

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

LESSON 1

What is Repentance?

The doctrine of repentance has become one of the foundational principles of Christianity that is skipped across the surface much like skipping a rock across a pond or lake. The goal of these lessons is to not only gather a biblical understanding of repentance but to apply that understanding in a true walk with God through Jesus Christ.

In every conversion to Christianity, there are two parts: repentance and faith (**Romans 10:9-10**). Both parts are necessary for a person to be born again, also known as salvation. Repentance is a doctrine that is not discussed within many churches, especially in the vastness needed for the people of God. This doctrine is the heart of the kingdom of God for all mankind no matter a person's era of living.

REPENTANCE DEFINED

Repentance is defined as a change of mind or a change of purpose. Applying this in the theological setting means to turn from sin by changing the mind and purpose of one's life.

- ***Repent* ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. Acts 3:19-20 KJV**
- **Such [former] ages of ignorance God, it is true, ignored and allowed to pass unnoticed; but now He charges all people everywhere to *repent* (to change their minds for the better and heartily to amend their ways, with abhorrence of their past sins). Acts 17:30 AMP**

This verse specifically tells believers to abhor their past sins. To abhor means to loathe, regard with extreme dislike or distaste. Repentance reflects the hate toward sins committed. Not having a dislike or hatred toward sin may reflect a lack of true repentance or a heart turning back to its previous state of living in sin.

- **People who conceal their sins will not prosper, but if they confess and turn from them (*repent*), they will receive mercy. Proverbs 28:13 NLT**

To be born again a person must turn away from their sins and turn to God. Repentance is the beginning step of salvation. John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and other people of God throughout the Bible preached the message of repentance. This message is closest to God because the result brings His creation closer to Him.

- **The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*. 2 Peter 3:9 KJV**

God desires to see everyone repent and have a true relationship with Him, not only for eternity but here and now. Sin separates and dominates while repentance humiliates and germinates. Sin separates a person from God and dominates that person's life. Repentance keeps a person humble and allows the things of God to grow within that person. Without a relationship with God on earth that person will not be with Him for eternity.

THREE ELEMENTS OF REPENTANCE

There are three elements of repentance: intellectual, emotional, and voluntary. Each of these elements is vital to repenting and having a true relationship with God.

The *intellectual element* is the change of view within the mind. Sin is viewed as a personal guilt and transgression against God. The spiritual enemy of God uses the deception of calling this element condemnation (*blame, pass sentence*) rather than its true substance of conviction (*admission of truth by revealing error*). This element also changes the view to see sin as a defilement and pollution of self.

- **For I am conscious of my transgressions and I acknowledge them; my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified in Your sentence and faultless in Your judgment.** **Psalm 51:3-4 AMP**

These verses display God's ability to condemn anyone who is found in sin due to His righteous judgment, but He uses conviction for people everywhere to understand their need for the salvation He offers by the truth being revealed. This truth should lead to repentance.

- **For no person will be justified (made righteous, acquitted, and judged acceptable) in His sight by observing the works prescribed by the Law. For [the real function of] the Law is to make men recognize and be conscious of sin [not mere perception, but an acquaintance with sin which works toward repentance, faith, and holy character].** **Romans 3:20 AMP**

When people know the intellectual element of repentance it begins the process of understanding the need for a savior due to the sin within their life. Knowing what is wrong can be the beginning of taking the correct steps toward God. Sadly, not everyone will choose to take the appropriate steps in repentance.

The *emotional element* is a godly sorrow for sin. The heart must stir in emotion that ushers in a desire to rid oneself of sin which defiles and pollutes. Without the heart stirring toward a resolution of sin within one's life, that person will remain the same. This is the danger of inviting people to accept Jesus but not revealing the necessity of change in their lives.

- **Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 KJV**

Godly sorrow works for people to repent of their sins to receive salvation. Salvation is not to be repented of or turned away from. The sorrow of the world may make a person feel bad or guilty but it does not turn people away from the wages of sin, which is death (**Romans 6:23**).

- **But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. Luke 18:13 NLT**

The heart must break, in some regards, to realize the defect of sin within oneself to attach to Jesus Christ as the healer of the brokenhearted. This again is conviction, the admission of truth through revealing error. Repentance heals the heart because the person is turning toward God through Jesus Christ.

The voluntary element is the exercise of free will to make the changes necessary in the direction of holiness and God's presence. Repentance that is coerced is not legitimate in the presence of God. In regards to salvation, God will not override the choice of a person's desires to not assault the freedom of each person. This limits God to the response of the person when hearing the Word of God. Repentance must be voluntary as a product of a heart ready to repent.

