

Fresh Start

Week #1 - Spiritual: Most people don't equate repentance with the words "fresh" or "liberating." Crying "God, have mercy on me, a sinner!" seems like a miserable way to start the year. But not according to Jesus. Jesus said that those who humbly confess their need of God's grace (instead of self-righteously comparing themselves to others) would be justified and exalted in the eyes of God. Perhaps, then, repentance is the most liberating way to live! Text: Luke 18:9-14

- Luke 18:9 - *To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable...*

First Step —> Face your **Denial**

- Luke 18:10-13 - *"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'*

Needed Step —> Confess your **Sin**

- Luke 18:14 - *"I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."*

Repentance —> Fresh Start

- James 4:8,10 - *Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts...10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*
- 1 John 1:8,9 - *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

Points To Ponder

1. Are there things in your life that you have been holding on to and you need to repent for? Take a look at your life and identify the areas that need repentance. Once that is done, what is the next step (or 2) that you need to take to get a fresh start spiritually this week?
2. Reread 1 John 1:8-9. What comfort do you find in these words for those times when we sin? What encouragement do you find in these words for getting a spiritual fresh start in 2019?

Homework: Genesis 1 & Psalm 139