2011) Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.*

Let's ponder what might be going on here. Use your imagination with me for a little bit. Picture a long line of people waiting to be baptized. And Jesus is in that same line. Jesus walks up and down



the line we are standing in to repent. I want you to imagine it this way.

Jesus goes up and down the line of humanity needing repentance and he asks for our name tags. Let's say you overhear this conversation. Jesus says, Can I have your name tag for a moment? He goes up to Andy and writes on his name tag. "Adulterer".

But Andy protests... "Hey, I never committed adultery. What did you do that for?"

Jesus lovingly and kindly says, "Yes, you have Andy, when you lusted in your heart and enjoyed that lust. You committed adultery in your heart. But here is my offer. Would you allow me to take that sin away from you? Would you like that?"

Andy, stops being angry and says, with moist eyes. "Can you do that?"

Jesus says, "Yes I can. Isn't that what you are in line for.?"  
"Yes. That's right. Then, by all means, please do.", says Andy.  
Then Jesus does something odd. He put's Andy's nametag on.

He goes to Martha, And shocks Martha and goes through a similar conversation, but shocks her when he writes on her nametag, "Murderer".

Martha protests, "I never committed murder". But Jesus with love and kindness in his eyes says, "Yes you did when you were angry with Lydia, and slandered her character, that is murder in your heart". And Martha is silent. She knows he is right.

Jesus makes the same offer to Martha, and she accepted, and Jesus put her nametag on himself. And on down the line he

went...making each of us the offer, personalizing our nametags, then putting them on himself.

When Jesus came to the water to be baptized He was covered in the nametags of every person who took responsibility and repented.

Then something very strange happened. As Jesus went down into the water, black ink swirled around his immersed body, it was the black ink from the labels. When Jesus came up out of the water the labels had changed. The inky black labels were brightly shining gold labels under each name, but labels read Loved, Forgiven, Accepted, Significant, Secure, Whole, Free.

Then someone shouts, “Hey, look at the water”. The black ink from the old labels that had swirled around Jesus’ body... was no longer black, but the swirling ink flowed away in red as it dripped off Jesus body...and the river took the red stains as far as the East is from the West.

## REFLECT

Repentance is God’s gift and our responsibility.

Lord Jesus,  
Thank you for identifying with us, repenting for us, and granting us repentance. We repent and ask for your help rewiring our minds, our emotions, our wills, and our bodies. Thank you for taking away our sin labels and washing us clean, and giving us our new identity in you! We turn to you to live for you! Amen!