- **If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. 2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV**
- **I will go home to my father and say, Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant. Luke 15:18-19 NLT**

Without the voluntary will to repent the actions that take place are religious in methodology but are void of sincerity. The heart is a key ingredient in two of the elements of repentance. A changed heart and mind will be the fruit of true repentance.

Each of these elements is important to repentance. All three produce the change necessary within a person to bring them closer to God as a true Christian.

REPENTANCE IS NOT MERIT-BASED

There are no magical punishments or good deeds that bring the fruit of repentance to one's life. Repentance requires the three elements, as previously mentioned, mixed with faith to

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bring the product of repentance. Again, there are no acts of repentance but fruit of repentance. Faith produces works from a love for and a relationship with God (**James 2:17-26; Titus 1:16; 2:14; 3:8**). These verses display it is a life of faith-produced works, not repentance-produced works. Repentance turns a person away from sin but faith and love for God produce a holy, clean life. The fruit of repentance will be discussed further in another lesson.

There are too many verses within the Bible referencing repentance for Christians to overlook this doctrine, skip across it, or think that there is no longer a need for such teaching. May Christians begin to see the importance of not just repentance, but biblical repentance to a holy God that holds the eternity of every person within His hands based on each person's choice to repent or not.

May people be biblical in repentance to live holy, clean, and in right standing with God.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

LESSON 2

The Need for Repentance

Every person who has ever lived, currently living, or whoever will live needs repentance. Although some Christians will discuss their salvation of who they are now in Christ, not many will discuss their repentance of sin. To understand the requirement of repentance, a person must first understand their need for repentance.

- **Cast away from you all your transgressions by which you have transgressed Me, and make you a new mind and heart and a new spirit. For why will you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of him who dies, says the Lord God. Therefore turn (be converted) and live!** Ezekiel 18:31-32 AMP

It is sin that brings death since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis 3:3-19**). God is asking His people why they are choosing to not turn from their sins and are choosing to die. God desires for all of mankind to have life in Him.

- **But if the wicked man turns from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all My statutes and does that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of his transgressions which he has committed shall be remembered against him; for his righteousness which he has executed [for his moral and spiritual rectitude in every area and relation], he shall live.** Ezekiel 18:21-22 AMP

These verses display God's purpose for repentance, to gain life. When those who live in wickedness (which is lawlessness, selfishness, and rebellion to God's Word), turn away from that type of heart (aka repent), and obey God and His Word, they will gain life. God desires for everyone to have life.

- **And the time of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.** Acts 17:30 KJV
- **I tell you, No; but unless you repent (change your mind for the better and heartily amend your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins), you will all likewise perish and be lost eternally.** Luke 13:3 AMP

God's message of repentance has not changed during any dispensation although the methods of walking with God did change during the current dispensation of grace and the Church age through Jesus Christ. Having a relationship with God has been the original plan since the creation of Adam (**Genesis 1:26; 2:8**). Part of repentance is having a hatred for past sins and sin in general. Having a heart that hates sin will motivate that person to not return or go near a sinful lifestyle again. Without repentance, a person cannot have a relationship with God leaving that person separated in the present but also for eternity.

HELL IS THE CONSEQUENCE OF NOT REPENTING

Those who do not repent of sin will face Hell as their eternal damnation and judgment. This is the high price to pay for not taking repentance seriously in life.

- **³³And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. ⁴¹Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴⁶And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.**

Matthew 25:33,41,46 KJV

The goats represent the people who chose to not be righteous but chose lawlessness. To be righteous reflects right standing with God (**1 John 3:7; 5:18; Philippians 1:11**). Those who are not righteous practice lawlessness. Lawlessness is living without a law or a governing force to do right. A lawless person does not desire to be regulated. Repentance is the changing of the mind and heart from lawlessness to righteousness.

- **And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.** **Revelation 20:15 KJV**
- **And if your hand puts a stumbling block before you and causes you to sin, cut it off! It is more profitable and wholesome for you to go into life [that is really worthwhile] maimed than with two hands to go to hell (Gehenna), into the fire that cannot be put out.** **Mark 9:43 AMP**

Repentance is the only way to have one's name in the Book of Life (**Revelation 3:5; 21:27; Luke 10:20; Philippians 4:3**). Hell has eternal torments that will never be stopped including a fire that cannot be put out. Repentance is the only way to escape Hell through salvation.

