

## CONNECT GROUP LEADER GUIDE

### Comfort My People #1 – Isaiah 1:18-20



#### BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

This week jumps right into a discussion of repentance. If your group needs to ramp up to this discussion, start here. **“What is the biggest turn around you have seen someone make in life?** (personally, local celebrity, historical figure, etc.) **Repentance** = turning away from evil and turning toward God. As people share about their need to repent, encourage them to humbly share how they came to recognize something they were doing was sin. A good follow up question to their story,

might be, “What encouraged them to know that they would find grace when they turned to God instead of rebuke?”

#### A LOOK AT THE WORD

**Jesus talks about pride, humility, and repentance.** This should lead to a great discussion centered around Jesus’ parable. Encourage your group as you discuss these study questions to continue to point back to where what they are sharing comes from the text. What word, what verse, what phrase, what description helps them to arrive at their conclusion. This is a great study for having a finger in the text of the Bible as you are having your group discussion. Don’t skip past the application question too quickly either, **“What do you learn about God’s heart and repentance?”** Give people a few moments to reflect personally on the last time they “repented” to someone else or to God. If it has been a long time, perhaps there is some pride that needs to be acknowledged.

#### MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

**Ask yourself, “Did God make my day?”** If you can save some time to look through these three sections together, I think you’ll be glad you did this week. There are some great discussions to have here. Perhaps as a group you could read through all three sections and take a vote to decide which one you want to focus on as an application of this study to your life this week. One is more personal, one includes your family, and one has group dynamics in mind.

### Christ Community Church - Announcements

- ② **The Perfect Gift** is coming, Saturday DEC 10. This outreach event has reached thousands in our community since it began. It is a wonderful opportunity for the whole family to connect while serving others. There are hundreds of volunteer spots available, so you can find a place to use your gifts. There will be 2-hour shifts from 9:30a-5:30p. For details and to sign up go to [www.ccames.org](http://www.ccames.org).
- ② **Christmas Emergency Residence Project Outreach** | Help people in need right here in Ames! "Adopt" a family and provide a Christmas gift for each member. Donate gift certificates from Wal-Mart, Aldi's or money towards Hansen Sinclair gas cards. Or donate winter coats, boots, hats and gloves. For more details contact: Debbie and Tom Johnson, [tdjohnson@mchsi.com](mailto:tdjohnson@mchsi.com), 515 296 2041.
- ② **Blinks** Volunteers Needed | for the upcoming Upward Basketball season. Barista training is available. Contact Marilyn Rohlf to find out more information [[jammr@isunet.net](mailto:jammr@isunet.net) or 515-203-1018]
- ② **Congo Christmas** | Bring joy to children in Congo while meeting their basic needs. Purchase practical gifts to be delivered to children in your name or in the name of a friend or family member. Gifts range in price from as little as \$1. You can also become a monthly sponsor for orphans in Congo through Reach Global. Information and donation cards are available in the atrium.

## CONNECT GROUP STUDY

### Comfort My People #1 – Isaiah 1:18-20

#### BEGIN WITH YOUR HEART

This week's teaching featured a section from Gordon MacDonald's book *A Resilient Life*, chapter 14 – *Resilient People Practice Repentance*. MacDonald's "Peace Lodge" meadow (in New England) had more "rocks and boulders" underneath the surface than he had initially cleared away when they first worked the field. Over several more years, frost pushed more of the rocks to the surface. MacDonald likened this to acknowledging that there are more sinful tendencies, etc. in our lives than we sometimes realize...and that we should always be ready to acknowledge this and repent before our Father.

To begin – what do you understand REPENTING to be? What does it look like?

And then – can you recall a time in your life when God pointed out something surprising to you...that needed your teachable, repenting response? Share your story with your group.

#### A LOOK AT THE WORD

There is a fascinating parable that Jesus told about repentance. It's worth a closer look.

**READ TOGETHER** – Luke 18:9-14

#### ASK AND ANSWER

- (1) What is **the difference** between the two men's occupations? Which was typically regarded as the "more spiritual" vocation?
- (2) **Compare** the "level of confidence" exhibited by the two men as they came before the Lord. HOW would you describe their hearts' attitudes in your own words. And, WHY do you think each man came before the Lord with his particular attitude?
- (3) **Compare** their two prayers. What was each man expressing to God? How did the two differ?
- (4) What is the surprising outcome of the worship of these two men?
- (5) Finally, WHY do you think Jesus told this parable? What is Jesus warning about?

Identify several key truths or lessons that emerge from this story. What do you learn about God's heart and what repentance looks like?

Finally, take a look at 1 John 1:8-10. What truths from the Luke 18 parable does the Apostle John speak about?

#### MY LIFE- OUR MISSION

**MY LIFE** – Resilient people practice repentance (MacDonald). So often we may have a "quiet time" with God that simply seeks to "get something from the Word" to encourage me, a thought to lift my day. Do we wrongly set aside or ignore the discipline of confessing and repenting of sin that the Spirit points out? How might you make this a more regular, and health-maintaining, practice as GOD MAKES YOUR DAY!?

**YOUR FAMILY** – Take the pulse of your family members for a moment. Launch a discussion about how easy (or hard) it may be to admit when you are wrong, ask for forgiveness, and "turn around" something you may have been doing (or thinking). As a parent, be vulnerable a bit. Share with your kids what may be hard for you to admit, and turn away from. It may spark a great God-talk around the table. Pray for each other.

**OUR MISSION** - Christ Community Church seeks to express the value (in our church family environment) of **transparent relationships** – being humble, authentic together, and extending grace to one another, helping each other grow. Talk about the "transparency" in your group. Ask each other if there is such a grace-giving, life-defining atmosphere. What might enhance it even more?