

2026-05-13 Small Group Guide

Small Group Guide: "Returning to God" - Amos 4-5

Opening Prayer

Begin your time together asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and for courage to honestly examine areas where repentance may be needed.

Ice Breaker Question

Share about a time when someone showed you patience when you didn't deserve it. How did that impact you?

Sermon Overview

This study examines God's warnings to Israel through the prophet Amos, revealing a people who had grown comfortable in their sin and misinterpreted God's patience as approval. The message challenges us to examine our own lives for areas where we may be presuming on God's grace rather than responding with genuine repentance.

Key Scripture Passages

Amos 4:1-13

Amos 5:4-15

Jonah 4:2 ("gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love")

Revelation 2:18-25

Discussion Questions

Understanding God's Character

The sermon repeatedly mentions that God is "gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in love." How does this description of God challenge or comfort you? How might we misinterpret God's patience?

Amos 4:6-11 shows God sending various warnings (hunger, drought, plagues) that all end with "yet you have not returned to me." What does

this pattern teach us about God's heart toward His people?

How do we balance understanding God's love with taking His warnings seriously? Why is it dangerous to focus only on one aspect of God's character?

Personal Examination

The sermon asks: "Are there things God has done and signs He's given me that I've ignored?" Take a moment of silence for personal reflection. What comes to mind?

The people in Amos were oppressing the poor and crushing the needy while living in luxury (Amos 4:1). What modern equivalents might we be blind to in our own lives?

"Yet you have not returned to me" appears five times in Amos 4. What does genuine "returning to God" look like practically? How is it different from just feeling sorry?

Repentance and Action

Amos 5:14-15 says "Seek good, not evil, that you may live... Hate evil, love good." The sermon challenges us to ask God to help us see and hate evil. Why is this difficult in our current culture? What specific evils should Christians be addressing?

The sermon mentions that "the prudent man keeps quiet in such times, for the times are evil" (Amos 5:13), but then calls us to speak truth anyway. How do we balance wisdom with boldness in speaking biblical truth to our culture?

Revelation 2:21 says God gave Jezebel "time to repent." What does this teach us about:

God's patience with persistent sin?

The urgency of responding when convicted?

The consequences of refusing to repent?

Application to the Church

The sermon warns that American churches may be like Israel—comfortable and unaware of spiritual danger. Do you agree? What evidence do you see either way?

"We've gotten used to everything. And it's infiltrated the church to where there's sins that all of us can be a part of, and we don't look at it as being that big of a deal." What sins has the modern church become too comfortable with?

Key Takeaways

God's patience is not approval - His kindness is meant to lead us to repentance, not presumption

God sends warnings before judgment - Difficulties in life may be God's merciful attempt to get our attention

Repentance is essential - From John the Baptist to Jesus to the apostles, the call to repent is central to the gospel

Our deeds matter - While saved by grace, Jesus will "repay each of you according to your deeds" (Revelation 2:23)

We must seek good and hate evil - Passive Christianity that tolerates evil is unacceptable to God

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

PERSONAL EXAMINATION

Spend 30 minutes in prayer asking God: "What am I doing that You want me to stop? What am I not doing that You want me to start?"

Journal about areas where you may have mistaken God's patience for approval

REPENTANCE

Identify one specific sin you've been tolerating and confess it to God and a trusted Christian friend

Ask someone to hold you accountable in this area

SPEAKING TRUTH

Have one conversation with a friend or family member about biblical truth they need to hear (with love and humility)

Prepare by praying for wisdom and the right words

COMPASSION FOR THE NEEDY

Research one practical way to help the poor or needy in your community

Take action this week (donate, volunteer, advocate)

SCRIPTURE MEDITATION

Memorize Amos 5:14-15

Each day, ask God to show you one way to "seek good, not evil"

Reflection Questions for Personal Journaling

If Jesus were to write a letter to me like He did to the church in Thyatira, what would He commend? What would He say He has against me?

What would full repentance look like in my life right now? What would need to change?

Am I more concerned with being comfortable or being obedient?

Closing Exercise

Group Confession and Prayer

Allow time for silent confession before God

Invite those comfortable to share (without details) an area where they sense God calling them to repentance

Pray for one another, asking God for:

Genuine conviction of sin

Hearts that hate evil and love good

Courage to speak truth

Compassion for the poor and needy

Wisdom to interpret God's work in our lives

For Next Week

Read Amos 6-7 and consider:

What warnings does God continue to give?

How do I respond when confronted with uncomfortable truth?

What does it mean to "prepare to meet your God"?

Leader Notes

Be Sensitive: This is heavy material. Create a safe space for honest confession without judgment

Model Vulnerability: Leaders should be willing to share their own struggles with sin and need for repentance

Avoid Legalism: The goal is heart change, not just behavior modification

Balance Truth and Grace: Speak honestly about sin while emphasizing God's desire to forgive and restore

Don't Rush: Allow silence for reflection. The Holy Spirit works in quiet moments

Follow Up: Check in with group members during the week, especially those who shared vulnerably

"Seek the Lord and live." - Amos 5:6