- **So repent [change your inner self – your old way of thinking, regret past sins] and return [to God – seek His purpose for your life], so that your sins may be wiped away [blotted out, completely erased], so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord [restoring you like a cool wind on a hot day].** **Acts 3:19 AMP**
- **Don't be afraid of those who want to kill your body; they cannot touch your soul. Fear only God, who can destroy both soul and body in hell.**

Matthew 10:28 NLT

God will not destroy those who have repented for their sins and walk with Him daily in their salvation. His promises to those who repent are life and life more abundantly (**John 10:10**). The only way to God is Jesus Christ. The method to Jesus as Savior is through faith and repentance (**Romans 10:9-10**).

REPENTANCE GIVES LIFE

Repentance affords forgiveness and salvation affords eternal life but those only come through Jesus Christ.

- **⁵Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. ⁷Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. John 3:5,7 KJV**

Jesus states that *everyone must be born again* to enter into the kingdom of God. Repentance is part of this conversion when applied with faith in Who Jesus is. If a person chooses not to repent and be born again, they are denying receiving the free eternal gift of life God has for them (**John 10:10; Romans 6:23**). Jesus has already paid the price for everyone's conversion but repentance through faith is subject to each person's choice for their life.

- **For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. John 3:16-21 KJV**

This famous passage paints the picture of repentance in action but many overlook the heart of what is being said. God made a plan of salvation for mankind to repent for the restoration of fellowship with Him through Jesus Christ, His Son. Those who believe in Jesus and submit to the conviction of the Holy Spirit are converted through repentance and faith. This sets them apart for everlasting life and a lack of condemnation. Those who do not believe are already on their way to Hell and condemnation unless repentance takes place. When those who believe and are converted come to the light they produce fruit of repentance (**Matthew 3:8; Galatians 5:22-23**) while those who choose to not come to the light remain in darkness with their works of the flesh (**Galatians 5:19-21**).

The need for repentance is great within the lives of every human being. Without repentance, death is not only the eternal choice of residence but the dominating force being paid as the wages of sin (**Romans 6:23**) while on the earth. With such a great need for repentance, why are so many people not being taught this eternal principle? Why do so many people lack the heart to commit to such a requirement by God after they learn of repentance? Why are so many people not ensuring their soul's current and eternal position in God through Jesus Christ knowing the price of lawlessness is hell? The answer is selfishness. Repentance is based on humility and the realization of needing God.

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When characteristics arise that oppose humility the realization of a need for God begins to lessen creating a stubborn, lawless person who would rather choose the pleasure of sin for a season than God for all eternity. Humility should lead to repentance. Repentance leads to life, wisdom, and forgiveness (**Proverbs 22:4; Proverbs 11:2; 2 Chronicles 7:14**).

May people everywhere see their need for repentance and make the changes necessary to live for God.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

LESSON 3

The Process of Repentance

After discussing what repentance is and the need for repentance, one should now discuss the process of repentance. The process of repentance includes confessing sin, forsaking sin, and turning to God.

CONFESSING SIN

To confess is defined as to assent (agree with), to acknowledge, declare, admit, to profess, or not to deny. Applying this definition the process of repentance can be seen within the first element. Each person must agree with God by acknowledging their wrongdoing, not denying their participation but declaring, admitting, and professing those sins to God in seeking forgiveness.

- ***If we confess our sins*, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 KJV**
- ***Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [also] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [to a spiritual tone of mind and heart]. The earnest (heartfelt, continued) prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available [dynamic in its working]. James 5:16 AMP***

Confession humbles a person to know their need for someone greater. The action of confession displays humility and should reflect the desire to cleanse oneself from the filthiness of sin.

- ***He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes his sins will obtain mercy. Proverbs 28:13 AMP***
- ***I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Psalm 32:5 KJV***

Repentance starts with an acknowledgment of the issue then followed by further action in turning from sin. Confession is only the beginning of the process of repentance.

FORSAKING SIN

To forsake is defined as to renounce, turn away from entirely, withdraw or retreat from, leave behind, or give up. Forsaking sin is vital to the Christian life because there is a high price to pay if a person chooses not to obey. The price is eternal death in Hell.

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- **For the wages which sin pays is death, but the [bountiful] free gift of God is eternal life through (in union with) Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Romans 6:23 AMP

When sin is viewed accurately as deadly it should create a motivation to not only confess it to be delivered but to forsake it so the wages no longer are the seeds planted within one's life. Confessing and forsaking sins go together with confession as the disposal and forsaking as the walking away to not return.

- **He who covers his transgressions will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes his sins will obtain mercy.** **Proverbs 28:13 AMP**
- **Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** **Isaiah 55:7 KJV**

God commands that all people do not go toward sin but away from it. Those who have already turned to God are especially given the command to not go back to them.

