

Repentance gives Entrance!

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The next step in being right with God is repentance for the mistakes and sins and wrong attitudes of the past. The Bible mentions *repentance* more than *one-hundred times*. Jesus knew how *important* it is to say the *right thing, right away*, so began His ministry with Matthew 4:17 “*Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”

To be sure this vital aspect of the Christian life is not overlooked—He mentions it twice. Jesus said Mark 1:15 “*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*” It is just what John the Baptist said when his ministry led to the Messiah’s ministry—he was just making the pathway straight for the Master Matthew 3:2 “*And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*”

In English, and the Latin from which it comes, “*re*” means “*again*,” and “*pent*” means “*think*,” so repent means to “*think again*,” or “*rethink*” the way we *had* lived or the attitudes we *had* kept. In Hebrew of the Old Testament, the word translated “*repent*” means to “*return*”—with the implication that it means “*return to God*.” In the Greek of the New Testament, the words translated “*repent*” mean “*regret*” and “*reconsider*.”

When we *repent*, we turn *away* from the sins and *toward* God—*rethinking* and *reconsidering* the way we *had* lived; the attitudes we *had* kept

toward some people; and our conduct in general—in light of what God *wants* us to *think* and *do* and *treat* people. We are to be very *sorry* for, and regret, the way we had *offended* God and to take action in *changing* our ways and attitudes with His help.

At the same time we repent, we are to cast away everything in our life that *entices* us and *tempts* us to the very things that we are repenting of. We are to make a definite decision—and only with the help of His Holy Spirit—not to *return* to those wrong things; those mistakes, sins, unscriptural attitudes, hard feelings, and bitterness.

Going *back* to those wrong ways, unscriptural desires, and worldly attitudes after we have *repented* and received God’s forgiveness, is what the apostle explains 2 Peter 2:21 “*For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.*” It is like, he said, 22 “*The sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*”

Repentance and *faith* are always linked—it is how we are *saved* and *spared* from being declared *guilty*. When we repent and believe on the Name of Jesus, we become new creatures born into God’s family. We are no longer under the condemnation of the Law nor held in sin by Satan. It is a *first* but very important step—not only as we begin the Christian life, but at any time after.

God does not want *anyone* to perish—that is why Jesus said Luke 13:3 “*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*” He also said Luke 5:32 “*I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*” Acts 3:19 “*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.*”

Being sorry we got caught at something is *not* repentance. In Greek—what the New Testament was written in—the word *repentance* is a

strong indication of *change*; it is a change of *heart* and *mind* and *thoughts*—and a *reverse* of what we had *wanted* to do.

A true *repentance* is evidenced by a visible *change* in our life; what we talk about; our attitudes, and our responses to people. By rethinking and regretting our past ways and attitudes, the result is a noticeable *change* in the way we behave. When *Jesus* comes *into* our heart, *self* has to move *out* because there is room for only *one* to be in control.

In testifying before King Agrippa, the apostle Paul said he was sent to the Gentiles Acts 26:18 “*To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*”

He had always obeyed God and had preached in, 20 “*Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.*”

Once we repent and give our life and attitudes over to God for *His* control, we may still face temptations and even struggle with them, because Satan never gives up trying. Hebrews 12:4 “*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.*”

People should see *change* on the *outside* because there is now a *change* on the *inside*—God is in control. Our attitude toward God is changed, and He continues to change us and adjust our attitudes to be what He wants them to be—as we remain committed to doing His will and following His Word with every aspect of life.

The importance of *repenting* and *returning* to trust on God is emphasized throughout Scripture. After committing the worst sin possible, the

people were told—Acts 2:38 “*Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*”

True *repentance* is a true *change* from one direction to another; it means a conversion from doing things the *world’s* way, to start doing them the *Lord’s* way. Repentance brings amazing results—we are pardoned and forgiven through the shed Blood of Jesus Christ—a significant result!

Erasing of past sins is the foundation of a Christian life of faith—not everyone *has* that foundation. A genuine repentance enables us to surrender our *self will* to be *God’s divine will*. Repenting is being willing to give up every unscriptural attitude, and to learn under God’s teaching, how to be scriptural in all attitudes toward everyone and everything.

