

Sunday October 25, 2026 - BUT... HOW DO I REPENT? – Pastor John Henry Raskin

A biblical path from conviction to cleansing, restoration, and freedom

Repentance is not the enemy of grace—it is how a child of God walks in grace.

Why Repent If I Am Already Forgiveness?

In Christ, the believer is **completely clean**—secure in justification and free from condemnation. Yet, like feet made dusty while walking, our daily lives still need cleansing (John 13:10). Repentance is not a second salvation or self-punishment. It restores unhindered fellowship with the Father and allows grace to continue forming us into Christ's image.

The Spirit's conviction	The enemy's accusation
Specific; identifies an attitude, habit, word, or act	Vague and sweeping: "always," "never," "failure"
Draws you toward Christ, truth, and other believers	Drives you to hide, isolate, despair, and feel condemned
Produces hopeful, godly sorrow and a changed direction	Produces shame without hope

How Do I Repent? A Six-Step Path

1. **Come as God's child.** Approach the throne of grace through Christ—not through your performance. Thank the Father for the Cross (Hebrews 4:16).
2. **Ask the Spirit to search you.** Pray Psalm 139:23–24. Listen quietly and let Scripture examine your heart. Do not invent sins; trust the Spirit to be specific.
3. **Name it and agree with God.** Confess the actual lie, bitterness, lust, neglect, language, or self-serving attitude—without excuses or blame (1 John 1:9; Proverbs 28:13).
4. **Turn around.** Repentance changes the mind and direction. Decide what must change, remove what feeds the sin, and depend on the Spirit rather than willpower alone (Romans 8:13).
5. **Make it right and invite help.** Seek reconciliation where possible, forgive others, and bring recurring struggles into trusted Christian fellowship (Matthew 5:24; James 5:16).
6. **Receive forgiveness and walk free.** Rest in Christ's finished work. Refuse renewed condemnation, take hold of a clear conscience, and walk by the Spirit (Psalm 103:12; Hebrews 10:22; Galatians 5:16).

A Simple Prayer of Repentance <i>Father, I come through the blood of Jesus, not my own goodness. Holy Spirit, search me and show me anything that grieves You. I agree that what You have shown me is sin. I will not excuse it or blame another. By Your Spirit, I turn from it now. Show me what to do differently. Thank You that Christ has borne it and that I am forgiven. Amen.</i>	Key Scriptures John 13:10 1 John 1:6–9 Psalm 32:1–5 Titus 2:11–12 2 Corinthians 7:10 Psalm 139:23–24 Romans 8:1, 13 Psalm 103:12
---	---

The Pattern of Repentance: God's Light reveals → you agree with God → Christ cleanses → you walk on in freedom.

BUT... HOW DO I REPENT?

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last Sunday we unpacked the 7th Psalm, a Psalm of David, and took away several tools that I hope you will find valuable in coming against the attacks of the enemy.

We learned that when evil is spoken of us, the follower of Jesus

1. Runs to God for refuge.

2. Invites God to search his heart.

3. Refuses the opportunity to take revenge.

4. Entrusts justice to the only righteous Judge,

5. Responds with repentance, mercy, and praise.

Today we're going to talk about what is possibly the hardest thing for believers to do when we have searched ourselves with the Mind of Christ and found that we have indeed done something wrong.

Today we are going to talk about repentance and the question before us is...

Why do I have to repent and how do I repent in a way that glorifies God?

Some of you may be asking that question for the very first time today.

Not because you don't care, but because perhaps no one ever told you repenting was something you needed to do.

Somewhere along the way, as a new Christian, you might have been told, kindly and sincerely, that grace covers everything.

You might have heard... "Jesus died for your sins, past, present, and future, so there is nothing left to acknowledge".

Or that “confession is for the unsaved”.

Or that “repentance is a one-time event at an altar”.

They might have even told you that “Once you are born-again, to keep bringing sin before God, is an insult to the cross”.

And so, you may have believed that.

Maybe you went about some of your old not so holy behaviors thinking, “well, I’m saved, which means I’m forgiven, so why change?”

And yet...maybe you feel a weight that you cannot explain.

You have no doubt about the cross. You know you are saved.

But perhaps you feel that there is a distance between you and God that you perceive other people don’t feel.

Perhaps it is a habit that has dug in and will not let go.

Or a smoldering resentment has quietly become part of the furniture.

You have been told there is nothing for you to deal with, and yet something in you keeps saying, “yes, there is”.

Let me say this plainly and gently: While that teaching grows out of a precious truth, it is not the whole truth that scripture tells us.

It is gloriously true that “there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” as Paul says tells us in Romans Chapter 8.