- **Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.** **Proverbs 4:14-15 KJV**

This forsaking of sin begins with repentance but does not stop until the glorified body is received as the reward of endurance unto salvation (**Matthew 10:22; 24:13**). Forsaking sin is truly tested when a Christian submits to their reasonable service as a living sacrifice.

- **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.** **Romans 12:1 KJV**

Being a living sacrifice is the ultimate testimony of forsaking sin to live holy and clean before God every day.

TURNING TO GOD

Turning to God is the essence of replacing the sinful nature and lifestyle that once dominated one's life with a new mindset, a new nature, and a new way of living that reflects the cleansing that has taken place spiritually on the inside to honor God.

- **So repent (change your mind and purpose); turn around and return [to God], that your sins may be erased (blotted out, wiped clean), that times of refreshing (of recovering from the effects of heat, of reviving with fresh air) may come from the presence of the Lord.** **Acts 3:19 AMP**

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It is not enough to only turn away from sin but allow God's presence to fill the void where sin once dominated. The change of mind and purpose turns to God in obedience bringing a refreshing.

- **Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.** **James 4:8 KJV**

After confessing and forsaking sin, turning to God brings repentance to fulfillment. It is the height of making the change from the old sinful nature to a new holy character.

- **But made known openly first of all to those at Damascus, then at Jerusalem and throughout the whole land of Judea, and also among the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works and live lives consistent with and worthy of their repentance.** **Acts 26:20 AMP**

- **Our God is a God who saves! The Sovereign Lord rescues us from death.** **Psalm 68:20 NLT**

God's Word displays that in turning to God there are requirements and promises as a result of the process. When turning to God, sins are being forsaken by the cleansing of hands, purifying hearts, and turning the opposite direction of sin (**James 4:8**). Simultaneously, as Christians turn to God by getting closer to Him, He gets closer to them because sin is no longer a wall creating a division.

- **But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.** **John 1:12 KJV**

The promise within this process is deliverance and victory from death, which is the wages of sin (**Romans 6:23**). Turning to God gives the person power through faith. The ultimate goal for those who repent is to become a child of God.

REPENTANCE REQUIRES THIS PROCESS

Repentance requires this process to properly make the permanent turn from a sinful being to a clean and holy being. This does not constitute sin will never be present again in one's life, but a person who lives a life of submission to God is quick to repent for the sins committed (**1 John 3:6**). Examining the previous verses displays each part of this process is vital to repentance. Omitting any part of this process diminishes repentance to a religious formality.

May God's people understand the importance of confessing sin, forsaking sin, and turning to God to live holy before Him.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

LESSON 4

Preachers of Repentance

Although the doctrine of repentance is not taught or preached in depth or throughout the body of Christ, it has been a message that God desired to be preached throughout time. This doctrine is found within the Old and New Testaments. God does not change (**Malachi 3:6**) and neither does His expectation of people to repent of their sins.

THE OLD TESTAMENT MESSENGERS

Even before Jesus was born on the Earth, God had His ministers preaching repentance or sending various messages for the people to repent.

MOSES: God gives Moses the commandment even within the first five books of the Bible to discuss repentance.

- ***If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which are written in this book of the law, and if thou turn unto the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.***
Deuteronomy 30:10 KJV

Here the emphasis can be noted on the hearkening to the voice of the Lord, keeping God's Word, and turning to God with all one's heart and soul. Hearken is defined as giving attention, obeying, and consenting to what is being said. Moses being the first pastor, of sorts, was giving the message of repentance to everyone but also a reminder to God's people to turn from their sins continually.

JOEL: God uses Joel to preach repentance to people.

- ***Therefore also now, says the Lord, turn and keep on coming to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning [until every hindrance is removed and the broken fellowship is restored]. Rend your hearts and not your garments and return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness; and He revokes His sentence of evil [when His conditions are met].***
Joel 2:12-13 AMP

Part of Joel's message is the ideology of repentance turns away the sentencing of evil when God's conditions are met. This sets the stage for Jesus Christ when He comes as the Supreme Sacrifice for the sins of the world. God's conditions must still be met through repentance to allow this revocation to take place.

EZEKIEL: God uses Ezekiel to declare repentance.

- ***"For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord God. "Therefore, repent and live."***
Ezekiel 18:32 NASB

- **But *if* the wicked people turn away from all their sins and begin to obey my decrees and do what is just and right, they will surely live and not die. All their past sins will be forgotten, and they will live because of the righteous things they have done.** Ezekiel 18:21-22 NLT

God used the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy and declare many things. Repentance was one of the important topics God saw as vital for Ezekiel to discuss.

ZECHARIAH: God used Zechariah to preach repentance to people.

