



THE CHURCH OF THE  
**ADVENT**

**Godly Grief**

**Read:** 2 Corinthians 7:2-16

**Summary:** Some people tend to feel excessive amounts of regret, remorse, and guilt, while others tend to avoid these feelings. This passage show us, however, that regret can be a gift to help us grow into maturity. Worldly grief tends to be self-centered because it only grieves having to face the consequences of our actions. It avoids responsibility for sin, shifts blame to others, and leads to self-pity, bitterness, and resentment. In contrast, the Heidelberg Catechism defines godly grief this way: **“to be genuinely sorry for sin and more and more to hate and run away from it.”** A person with godly grief is God-centered, recognizing that all sin they commit is against him. They are willing to take responsibility for their sin, which ultimately leads to repentance and freedom.

Godly grief has 5 movements:

1. **Listen to Regret.** Feelings of regret, remorse, and guilt are all forms of pain that tell us there are spiritual issues in us that need to be addressed.
2. **Identify Sin.** As we lean into our feelings of regret, this helps us identify any unresolved sin in our lives.
3. **Grieve Sin.** To experience the relief of God’s grace, we have to truly feel sorrow. To grieve sin is to meditate on the fact that God hates our sin even though he loves us.
4. **Repent from Sin.** Jesus calls everyone to let go of the things we are pursuing instead of him and to turn around to follow him.
5. **Embrace Forgiveness.** Jesus gave his life on the cross to atone for the sins of the world so that we could experience the freedom of his forgiveness. This gives us a way to deal with regret and guilt so we can leave it in the past and move on with our lives in freedom. It also enables us to extend forgiveness to others.

- Questions:**
1. Do you tend to be a person who is loaded down with regret and guilt or do you tend to avoid these feelings? Are there any examples you’re willing to share?
  2. If you are willing, share a time in your life when you experienced worldly grief. How do you wish you would have responded? What did you learn?

3. Pastor Tommy argued that it is easy to skip the step of grieving our sin because we live in a culture of shallow authenticity. People tend to confess socially acceptable sins, but not experience genuine sorrow over real sin. Which of these 5 steps do you tend to skip or find the most difficult? Why is that?

4. Recall the Indiana Jones illustration, where he is reaching for the holy grail but turns around to hear the voice of his father. How does this illustrate repentance for us? What is a “holy grail” in your life that is hard to let go of?

5. We can be tempted to minimize the sins of others and tell them, “It’s not your fault, nobody’s perfect, etc.” But sometimes giving others an opportunity to experience godly grief is the most loving thing we can do because it also gives them an opportunity to experience God’s grace and be set free from regret. Given how difficult this is, spend time as a group thinking about how someone might do this well. What does it look like to have this conversation in a loving way? Do you have any insights or examples from your life?

**Prayer:** Ask the Lord to speak to you in any places where you might feel regret, remorse, or guilt. Confess any areas of underlying sin and ask Him to help you experience genuine sorrow over it. Ask him to help you turn away from sin and towards him in repentance. Praise him for his full forgiveness through Jesus’ work on the cross. Ask him to help you to experience freedom from regret through the power of His Spirit living in you.

**Do:** Take these 5 steps and process through them in a journal. Spend some time meditating on and praying through Psalm 51.