And if you are in Christ, your standing before God is secure. Nothing I am going to say this morning challenges that.

But the error is not in what Grace alone teaching, often called Hyper-Grace teaching affirms. It is in what it concludes.

It takes the fact that grace has dealt with our sin and guilt and concludes that grace has no further work to do in us.

Scripture will not let us conclude that.

Repentance is not the enemy of grace. It is the way a child of God's grace walks in it.

Here is where we are going this morning.

First, we will see from Scripture why a believer still needs to repent.

Second, we will see how the mind of Christ, given to us by the Holy Spirit, shines light into the places where darkness remains.

Third, I want to give you some plain, biblical steps for coming to the Father in repentance.

And finally, you will see how to rise from that place knowing, truly knowing, that you are wholly forgiven and walking with a clear conscience.

First let's look at why Grace does not cancel repentance.

We begin in an upper room. Jesus is washing the disciples' feet, Peter objects, and then overcorrects and asks to be washed from head to foot.

Listen to the Lord's answer.

John 13:10

He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet but is completely clean.

Here is the whole matter in one picture.

The bathing that Jesus references represents justification before God.

It happens once, at the moment of faith in Jesus, and it is complete. Once bathed, the disciple is “completely clean.” But he still walks through a dusty world, and his feet get dirty. Jesus does not say, “Your feet don’t matter, you’ve already had a bath.”

He kneels with a towel and a basin and washes the disciple’s feet.

We only need our feet washed and Jesus will do it if we allow Him to. Daily cleansing is not a second salvation. It is the Lord’s own care for the one He has already saved.

Now we turn to 1John 1.

John is writing to born again believers in the early church...

He calls them “my little children” and he writes so that they may have fellowship with the Father and the Son.

The key word here is fellowship.

John is writing to them and us so that we might have fellowship with God in faith and not just some vague and distant relationship based on belief.

1 John 1:6–9

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Notice that John includes himself in the word we. That is crucial to understanding that this is an admonishment to all believers.

The doctrine that we are untangling this morning tells precious believers, “I have no sin that needs acknowledging.”

John’s verdict in this scripture is that if we believe that then we deceive ourselves.

The Greek word that John uses for the word confess is *homologeō*.

The word joins *homo*, meaning “same,” and *logeō*, which means “to say.”

To confess sin is to say the same thing God says about your sin.

The verb is in the present tense, which most naturally describes an ongoing habit of life, not a single event at an altar.

Let’s hear from Jesus Himself.

In Revelation 2 and 3, the risen Christ writes to churches full of believers, and again and again He says one word. Repent.

To the Church at Ephesus he says...

Revelation 2:5

Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.

And to Laodicea, a church He says He loves especially well, hear the voice of the Lord:

Revelation 3:19

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.”

Notice the logic. He does not say, “I rebuke you and I have rejected you.” He says, “Because I love you, I must rebuke and chasten you, so repent.”

As we have discovered in our recent teaching about the Psalms, David, a man after God’s own heart, according to the Lord Himself, provides us with a template of how we can and should relate to God, or as David says it, the Lord, my God”.

In Psalm 32, a Psalm of repentance, David, as a man in covenant with God, tells us what unconfessed sin does to a believer.

Psalm 32:1-5

**Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,
Whose sin is covered.**

**2 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute
iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit.**

**3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old
Through my groaning all the day long.**

**4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.**

**5 I acknowledged my sin to You,
And my iniquity I have not hidden.**

**I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,”
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

David always related to God as his Father, even as Jesus did. In verses 3 and 4, David is demonstrating for us the needless suffering that unconfessed sin puts us through...

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old

Through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

David did not lose his sonship in his silence about his sin.

What he lost was his joy, his strength, and his sense of the pleased Presence of his Father's face.

That is the distinction that we must understand.

The Lord desires for us to have a healthy relationship with Him and so it pleases Him when we come to Him with anything that is troubling us about ourselves, that may be separating us from close unhindered fellowship with Him.

The Reformed Church founders put it this way: "believers can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may fall under their Father's displeasure and will not have the light of His countenance restored until they humble themselves, confess their sins, and renew their faith in repentance.

That is the same truth as John 13: the bath and the foot washing basin.

Martin Luther's first thesis says the same thing: "the life of the believer is to be one of repentance".

Does this insult the cross as those who teach that Grace covers ongoing sin, claim?

Many teachers of the doctrine that is known as Hyper Grace profess that the Holy Spirit does not convict, warn or scold believers about ongoing sin and that feelings of guilt or conviction come from legalism or demonic forces.

The Apostle Paul answers that objection directly.

Romans 6:1-2

Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not!

In fact, Paul tells us, that grace is our teacher.