- ***Therefore*, say to the people, “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: return to me, and I will return to you, says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies.” Don’t be like your ancestors who would not listen or pay attention when the earlier prophets said to them, “This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies says: Turn from your evil ways, and stop all your evil practices.”** Zechariah 1:3-4 NLT

JEREMIAH: God used Jeremiah the prophet to discuss repentance.

- **Perhaps they will listen and turn from their evil ways. *Then* I will change my mind about the disaster I am ready to pour out on them because of their sins.** Jeremiah 26:3 NLT

SOLOMON: God used the wisest king to discuss repentance.

- ***If* you will turn (repent) and give heed to my reproof, behold, I [Wisdom] will pour out my spirit upon you, I will make my words known to you.** Proverbs 1:23 AMP

Here wisdom is associated with repentance and the Word of God. This is the same book that reminds people that fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (**Proverbs 1:7; 9:10**). A true honor and reverence for God should lead to repentance of sins.

EZRA: God used Ezra (discussed from Jewish tradition) through the historical books to discuss repentance.

- ***If* my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; *then* will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.** 2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV

The major emphasis of each of these messengers is located on the words “if”, “therefore”, and “then”. If people repent then God can work. The word therefore means for that reason, consequently, because of that, on that ground, and to that end. God moves when His conditions are met, but His conditions are met when people repent of their sins and turn to Him.

THE NEW TESTAMENT MESSAGE

After all the time of God's Old Testament messengers being listened to and then rejected or rejected completely, He chose different messengers. One messenger in particular would change the ability to repent to a personal process with God.

JOHN THE BAPTIST: God sent John the Baptist as a forerunner of Jesus to discuss repentance.

- **In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 3:1-2 KJV**
- **⁶And when they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. ⁸Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Matthew 3:6,8 NLT**
- **This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. Mark 1:4 NLT**

John preached repentance and baptized only the people who had already repented by confessing their sins and turning to God.

JESUS CHRIST: God sent His Son to preach repentance and to make repentance a personal process with God.

- **From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4:17 KJV**
- **I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:3 KJV**
- **As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. Revelation 3:19-20 KJV**

The very example to all Christians, the Lord, and Master of every Christian's life preached repentance. Christians are to be like Him.

PAUL: God used Paul to preach repentance to people.

- **Or are you [so blind as to] trifle with and presume upon and despise and underestimate the wealth of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering patience? Are you unmindful or actually ignorant [of the fact] that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repent (to change your mind and inner man to accept God's will)? Romans 2:4 AMP**

- **For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.** 2 Corinthians 7:10 KJV
- **I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike – the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, and of having faith in our Lord Jesus.** Acts 20:21 NLT
- **With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.** 2 Timothy 2:25-26 NASB

Paul preached and taught repentance to display that it is necessary to escape Hell and the enemy.

THE BODY OF CHRIST: God's born-again believers should all be preachers of repentance and righteousness. Jesus Christ gives the command for all believers to preach repentance.

- **Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.** Matthew 28:19-20 NLT
- **And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.** Mark 16:15-16 KJV
- **When they heard this, they were quieted and made no further objection. And they glorified God, saying, Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance unto [real] life [after resurrection].** Acts 11:18 AMP

All Christians should teach and preach repentance with their words but also through example. When a person does not live repentance but speaks for everyone else to live it, this is hypocrisy and religious. Christians must repent when they stumble and then live holy and clean lives not only in front of others but more importantly before God. Having John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter (**Acts 2:38; Acts 8:21-23; 2 Peter 3:9**), and Jesus Christ as examples, Christians must understand how this same message is needed for today. With so many biblical examples of preachers of repentance, it should be evident the Body of Christ should be fulfilling this plan/command as well.

OVERVIEW

Although this list of the Old and New Testament messengers is not exhaustive, it should give every Christian an understanding of how important repentance is to God. With more

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messengers and more scripture available from these mentioned, the Word of God is full of the doctrine of repentance.

May Christians study these examples of preachers of repentance and not only preach repentance themselves but live it.

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LESSON 5

The Reasons Repentance is Missing

Repentance is a missing foundational doctrine in many modern churches. For some churches, it is briefly discussed but no depth is given to fully understand what God requires for people to repent of their sins or the need for repentance. This lesson will discuss some of the reasons repentance is missing from many churches.

REASONS REPENTANCE IS MISSING

The following are some of the reasons repentance is missing from modern churches and what the Bible says about those excuses that allow the departure from this doctrine.

1. **Lukewarmness.** Lukewarmness is the overall key to reasons repentance is missing from modern churches but this is a condition of the heart of church leaders as opposed to only the hearts of the congregation. These types of leaders keep the temperature of the church regulated at lukewarm to conform to the desires of the people while allowing themselves to benefit from not living a higher standard of Christianity.

