

What is Repentance?

Heart of a Woman Lesson Six Handout

Repentance is the true turning of a heart to God, a turning that arises from holy reverence, a humble contrition, deep gratitude, and filial fear of Him: A pure, holy, and earnest fear of Him, a fear that a child has for a loving father, a child who has respect and love for his father or mother and wants to please them. True repentance has a vigilant, diligent concern, not wanting to offend the one he loves, not because he's afraid of their wrath or punishment, but because he's afraid of displeasing the one who is, in that child's world, the source of security and love. "Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done!"

This authentic biblical repentance is manifest in the ongoing denouncing, renouncing, denying, rejecting, and repudiating of our flesh, and entering into and embracing the life, quality, in the power of the Spirit...BY FAITH. BELIEVING WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN THE SPIRIT ... And that because we have been given the Spirit we have been given the strengthening and empowerment we need to live a righteous and godly life. It is the beautiful manifestation of the God growth of a Christian's spiritual and moral character.

You can't say I've repented of something and then turn around and do it again. Do not be deceived, and God will not be mocked. If we say that, we believe that anger is wrong and that giving into the flesh or worry is sin. Then we are going to stop and we are going to do whatever we can to make sure that we no longer make any provision for the flesh at all.

John Calvin

[Repentance] is the true turning of our life to God, a turning that arises from a pure and earnest fear of Him; and it consists in the mortification of our flesh and of the old man, and in the vivification of the Spirit.

D. A. Carson [Repentance] is not a merely intellectual change of mind or mere grief, still less doing penance, but a radical transformation of the entire person, a fundamental turnaround involving mind and action and including overtones of grief, which result in (spiritual) fruit.

Mark Dever Repentance is turning from the sins you love to the holy God you're called to love. It is admitting that you're not God. It is beginning to value Jesus more than your immediate pleasure. It is giving up those things the Bible calls sin and leaving them to follow Jesus.

Jim Eliff Repentance is hating what you once loved and loving what you once hated, exchanging irresistible sin for an irresistible Christ. The true repentor is cast on God. Faith is his only option. When he fully knows that sin utterly fails him, God takes him up. (Mt. 9:13b) He will have faith or he will have despair; conviction will either deliver him or devour him.

William Gurnall (a Puritan) Repentance is to forsake sin, is to leave it without any thought reserved of returning to it again.

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J. I. Packer Repentance is more than just sorrow for the past; repentance is a change of mind and heart, a new life of denying self and serving the Savior as king in self's place.

J. C. Ryle True repentance is no light matter. It is a thorough change of heart about sin, a change showing itself in godly sorrow and humiliation – in heartfelt confession before the throne of grace – in a complete breaking off from sinful habits, and an abiding hatred of all sin. Such repentance is the inseparable companion of saving faith in Christ.

WHAT DOES GOD'S WORD SAY?

Three Greek words for "repentance."

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1st "Metanoeo" a spiritual change of mind. Literally "to have another mind." Changed opinion and perspective with regard to sin and seeing sin is against a holy God.

2nd "Metamelomai," grief and true sorrow over sin b/c offended one's heavenly Father. Not merely "I didn't get caught or don't have to pay the fine or suffer the punishment but profound gratitude.

Isaiah 6:1-6

In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory!"

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!"

⁶ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth and said: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for."

3rd "Epistrepho," the change in direction and transformation of the will. Choosing to act/speak in an observably different way. Look and act and speak with an entirely different posture, presence, etc.

Our Lord's idea of repentance is as profound and comprehensive as His conception of righteousness. Deep regret, sorrow, mourning, poverty of spirit over sin, reversal of the

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entire mental attitude, a change in the direction of life, one goal and purpose is substituted for another.

Matthew 5: The Beatitudes

³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

⁵ “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

⁶ “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

⁷ “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

⁸ “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

⁹ “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons^[a] of God.

¹⁰ “Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ “Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that^[b] they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

Geerhardus Vos Repentance is not limited to any single faculty of the mind: it engages the entire man, intellect, will and affections... Again, in the new life which follows repentance the absolute supremacy of God is the controlling principle. He who repents turns away from the service of mammon and self to the service of God.

Augustine I was weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when I heard the voice of children from a neighboring house chanting, “Take up and read; take up and read.” I could not remember ever having heard the like, so checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting it to be no other than a command from God to open the book and read the first chapter I should find. Eagerly then I returned to the place where I had laid the volume of the apostle. I seized, opened, and in silence read that section on which my eyes first fell: “Not in revelry and drunkenness, not in licentiousness and lewdness, not in strife and envy; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.” No further would I read, nor did I need to. For instantly at the end of this sentence, it seemed as if a light of serenity infused into my heart and all the darkness of doubt vanished away.

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Martyn Lloyd Jones Repentance means that you realize that you are a guilty, vile sinner in the presence of God, that you deserve the wrath and punishment of God, that you are hell-bound. It means that you begin to realize that this thing called sin is in you, that you long to get rid of it, and that you turn your back on it in every shape and form. You renounce the world whatever the cost, the world in its mind and outlook as well as its practice, and you deny yourself, and take up the cross and go after Christ. Your nearest and dearest, and the whole world, may call you a fool, or say you have religious mania. You may have to suffer financially, but it makes no difference. That is repentance.

Not merely a change of mind.

A change of life. A change of heart.

A change of kingdoms.

In fact, it's an entirely new kingdom. His kingdom has come. His will is to be done.

Jesus called us to repent of self:

“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?

Deny self and say no to the way you want to do things, to the way you think it should be, say no to controlling the situation, say no to not trusting, say no to holding onto anger, say no to the things of the world, temptation of the devil, and the pull of the world and the pull and pressure of the flesh and say no to it and TURN to the Lord by faith and follow him and loving him more than we love anything or anyone in this world...more than our children, more than our husbands and more than ourselves...particularly ourselves.

A love that is so far and above anything in this world that it almost appears as though we hate our father, mother, sister, brother, husband, child, even our own life. And that seems hard for our human minds to comprehend. It doesn't mean that we hate them. It means that we love God above all. And so far above all that we are willing to follow him at all costs, knowing, knowing, and believing that even when it feels like we are forsaking everything and everyone that we are in fact, loving them in a higher and better way than we could ever love them. PAUSE HERE. Think.

The initial birth of repentance in our hearts, the ability to repent at all is all initiated by God. We cannot make ourselves repent. We cannot make ourselves believe. We can hear the truth. And faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. But faith, is a gift from God. It is a gift so that no one could boast, no one can walk around and hold their shoulders back just a little bit or lift our heads higher than everyone else's (husband, children, friend, etc).