Titus 2:11–12

For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.

Grace is not a blanket that hides us from the light of God's truth about our sin.

It is the very ground on which we can safely stand in His all-revealing light.

Why does this matter so much?

Because God has a destination in view for the life of every believer.

2 Corinthians 3:18

But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

And in Romans 8:29, Paul says we were predestined "to be conformed to the image of His Son."

Not merely forgiven. Formed and conformed.

And the Holy Spirit is the One doing the forming, which means the work only happens in the light.

We have seen that a true mirror shows you what is really there.

You cannot be conformed into Christ's image in the dark rooms you will not let Him see.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians Chapter 2 that the Spirit searches even the deep things of God, “that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God”.

And then he asks...For “who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?”

Then answers plainly: “But we have the mind of Christ”.

What does that mean? It does not mean you are omniscient, or that every thought you have is infallible.

It means the Holy Spirit lives in you and shares with you how Christ sees everything you see.

Paul said further in Philippians Chapter 2, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

The word “Let” here should be taken, I believe, as an act of allowing the Spirit, the Mind of Christ to supply you with His perspective.

Friends, this is free will at its very finest!

Think about how Jesus sees sin. He sees it with a holiness that cannot excuse it and a mercy that went to the cross for it.

If we robe ourselves only with the holiness, we become harsh and legalistic.

If we hold ourselves only to the mercy, we become careless and ungodly.

The mind of Christ holds both, and it sees you with both: sin as an enemy, and the sinner as someone dearly beloved.

So where does darkness remain in the believer?

Paul tells the Ephesian church something remarkable.

Ephesians 5:8-13

8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather expose them.

Here Paul affirms that you are light, and yet there are corners the light has not reached.

And notice why the light comes. Not to shame you but to heal you. Light makes things visible, and only what is visible can be healed.

How does God shine that light? There are three ways, and they all work together.

The first way is through the Word of God, your Bible.

Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

When you read Scripture, the Scripture reads you. Let it have its way. It will convict the humble heart of anything out of God's perfect will. Let it move you.

Second, the light shines through the Spirit's direct work within us.

David prayed for it, and so can we.

Psalms 139:23-24

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting.

Notice as we did last week that David asks to be searched. When we invite the Searcher, the Holy Spirit, He is the One who as Jesus says in the Gospel of John, “will guide you into all truth”. The Spirit will lead you in the way everlasting.

Third, the Light of God shines through the body of Christ.

James 5:16

Confess your trespasses to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed.

Some darkness we cannot see in ourselves, until a trusted brother or sister, led by the Spirit, holds up a second mirror. But how do I know whether it is the Spirit speaking, or just my own guilt, or the enemy accusing me?

Here is how to discern that.

The enemy’s accusations are always vague and sweeping: “You always do this. You never do that right. You are a failure.”

The Spirit’s conviction is specific. It names a thing: “this attitude, that habit, that unnecessary word, that unkind act.”

The Spirit’s conviction will always draw you closer to Christ and to other people. He says, “come, let’s work through this together.”

Revelation 12:10 calls Satan “the accuser of the brethren.”

Accusation drives you away to hide, to become isolated and numb to the honest conviction of the Holy Spirit.

The sorrow that we feel at the Spirit’s conviction carries hope that we can be better:

2 Corinthians 7:10

For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Any voice that tells you that you are condemned is not the voice of Christ.

Remember that “there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus”. So here is the pattern. The light reveals, you agree with God, Christ cleanses you, you walk on, and as you walk, the Spirit shows you more as you allow the Mind of Christ to reveal it. That is what Romans 12:2 calls “being transformed by the renewing of your mind”.

Now to the question we started with: how do we repent? Here is the path, as Scripture plainly lays it out.

Step 1: Come as a child of God, not as a stranger

Hebrews 4:16 tells us to “come boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Don’t wait until you feel worthy. You are not approaching God on the strength of your performance.

Remember that the Father has already declared you His child in Christ. You are approaching the throne of your Father’s grace.

Find a quiet place. Slow down. Begin by thanking Him for the Cross, because everything that follows rests on it.

Step 2: Ask the Spirit to search you, and then listen

Pray the prayer that David prayed in Psalm 139:23–24 and mean it. Then be still in confidence.

Let the Word be your lamp: read a passage like Ephesians 4, Colossians 3, or Galatians 5 slowly, and let it measure you. If something specific rises, do not argue with it and do not bury it. Write it down. Meditate on it.

And if nothing comes, thank Him and move on. Don't invent sins just to feel thorough. The Spirit is faithful to show you what needs showing.