- **I know your [record of] works and what you are doing; you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of My mouth!**

Revelation 3:15-16 AMP

- **For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.**

1 Peter 2:16 NLT

This type of Christianity allows the flesh to remain king while submitting to God only in theory. Having a doctrine of repentance should keep each Christian burning with a passion to honor God, not be separated from Him, and create endurance knowing the price for not completing the race of faith.

2. **Preach the Gospel, not repentance.** Some Christians hold that repentance is not needed as part of the Gospel. This type of message focuses on God's love and acceptance of sinful people, not the need for a Savior from sin. God loves everyone but His love sent Jesus to die as the Supreme Sacrifice allowing repentance to bring whosoever a personal relationship with Him.

- **Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

Acts 2:38 KJV

- **Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

Mark 1:14-15 KJV

Not only Peter, but Jesus preached the Gospel which includes repentance. Not including repentance as part of the Gospel should be a red flag to Christians of a lukewarm church or lukewarm minister. When this message does not confront one's sin it becomes an easier lifestyle while still clinging to the title of a Christian. Sadly, many will face judgment holding onto a title that does not belong to them due to not repenting of sin.

3. It puts people under the law. When Christians have this view they are under the doctrine of not needing the Old Testament and are leaving the foundations that built the New Testament.

- **It is the Spirit Who gives life [He is the Life-giver]; the flesh conveys no benefit whatever [there is no profit in it]. The words (truths) that I have been speaking to you are spirit and life.**
John 6:63 AMP
- **For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.**
Hebrews 4:12 NLT

Jesus was the Word made flesh (**John 1:14**) meaning what He said is God's Word. The Word of God is also a reference to what Christians now know as the Old Testament. The early Christians did not have a copy of the Bible as comprised today but still went to the temple to hear the Word of God read and taught. They also testified and wrote down their experiences for historical reference and epistles to the churches to be canonized later as the New Testament. Disregarding the Old Testament removes the heart of God and foundational teaching on many New Testament subjects that are furthered by the Apostles and Jesus Christ. Repentance is one of those topics. As discussed in *Lesson 4*, repentance is throughout the entire Bible so it is a vital doctrine that God desires His people to know.

4. It doesn't lead people to salvation. This excuse is usually coupled with another reason for not discussing repentance. The person could be embarrassed, think of it as not fun or exciting, fearful of offending, etc. Again, God's love is the only message from those who hold onto this excuse.

- **Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.**

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 KJV

- **I tell you, No; but unless you repent (change your mind for the better and heartily amend your ways, with abhorrence of your past sins), you will all likewise perish and be lost eternally.** Luke 13:3 AMP

Holding the doctrine of repentance not leading people to salvation is not only erroneous but unbiblical. With words from the Apostle Paul and Jesus Christ (not to mention many other messengers of God), there are plenty of scriptures that describe repentance leading to salvation. A person can hold a higher value for a savior when that person knows what they have been saved from.

5. **People might leave the church.** This excuse leaves a minister or pastor being more fearful of the people rather than God. The word of the people means more to that pastor or leader than the Word of God. Emphasizing the people rather than God did not go well for King Saul (**1 Samuel 15:24**). God expects His people to repent and obey Him.

- **But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.** 1 Corinthians 15:57-58 KJV
- **And you, son of man, neither fear them nor fear their words, though thistles and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions; neither fear their words nor be dismayed at their presence, for they are a rebellious house.** Ezekiel 2:6 NASB
- **Get up and prepare for action. Go out and tell them everything I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, or I will make you look foolish in front of them.** Jeremiah 1:17 NLT

When this excuse is the heart of the church leaders, the messages and other aspects of the church will cater to the people's desires and not to the things of God. The messages get watered-down and are not about removing sin while leaving little room for God to change the lives of people who are bombarded by sin and temptations every day.

6. **It is not fun, relevant, or exciting.** Although the topic of repentance may not be fun in the moment, it leads to life everlasting which is exciting and impacts every person now and for eternity.

- **For the time is coming when [people] will not tolerate (endure) sound and wholesome instruction, but, having ears itching [for something pleasing and gratifying], they will gather to themselves one teacher after another to a considerable number, chosen to satisfy their own liking and to foster the errors they hold. And will turn aside from hearing the truth and wander off into myths and man-made fictions.** 2 Timothy 4:3-4 AMP

- **Now the Holy Spirit tells us clearly that in the last times some will turn away from the true faith; they will follow deceptive spirits and teachings that come from demons.** **1 Timothy 4:1 NLT**

Church is not designed to be a carnival, circus, or a religious form of entertainment. These types of venues focus on fun, relevance, and excitement because they are focused on the customer's money to keep them coming back. Biblical churches are designed to help people become Christians. Once they are believers they are disciplined to live out the Word of God in holy and clean lives reflecting their relationship with God. Repentance is part of the process of turning from sin to remaining holy and clean honoring God.

