

Doctrine of Repentance Explained

1. The word ‘*repent*’ when used in a general sense means literally ‘*to change one's mind.*’ The word is used this way of God.
 - *Genesis 6:6 And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. 7 And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.*
2. When used of man, true spiritual repentance speaks of a sense of personal ‘*guilt*’ with the hope of God's mercy. There is a sense of deep *regret* for the act of transgression committed.
 - *Matthew 26:75 And he [Peter] went out and wept bitterly.*
3. Repentance demands a deep *sorrow* for sin and a turning away from it to obey God. There is a fundamental change in one’s life.
 - *Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. (cf Luke 5:32)*
4. In the Old Testament the classic case of repentance is that of King David, after Nathan the prophet accused him of killing Uriah the Hittite and committing adultery with Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. David's prayer of repentance for this sin is found in Psalm 51.
5. In the New Testament the keynote of John the Baptist's preaching was, "*Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*" (*Matthew 3:2*).
6. To the multitudes John declared, "*Bear fruits worthy of repentance*" (*Matthew 3:8; Luke 3:8*). It is not enough to simply say you are sorry.
7. When Jesus began His ministry, He took up John's preaching of the message of repentance, expanding the message to include the good news of salvation: "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel*" (*Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15*).
8. In the preaching of Jesus the truth is revealed that repentance and faith cannot be separated. By repentance, a person turns away from sin; by faith, a person turns toward God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as personal Saviour. Such a twofold turning, or conversion, is necessary for entrance into the kingdom
 - *Matthew 18:3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*
 - "*Unless you repent,*" said Jesus, "*you will all likewise perish*" (*Luke 13:3, 5*).

9. This is the negative, or judgmental, side of Jesus' message. The positive, or merciful, side is seen in these words: *"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents"* (Luke 15:10).
10. After Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, His disciples continued His work of preaching the necessity of repentance and faith.
- *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 26:20 But shewed first unto them of 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.*
11. Repentance has many facets, some of which have more to do with the will than the emotions. There is an old saying, "Actions speak louder than words." Another saying declares, "I cannot hear what you are saying because I am too busy watching what you are doing."
12. Repentance is a turning from wickedness and dead works.
- *Acts 8:22 Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*
 - *Hebrew 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,*
13. Repentance is a turning toward God and His glory.
- *Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - *Revelation 16:9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not to give him glory.*
14. Repentance will lead to eternal life.
- *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

15. When a person truly repents there is a new ability to comprehend spiritual knowledge of the truth.

- *2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

16. Repentance is associated with

❖ Prayer.

- *1 Kings 8:47 Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;*

❖ belief.

- *Mark 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.*

❖ baptism.

- *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.*

❖ conversion.

- *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;*

17. Repentance is accompanied by

❖ humility.

- *Matthew 11:21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

18. Repentance is God's will and pleasure.

- *Luke 15:7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. 8 Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?*

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. 10 Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

- *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.*

19. Repentance is God's command.

- *Mark 6:12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.*
- *Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:*

18. Repentance is a gift of God's sovereign love.

- *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.*
- *Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*
- *Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?*
- *2 Timothy 2:25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;*

20. Apart from gospel repentance no one can be saved, sanctified, or have any peaceful assurance of salvation.

- *Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*
- *2 Thessalonians 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.*