

Warm Up Activity or Question

- 1. Group Activity:** Try to guess who made the following public apologies and the circumstances surrounding them:
 - "Indeed, I did have a relationship with Ms. Lewinsky that was not appropriate. In fact, it was wrong. It constituted a critical lapse in judgment and a personal failure on my part for which I am solely and completely responsible."
 - "I'm soooooo sorry to Taylor Swift and her fans and her mum. I spoke to her mother right after and she said the same thing my mother would've said. She is very talented! I like the lyrics about being a cheerleader and she's in the bleachers! I'm in the wrong for going on stage and taking away from her moment!"
 - "Appreciate all the love and support from #ChiefsKingdom, I let y'all down today. I'll always continue to work and try and learn and be better for it. Want to give thanks to God for every opportunity he has given me. We will be back."
- 2. Group Question:** Describe an apology that is not really an apology. Have you ever given or received such an apology? If so, how did that play out?

Can You Relate?

While struggling in Macedonia, Paul anxiously awaits the arrival of Titus and news of the Corinthian's response to his harsh rebuke sent in a now-lost letter. To Paul's utter joy and relief, Titus reports that the Corinthians have repented of their treatment of Paul and are now doing all in their power to follow his leadership. Paul rejoices in their repentance, and in his complete confidence in them. 2 Corinthians 7 is a testament of how true repentance carries transformative power, and to the joy that comes with reconciliation.

Read 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

1. Confrontation without Condemnation

From 7:2, what does Paul mean when he says, 'open your hearts to us?'

From 7:2-4, what attitude(s) toward the Corinthians did Paul hold? How do you think his feelings allowed him to confront without condemning?

How does one confront someone without condemning? Tucking this information into your spiritual toolbox, how would this change or bolster the way in which you would confront sin in the future?

Verse 7:8-9, what was Paul's emotional process after writing and sending his harsh rebuke? If you can relate to this, please explain why.

Under what conditions, and for what purpose, would it be necessary to confront sin even though you know you will cause pain to someone, and possibly feel remorse for having done it? Can someone share from experience?

2. Good Grief!

From verses 9, why does Paul now rejoice?

Twice, Paul mentions the Corinthians experienced 'godly grief.' (ESV) Other Bible translations say, 'sorrowful as God intended' (NIV) and 'grieved according to God,' (KJV) to list a few.

What does Paul say godly grief (grief intended by God) leads to?

What does 'salvation without regret' mean?

What is worldly grief and how does it differ from godly grief?

Remember that Paul first addressed the Corinthians face-to-face with their wrongdoing, and things went so badly he had to leave Corinth, before addressing them again with his letter.

With all honesty, what is your usual immediate response when confronted by wrongdoing? Defense? Explanations? Anger? Self-pity? Or godly sorrow and repentance?

Someone share a personal experience of being confronted with wrongdoing including the process and result.

What was the result of Paul's confrontation? (7:16)

Live it out

Paul ends this portion of his letter with a joyful expression of his confidence in the Corinthians and rejoices that Titus' spirit was refreshed by his visit. Their healthy relationship has been restored, and the work of God can continue unhindered by broken fellowship.

However, the process of confrontation to reconciliation was messy for Paul, Titus and the Corinthian church - and it is for us at times as well. While nobody really enjoys talking about our messy lives, sharing with one another how God grows and molds us through the process of confrontation, godly sorrow and repentance helps strengthen us, the body of Christ, and as a small group of friends. We learn from one another, grow in compassion

towards one another and can relate to one another in a deeper, more meaningful way as we share these testimonies of God's transformative power at work.

So let's DO IT! Spend some time in prayer, followed by discussion.

DO I need to apologize?

PRAYER: Father, search my heart and show me if there is anyone to whom I need to apologize. (give members time to hear from God)

DO I need to confront?

PRAYER: Father, search my heart and show me if there is anyone You are prompting me to confront, in love, with their sin or a wrongdoing against me. (give members time to hear from God)

HOW will I carry this out?

Discuss: Two or three people share with the group what God has revealed. Discuss your plans to carry out your apology, or confrontation, with the group.

PRAY for one another: Close by praying for one another as you prepare to walk out these paths to reconciliation.

If time permits, watch the following video of Andrew Petersons "I Want to Say I'm Sorry"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZEjf0oOBbe8>

(Answers from Group Activity: Former President Bill Clinton; Kanye West; Patrick Mahomes)