7. **Hard to market repentance.** It is hard to market repentance, but then again, when did God tell His people to market His house? Marketing is a tool used when the Word and Spirit of God is not allowed to impact the people. The Word of God changing the lives of people is the best resource for sharing with others about what God can do within a local church.

- **But the natural, nonspiritual man does not accept or welcome or admit into his heart the gifts and teachings and revelations of the Spirit of God, for they are folly (meaningless nonsense) to him; and he is incapable of knowing them [of progressively recognizing, understanding, and becoming better acquainted with them] because they are spiritually discerned and estimated and appreciated. But the spiritual man tries all things [he examines, investigates, inquires into, questions, and discerns all things], yet is himself to be put on trial and judged by no one [he can read the meaning of everything, but no one can properly discern or appraise or get an insight into him].**

1 Corinthians 2:14-15 AMP

- **And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.**

John 2:15-16 KJV

God nor Jesus Christ need to be marketed. They only need to be testified about. Many of the New Testament ministers testified of Jesus Christ and His role in bringing people to right standing with God. The only method of coming to Him is through faith and repentance.

8. **Ministers are too embarrassed.** This excuse is the most damning of all. Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, and so many other Bible heroes preached repentance, so why do modern ministers not want to be like these men of God? The answer is lukewarm Christianity which is more carnal than spiritual.

- **But I say, walk and live [habitually] in the [Holy] Spirit [responsive to and controlled and guided by the Spirit]; then you will certainly not gratify the cravings and desires of the flesh (of human nature without God).**
Galatians 5:16 AMP
- **Herald and preach the Word! Keep your sense of urgency [stand by, be at hand and ready], whether the opportunity seems to be favorable or unfavorable. [Whether it is convenient or inconvenient, whether it is welcome or unwelcome, you as preacher of the Word are to show people in what way their lives are wrong.]. And convince them, rebuking and correcting, warning and urging and encouraging them, being unflagging and inexhaustible in patience and teaching.**
2 Timothy 4:2 AMP

When ministers are more like the world than like God, there is an issue that is not God's fault. Jesus said if anyone denied Him before men, He would deny that person before God (**Matthew 10:33; Luke 12:9**). If a minister truly believes the Word of God they should not be ashamed of anything God says. Repentance is the answer to pride and sin creating humility, righteousness, and leads to salvation. Love in ministry does not reflect catering to desires but giving truth for the saving of souls.

OVERVIEW

While this list may not include all of the reasons modern churches do not discuss repentance as part of their message, it helps display that the underlying reason is lukewarmness. These excuses must be overcome through repentance if they are present within a modern church.

May Christians allow repentance to be part of the message to the world, as well as Christians, to help everyone be ready to meet Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

LESSON 6

The Fruit of Repentance

As previously discussed, there is a fruit of repentance that should be evident when this process takes place within one's life. Repentance takes place within the heart which consists of the mind, will, and emotions. This is also confirmed by the three elements of repentance: intellectual, emotional, and voluntary (as discussed in *Lesson 1*). The following verses are for review regarding this doctrine based on the Word of God.

Intellectual element (mind):

- For I am ***conscious of my transgressions and I acknowledge them***; my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned and done that which is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified in Your sentence and faultless in Your judgment. Psalm 51:3-4 AMP

Voluntary element (will):

- ***If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.*** 2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV

Emotional element (emotion):

- Now I rejoice, not that ye were ***made sorry***, but that ye ***sorrowed to repentance***: for ye were ***made sorry*** after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For ***godly sorrow worketh repentance*** to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Corinthians 7:9-10 KJV

With the heart so directly related to repentance, Christians must consistently bring their heart before God in repentance when sin has been committed. The nature of the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (**Jeremiah 17:9**). The Lord searches the mind, tries the heart, and examines the emotions to reward every man according to his ways (**Jeremiah 17:10**). These reasons alone should cause every person to keep an upright heart and stay holy before God. The heart must be commanded to produce this fruit.

