Weekly Study Guide

January 8, 2012

Reading Tracks

Track One

Follow along with basics of the story in a short selection of readings this week..

Monday: Mark 1:14-15

Tuesday: Matthew 3:1-12

Wednesday: Matthew 4:12-17

Thursday: Read John 8:1-11

Friday: Read Romans 12:1-2

Saturday: Real Joel 2:12-13

Track Two

Get a little bigger perspective by reading assigned sections from The Story © *2011 by Zondervan.*

Read pages 324-32 this week.

Track Three

Get the whole story by reading through most of the Bible in longer sections.

In your Bible, read Matthew 15-20 this week.

This Week's Scripture Memory Verse

"The time has come," he said. "The Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!" Mark 1:15 (NIV)

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Group Discussion

Connect

Have you ever heard or seen someone demanding "repentance?" What do you think that usually means?

Learn

Read Mark 1:14-15. This record of Jesus' earliest preaching (which can be found also in Matthew 4:17) contains two messages: A call for repentance and an announcement that the Kingdom or Reign of God is arriving.

- This Sunday's message clarified that repentance isn't meant to cause God to move in our lives. It is a response to God's action; not a condition of it. What difference do you think that makes?
- Why would the arrival of God's reign be a cause for repentance or change?

Read Romans 12:1-2. This passage urges us to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Similarly, the Greek word that was translated as "repent" in Mark 1 could be literally translated as "come to a new way of thinking."

- Do you hear anything different in a call to "repent" versus a call to "think like Jesus."
- Why would a "renewing of your mind" cause transformation in someone's life?

Read Joel 2:12-13. Joel was one of several Old Testament prophets who called for God's people to repent or return to God. The word that is translated as repent in the Old Testament is different than the New Testament. This word literally means "turn around."

- How does the image of "turning around" shape your understanding of what it means to repent?
- The act of rending (tearing) one's garments (v. 13) was an ancient sign of mourning or sorrow. What do you think it means to "rend (tear) your heart and not your garments"?

Apply

If you could sit down for dinner with Jesus at your favorite restaurant and have a long conversation, what patterns of thought do you think He might see in you and suggest you most need to renew or change?

Pray

In addition to sharing prayer requests in your group, ask yourselves if you know anyone who needs the new hope that comes from having the mind of Christ. Pray for them that they would know God's love and call for their lives in Jesus Christ.