



Week Four

Opening Praying

God, thank you for leading us through regrets and into redemption. Be with us as we look at our stories and the opportunity to have that story used for good.

Talk It Over

God wants to take our biggest mistakes; he wants to buy them back and redeem them. We're not just talking about getting over a regret, and we're certainly not talking about forgetting it. This idea is about God taking a regret – a mistake, an error, something you wish you could have a do-over on – and turning it into something He uses for good. If you look in the Merriam-Webster dictionary under “redeem”, the very first definition listed is “to buy back: repurchase”. God is ready to take your greatest regret and buy it back.

- Have you ever purchased something and immediately regretted that decision? Had a case of buyer's remorse? Share about that.
- Can you think of a time when someone helped you redeem a regret you had? Maybe through the gift of grace, forgiveness or redemption?

Review Isaiah 44:22 and Isaiah 61: 1-3 (NIV)

You might think that God is sitting in heaven with His arms crossed and a frowny face on just waiting for you to get the punishment you deserve for the things you've done wrong. But scripture says something different. Your offenses, your mistakes, and your regrets have been swept away like the morning mist and God has purchased you back. Why? Because that's what He wants to do.

- Consider the idea that God is at work desiring to redeem your regrets. What feelings does that evoke in you?
- Have you ever tried to settle for less than what God has for you? Have you kept yourself in a prison of shame when God has already set you free?
- If you have experienced a time where God redeemed a regret, and you feel comfortable, share.

Read Romans 3:4-5 and Psalm 34:18 (NIV)

When we invite God to step into our sorrow, our pain, and our regrets, there's a process underway that ultimately leads to our greater perseverance, character, and hope. As difficult as pain can be, God meets us there and often helps us finally process that pain and grow through it. Pain naturally causes resistance in us. No one likes to sit and focus on pain. To dive deep inside and do the soul work of examining the pain and regrets in our lives requires a level of courage. But when we do, we can see that God is there to help support us — often resulting in additional healing.

- Do you tend to run from pain or embrace it? What tools or practices help you work through your pain instead of running from it?
- When you feel sorrow or sadness do you distract from it? What are your go to distractions?
- Looking back at a past pain, can you recognize God at work in the midst of it?

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Read Psalm 27:14 and Isaiah 30:21 (NIV)

Have you ever tried “Waiting for the Lord”? It’s not an easy process. We’re so used to getting things quickly that waiting on God to remove our pain, bring redemption to it, or helping us figure out a next step can lead us to become quickly frustrated. Redemption can also look like redirection and that can be a process that takes a while to watch unfold in our lives.

- When you are faced with your own life situations and pain, do you tend to wait on God or try and fix it yourself?
- A posture of surrender, while waiting, can be difficult and often requires admitting we don’t have control. How have you navigated that lack of control feeling in your life?
- Talk a little about the difference between surrender and control.

Isaiah 52:3 (NIV)

The best part of the story of redemption is that at its core it was designed to turn from being a personal redemption to an opportunity for us to extend the same gift. This gift given to us by God was meant to be shared through us.

- Have you extended forgiveness to someone creating a path of redemption for regret?
- We can only give what we have received. In what ways do you feel the redemption God has given you in your life? How can you extend that gift to others?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you for the ways you redeem our pain and regrets. Thank you for your sacrifice and gift of redemption in our life. May my life be yours.

Practice

Carve out some time this week to be still before God. Find a comfortable place to sit where you won’t be disturbed, close your eyes, and open your hands before God. Picture your regret, pain, or sin in your hands. Visualize releasing that, accepting the gift of redemption, and ask God to make something good out of that pain.