REPENTANCE IS FRUIT-BASED NOT MERIT-BASED

Repentance is not merit-based but stems from the three elements of repentance mixed with faith to bring forth fruit. Again, there are no acts of repentance but fruit of repentance. When acts of repentance are desired this becomes a matter of conducting the action with no heart involved. Without the heart, repentance is not legitimate. The sinful act will be conducted multiple times to only be satisfied by the act of repentance. If this process was accurate, the Mosaic Law would have fulfilled God's requirement of forgiveness as opposed to forwarding sin for another year (**Matthew 5:17; Galatians 3:21-22**). Repentance is based on the heart.

Faith produces works from a love for and a relationship with God (**James 2:17-26; Titus 1:16; 2:14; 3:8**). These verses display it is a life of faith-produced works, not repentance-produced works. Repentance turns a person away from sin but faith and love for God produce a holy, clean life.

- **Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.** **Matthew 3:8 KJV**
- **Bring forth fruit that is consistent with repentance [let your lives prove your change of heart].** **Matthew 3:8 AMP**
- **Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God.** **Matthew 3:8 NLT**

This verse displayed in various translations reflects the evidence of repentance. When a person confesses their sin, forsakes sin, and turns to God there should be evidence of this process within the life of that person. Repentance is not stating sorrow alone but bearing the fruit of turning away from the previous direction of heart or attitude.

HOW FRUIT IS PRODUCED

Natural fruit begins with a flowering plant that receives a seed within it. As the center of the flowering plant is fertilized fruit production can begin. Fruit is a product of the development from the inside of a flowering plant. This same process is described by Jesus when the seed is first scattered for the plant-growing process within the heart of people when they hear the Word of God.

- **Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seed. As he scattered it across his field, some of the seed fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate it. Other seed fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The seed sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow. But the plant soon wilted under the hot sun, and since it didn't have deep roots, it died. Other seed fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain. Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they sprouted, grew, and produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted!** **Mark 4:3-8 NLT**

Jesus further describes this process to His disciples when they are asking Him questions in private.

- **The farmer plants seed by taking God's word to others. The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message, only to have Satan come at once and take it away. The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word. The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other**

things, so no fruit is produced. And the seed that fell on good soil represents those who hear and accept God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted! Mark 4:14-20 NLT

Jesus describes the seed as the Word of God. These verses also describe the various types of people and situations that hinder or allow the growth of the Word of God in their lives. When the Word is planted into good soil it grows to produce a bigger harvest than what was sown. Hearing the Word of God allows the seed (*Word of God*) to grow within the person (*soil*) as described in **Mark 4**. Once the seed takes root the person (*now the flowering plant*) is fertilized by the Word to the core (*heart*). As this process continues, it produces the fruit of repentance bearing the product of the changes taking place inside the person.

NO EXCUSES FOR LACKING REPENTANCE

John the Baptist was recorded to declare repentance and to produce the fruit of repentance to the people listening to him. He did not allow the people hearing him to have excuses for not repenting.

- **Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Luke 3:8 KJV**
- **Prove by the way you live that you have repented of your sins and turned to God. Don't just say to each other, We're safe, for we are descendants of Abraham. That means nothing, for I tell you, God can create children of Abraham from these very stones. Luke 3:8 NLT**
- **Bear fruits that are deserving and consistent with [your] repentance [that is, conduct worthy of a heart changed, a heart abhorring sin]. And do not begin to say to yourselves, We have Abraham as our father; for I tell you that God is able from these stones to raise up descendants for Abraham. Luke 3:8 AMP**

In Luke's account, this concept of the fruit of repentance is coupled with not making excuses for a lack of repentance. Some rely on their heritage or other relationships that do have a walk with God but John the Baptist gives these listeners the understanding that it is an individual matter. Everyone must bear fruit that reflects the changing of their lives through repentance.

OTHER REPENTANCE-BASED FRUIT

There are other fruits that Christians should bear that reflect the growth of their spiritual walk with God. Unless repentance takes place first, this fruit cannot come to pass.

- **But people who aren't spiritual can't receive these truths from God's Spirit. It all sounds foolish to them and they can't understand it, for only those who are spiritual can understand what the Spirit means. 1 Corinthians 2:14 NLT**

Spiritual understanding cannot come by natural means. Repentance begins a walk with God and maintains a walk with God when sin arises. When the fruit of repentance is produced the fruit of the Spirit can begin to grow as well.

- **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.**

Galatians 5:22-24 KJV

The fruit of the Spirit can only be produced when the believer allows the Word of God and His Spirit to cultivate this growth. The person must submit to God which starts with repentance. These fruits are the evidence for non-believers and other Christians to see as a living example of the Word. Having such a testimony of these fruits helps others desire a closer walk with God or desire to begin a walk with God.

May Christians everywhere produce the fruit of repentance and the fruit of the Spirit as evidence of their turning from sin and living with God.