Being scriptural is *opposite* to what we were *before* repentance. Since Adam sinned, everyone born is under the control of the devil—all the ways of *humanity* are the ways of the *devil*. If someone has not truly repented and received the Holy Spirit, they would not know that Satan was controlling their thoughts—but he *can* be, and he *does* by thoughts put in their mind.

The devil constantly tries to have people accept false religions—and there are millions today—each one claiming to give a gospel message. Anyone under the control of the devil—because they have never really repented of their sins—can be easily influenced to accept a false belief system. The Bible predicts that huge numbers of people would be following huge numbers of false religions in the closing days—where we are today.

Satan’s only intention is to have people pass from this earth still in their sins and unprepared for Heaven—that would mean spending an eternity with him in Hell—the worst result imaginable. Anyone who accepts a delusion will find

themselves in that dreadful place. Jesus said to some religious leaders John 8:24 “*If you do not believe that I am, THE ONE I CLAIM TO BE, you will indeed die in your sins.*”

There are two *stages* to repentance—*first stage* is like seeing the horizon of a burning desert stretched out in front of us, and *knowing* that this is *not* the direction in which we should be going. So, we turn our mount around and make our way *back* through the crowd. Repentance is not *valid* until we *turn around* and *go back* in the *other* direction.

We can hate *sin*, as a criminal hates *punishment*, but this is *not* proof of a real *repentance*. If we hate sin because of the punishment, we have not truly *repented* of sin—we just *regret* that God is just. However, if we *know* that sin and wrong attitudes are an offense against Jesus, and we detest ourselves because we have *hurt* our Savior—that is true repentance.

Consequences alone should not cause repentance. Offending God should make us *want* to make drastic changes. We should *want* to leave those wrong ways and attitudes behind us. We should *desire* a changed attitude that glorifies God. We should *want* to have our sins forgiven, and we should *want* God to prepare us for a life in Heaven with Him.

To hate sin, self, and wrong ways because they caused our *Savior* to be dishonored, beaten, mocked, crucified and slain—that is true repentance! Repentance is *not* because we are afraid of punishment or penalties, but because it made Jesus suffer for us—and so *unjust* was the suffering! He bore it all, so we could be converted; changed; and heading in the right direction.

When we repent, God possesses our life, and He begins guiding us away from every unscriptural thing in our life. We must be led *out* of every human thing we trust in; and be led *to* the place of total trust on God alone for everything.

At this point, we are *free* from slavery to sinful ways; *free* from unscriptural attitudes; and *free* from unscriptural or unprofitable interests—we will have God’s *protection*; His *healing*; we will enjoy *peace* in our home; and we will be *delivered* from things that disturb our peace.

Evidence of *Satan’s* control is when *God* is shut out of someone’s life. This means that the individual is trying by their own *ways and plans* to get what they want in this life. Satan’s key process is to have people follow worldly ways of self, but with a religious covering to cover it up.

Millions of religious groups follow the devil’s methods—totally *ignoring* God in this life, and *depending* on their own ways to get what they want. The facts are, however, that God is the *same* today; Jesus came to *deliver* us from Satan’s power today; and the Holy Spirit is *given* to anyone today—those who truly repent, believe, and accept God’s Truth of the Bible.

Repentance is *not* real, unless a *final* decision is made to turn from all unscriptural things in our life, and to accept God’s will and Word as the *rule* of our life. Every evil thing that has ever happened to anyone, has been caused by an unscriptural attitude toward God and His Word. When we are ready to *confess*, *repent*, and *forsake* our evil ways and are willing to accept God’s Truth, we will be delivered from sin, self, and Satan.

Psalms 1:1 “*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly;*” but instead, *rejects* the ways of the world; makes a true Bible *repentance*; *returns* to God in faith; willingly *accepts* His full Truth, and then *walks* in the light of it every day by the power of the Holy Spirit. *That* is true *repentance* and gives *entrance* into His Kingdom!



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