

THE ROAD OF REPENTANCE

1 SAMUEL 7:1-17

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – MAY 24, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Samuel 7:1-17 (ESV)

REACH ONE

REACH ONE - *Getting to know people and helping people get to know Jesus.*

As we continue growing in the habit of intentionally going out of our way to see people, carve out some discussion time to let group members share how they took a step towards others during the past week. It doesn't matter if it's small (learning their barista's name) or big (getting to share Jesus with someone), celebrating little wins like these can go a long way into making this part of our daily rhythms and lifestyle.

SERMON RECAP

Pastor Eric's sermon outlined how the people of Israel finally took to the road of repentance, and posed two questions for us to consider:

- What does the road to repentance look like?
 1. The road of repentance begins with grief (lament) over our sin
 - Stop trying to avoid lament.
 - We avoid lament when we compare our sin to others; use our good works to cover our sin; blame our circumstances or other people's wrongdoing to distract, placate or manipulate God.
 - While grief is the first step towards repentance, grief alone is not repentance.
 2. The road of repentance leads to turning from idols
 - Idolatry is when you are tempted to declare God saves, but idols, you satisfy.
 - Idolatry is not when you enjoy God's creation, it's when you serve God's creation.
 3. Repentance is real when instead of serving your idols, you put them away.
 - You will only release your idols when you know God is better.
 - We have to walk the road of repentance.
 - The road of repentance leads to deliverance and great joy.
 - The road of repentance is the road to eternal joy. There is no shortcut or alternative route.
 - You can't experience the eternal joy of a relationship with God without navigating the sorrow of your sin against a holy God.
- Who will help us travel it?
 1. You can't take this road alone!
 2. Jesus leads us down the road of repentance to great joy. He announces and leads the way.
 3. To walk with Jesus is to travel the road of repentance until the day he returns.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

1. Read 1 Samuel 7:1-17 as a group. Let group members share observations. Try not to move into interpretation of the passage or application of what you read quite yet. Simply share what you observe.
2. What happened in the opening verses? What did the people of Israel do? vv.1-2
3. What specific command does Samuel give the people and what did they take? vv. 3 and 5?

4. What does Samuel declare about God in verse 4?
5. What signs of grief or lament over sin do you see in Israel's actions? vv. 4 and 6?
6. How do the Philistines react when Israel gathers at Mizpah, and how do the Israelites respond 7-8?
7. What does Samuel do on Israel's behalf when the Philistines approach 8-9?
8. How does God respond to Samuel's intercession and the Israelites' repentance 9-11, 13-14?
9. What does Samuel set up in verse 12?
10. How would you summarize 1 Samuel 7:1-17?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

In verse 3, Samuel tells the people to "prepare your hearts for the Lord". Why is genuine repentance about both turning away from sin (idols) and turning toward God (serving Him only)? Isaiah 55:7; Acts 26:20

1. Israel lamented for 20 years in verse 2; why does Samuel insist that Israel must "put away" their idols before God will deliver them, and what does this teach about the nature of genuine repentance? Joshua 24:14-15; Ezekiel 14:3-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:9
2. Why do the Israelites express grief (lament) in verses 5-6, and what does this reveal about the kind of sorrow that leads to real repentance? Psalm 51:17; 2 Corinthians 7:10
3. Compare the events of this chapter with 1 Samuel 4:1-11 when the Israelites failed to defeat the Philistines when they brought the Ark of the Covenant into battle, but succeeded at Mizpah after repenting. Why couldn't Israel experience God's blessing while the Baals and Ashtoreths were still present? Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalm 66:18-19
4. How does God's deliverance in verses 9-11 show that repentance leads not only to forgiveness but to freedom and joy? Psalm 32:1-5; Isaiah 1:18; 2 Cor 7:10-11

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

- Grieving over sin
 1. When was the last time you grieved over your sin — repentance that leads you toward God rather than away from Him?
 2. In what ways are you tempted to avoid lament — by comparing your sin to others, blaming circumstances, or covering it with good works?
- Turning from idols
 3. What "idols" (e.g., money, pleasure, approval, success) compete for your trust, affection, and satisfaction today?
 4. What would it look like for you to "put away" those idols? What is stopping you?
 5. Where do you need to remember that God is better than the idol you're tempted to find satisfaction in?
- Repentance to Joy in Jesus
 6. Do you believe repentance can lead to joy? Why or why not?
 - What keeps you from believing that repentance is the road to joy?
 - How have you seen God bring freedom, relief, or joy when you've walked the path of repentance in the past?
 7. What would it look like this week to walk with Jesus daily on the road of repentance — not as punishment, but as the path to greater joy?
 8. How can your Church Group pray for you to cultivate wholehearted repentance and trust Jesus who is better?