Step 3: When you know it, name it, and say the same thing God says

Be specific. Not "I've been a bad Christian," but the actual thing: the lie, the language, the lust, the bitterness, the neglect, the self-serving attitude.

No excuses, no saying... "well, mistakes were made," no pointing at the person who provoked you. David did not do any of that.

He said, in Psalm 51- "For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, And done this evil in Your sight."

And the promise attached to honest repentance is found in Proverbs 28:13, which says this: "The one who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."

Step 4: Repent

The Greek word for repent is *metanoeō*. Literally, it means "to change the mind."

It begins in your mind and ends in a changed direction of life. The Hebrew verb "shuv" carries the same meaning only it is more specific: to turn around and return to God.

The Lord spoke it repeatedly to apostate Israel through the Prophets. “Shuvu elay O Yisrael.” Return to me O Israel and I will restore our relationship.

When we decide to turn around then it is He who restores us. God calls to Israel and to us through the prophet Joel -“Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning. So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness.”

Repentance is not self-punishment.

It is the godly sorrow that Paul speaks of, a sorrow that wounds me because I have grieved Someone I love and then moves me to change what has grieved Him.

In practice, repentance means three things.

1. Decide what you will do differently.
2. Remove whatever feeds the sin you are addressing.
3. Depend on the Spirit for strength rather than on your willpower alone:

Paul says to believers... “if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live” (Romans 8:13).

Step 5: Make it right, and invite trusted others in

In Matthew 3:8 John the Baptist says for us to “Bear fruit worthy of repentance.”

If your sin has wounded another person, go to them quickly.

Jesus says to leave your gift at the altar: “First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift” (Matthew 5:24).

If someone has wronged you, release them, because forgiving others is a command and consistent with a life of repentance (Matthew 6:14–15).

And for sins that keep returning, obey James 5:16 and bring a trusted fellow believer in and be transparent. Be real. Sin loses its power in the light of fellowship.

Here is a simple prayer to help you put these steps into words. Let's pray it together...

Father, I come to You through the blood of Jesus, not through my own goodness. Holy Spirit, search me and show me anything that grieves You.

Lord, I agree with You that what you have shown me as sin is sin. I will not excuse it or blame anyone else for it. I am sorry, not only for what it costs me, but because it wounds You.

By the power of Your Spirit, I turn from it now. Show me what to do differently. Thank You that Christ has already borne this for me and that I am forgiven. Amen.

Step 6: Simply receive forgiveness and walk free.

Many believers do everything right up to this point and then cannot take hold of the forgiveness that God offers. Let me give you five truths to stand on.

First, God forgives acknowledged sin because He is faithful and just, not merely kind.

Christ's blood has already paid for your redemption, and it would be unjust for God to demand payment twice.

Your forgiveness rests not on the quality of your confession but on the finished work of Christ.

Second, consider how far He removes it.

Psalms 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

Micah 7:19 says, “You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.”

Third, remember the Father of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15. The son who came home had a speech prepared about his unworthiness. He never got to finish it.

But, Jesus says, “when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

Before the son could say, “make me like one of your hired servants,” the father was already calling for the robe, the ring, and the sandals. That is how your Heavenly Father receives you when you repent.

Fourth, once you have repented of a particular thing, take hold of a clear conscience.

Hebrews 10:22 tells us. “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience”.

And Hebrews 9:14 says the blood of Christ “cleanses your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.”

Now, it is entirely natural that your feelings may lag behind your faith.

When the accusation returns, and the enemy will try, do not feel the need to re-confess a sin that has already been cleansed and from which you have truly turned.

Answer it with the Word, as Revelation 12:11 says: “they overcame the enemy by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.”

Say it out loud: “That is confessed. Christ has cleansed it. There is no condemnation.”

Confess again only when the Spirit shows you something new. And Fifth, rise and walk.

In Galatians 5:16 Paul exhorts us “Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh”.

A clear conscience is not the finish line. It is the launching pad. Once cleansed of acknowledged sin, you are free to follow the Spirit’s next step, and the more you walk this way, the more of the image of Jesus is formed in you.

So, back to the question HOW do I repent? Here’s a recap.

- 1. Come to the Throne of Grace as a child of God in Christ.**
- 2. Ask the Spirit to search you, in all humility.**
- 3. Name the thing that He reveals to you specifically, along with your desire to turn from it.**
- 4. Turn from it.**
- 5. If it is in your power to make it right, make it right.**
- 6. Having repented, receive your forgiveness by God’s Grace and don’t let the accusations of the enemy pull you backwards into guilt and shame.**

And beloved family, think of this not as a once for all, but as a way of life, because the God who justified you by Grace is still forming you into the image of His Son from glory to glory.

Let’s pray...