

"Old Paths" Baptist Ministries

Presents

What Is This Thing Called Repentance?



What About Repentance?

Real Biblical salvation involves a turning to God which results in a new life. We often use these terms, born-again, new birth, saved, and others, to explain what salvation means to someone who asks us about it or when we are giving our testimony.

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* True Biblical salvation consists of 2 inseparable elements: These elements are: Faith and Repentance. Faith comes from hearing God's word, believing God's word and deciding by an act of your will to obey it.

Hebrews 11:6 *"But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he that cometh to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarded of them that diligently seek him."*

Romans 10:17 *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.* Repentance is a change of mind which leads the sinner to turn to God away from sin

with all his heart which results in a changed life. Please note the order, first, to God and from sin. Not separate acts but the one and the same. The result of this decision is a life that serves God eagerly anticipating His return. *1 Thessalonians 1:9-10 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Luke 15:17-19 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

Luke 18:13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner.

Repentance is the missing element in many 'professions' of faith. However, it is a Biblical doctrine that needs to be reemphasized in our modern era. Too many times in our "soul-winning" presentations this doctrine is eliminated. In a large Christian newspaper published in the East, a sermon by Charles H. Spurgeon was reprinted. In checking the original sermon reprint with the paper's version the entire section where he talked about repentance was omitted. That unfortunately is the mindset of too many earnest and sincere evangelistic thrusts today. I believe that is why we have such an anemic 'Christianity' today. False professions abound which have been produced by this "1, 2, 3, pray after me" approach to evangelism. Many illustrations could be given to back up these statements. The church that my wife and I attended first after our salvation in 1970 has recorded thousands of 'conversions' and baptisms over the past 40 years yet the size of the church has remained about the same. There was a great emphasis on 'getting people saved' with no emphasis on Biblical repentance being a part of the evangelistic outreach. In the 40 years that we have been saved most churches that we have attended have not included repentance in their salvation plan. Yet God places great emphasis on repentance. He speaks of it in the Old Testament

Job 42:6 Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.

Ezekiel 14:6 Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.;

Ezekiel 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.

In the New Testament Gospels Jesus reminds us of the need and importance of repentance: *Matthew 3:1-2 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 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the

kingdom of heaven is at hand. Mark 6:12 *And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*

In the early church the preachers spoke of it:

Acts 2:38 *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 17:30 *And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

Acts 20:21 *Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Paul and Peter also preached about it in their letters:

Romans 2:4 *Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 *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 Peter 3:9 *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.*

Any one of the above mentioned verses should give the 'no need of repentance' group of people great cause for concern, but it doesn't seem to cause them any real distress. Realistically repentance involves a change of intellect and emotions, which induces our will to say yes to God and His claims on our life. During the intellectual phase we are confronted with the facts of our sin and God's Holiness which causes us change our mind. We are also made to realize from God's word that we are unable to save ourselves which also causes us to turn to God. Acts 2:14-40.

Emotionally, we become sorry for our actions against an Holy God and by an act of our will turn to God from our "idols." The volitional Element involves a change of will, purpose: *"it is an inward disposition to seek pardon and cleansing from God and turning away from sin which results in a turning to God"* (Webster) - 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.*

It involves a confession of sin - Luke 15:21 *And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* It also causes us forsake sin to the best of our ability. Proverbs 28:13 *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* How much of that do you see in modern conversions? As a result of true Biblical repentance leading to salvation, pardon and forgiveness are extended from Almighty God - Isaiah 55:7; Proverbs 28:13; Acts 3:19; the Holy Spirit is given to

that person as act of grace - [Acts 2:38](#); and all of Heaven rejoices - [Luke 15:7, 10](#). Repentance on the divine side is a gift of God.

Acts 5:31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. On the human side it is simply received. The word of God, the Gospel, chastisement, reproof, and belief in truth, are all used to produce repentance. *2Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

True repentance never exists apart from faith. Conversely, we may say that true faith never exists without repentance: The two are absolutely bound together. One cannot turn to God without at the same time turning from sin.

Repentance is accompanied not only a heart broken because of sin - [Mark 10:17-22](#), but from sin.

Repentance must not be represented as a work to perform. Repentance is, as we have already noted, is a gift from God. Confession of sin and reparation for wrong done to man are the fruits of repentance, but they do not constitute repentance.

The Puritan preacher and converted religionist Robert Bolton said this hundreds of years ago, and I think it epitomizes what is missing from most 'conversions' today. *"A man must feel himself in misery before he will go about to find a remedy; be sick before he will seek a physician; be in prison before he will seek a pardon. A sinner must be weary of his former wicked ways before he will have recourse to Jesus Christ for refreshing. He must be sensible of his spiritual poverty, beggary, and slavery under the devil before he thirst kindly for Heavenly righteousness, and willingly take Christ's sweet and easy yoke. He must be cast down, confounded, condemned, a cast away, and lost in himself, before he will look about for a Saviour."*

In David Cloud's excellent pamphlet, "*WHAT'S WRONG WITH MOST SOUL WINNING COURSES*", which can be found on his website, www.wayoflife.org, he says that there are five major problems with most soul winning programs and neglecting to include repentance is one of those problems. I could not agree more.

Repentance toward God and Faith toward our LORD Jesus Christ are integral and inseparable parts of the doctrine of true saving Grace. Don't leave them out of your soul winning efforts.

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