

## Repentance

The Greek word for repent is *metanoia* which literally means “to change one’s thinking” in a way that brings about a change of lifestyle. When we repent we choose to no longer live for ourselves but for God, according to the example set by Jesus. Repentance can also be understood as “turning and returning” – turning away from a life of sin to a life of obedience to God. Repentance is essential for salvation and is a major theme throughout the Bible, including in the teachings of Jesus himself. The love of God displayed on the Cross should lead us to feel Godly sorrow for our sin and motivate us to repent.

### Jeremiah 15:19; Ezekiel 14:6; Mark 1:4, 14-15; 6:12

- What is the common theme in each of these passages?
- To repent means to adopt a completely new way of thinking about the world around us, bringing about a change of lifestyle. What do you find most challenging about the call to repent?

### 2 Peter 3:8-9

- What is God’s desire for everyone?
- What results from not coming to repentance?

### Luke 15:3-7

- What does this parable tell us about the extent of God’s love?
- What is God’s response when one person repents?

### Romans 2:4-5

- What should motivate us to repent?
- What can we expect from God if we are stubborn and unrepentant?

### Titus 2:11-14

- Repentance (saying “No” to ungodliness) is a response to the grace of God displayed on the cross.
- Repentance is turning away from wickedness to living self-controlled, upright and godly lives.
- Jesus lay down his life to enable us to live such lives.

### Matthew 3:8

- What do you think it means to bear fruit in keeping with repentance?

### Galatians 5:19-26

- This passage follows on after a “sin list” and illustrates the principle of repentance – turning from a life led by our sinful nature to a life that is led by the Spirit and pleasing to God.
- Repentance involves deep character change to live a Spirit-filled life.
- Of the qualities listed here, which do you need to grow the most in?

### 2 Corinthians 7:10-11

- What are the two types of sorrow mentioned here? What is the difference between them?
- *Godly sorrow is genuine and brings about real change.*
- *Worldly sorrow involves “feeling bad” without leading to lasting change.*
- What does Godly sorrow bring about? *Repentance and eternal life.*
- What does worldly sorrow bring about? *Death.*

**Marks of Godly sorrow:**

- **Earnestness:** Strong determination to get right with God.
- **Eagerness to clear yourself:** Burning desire to be free from the slavery of sin.
- **Indignation:** Righteous anger directed at our sin.
- **Alarm:** Urgent fear of the danger of sin that is not dealt with.
- **Longing:** Deep craving for a pure heart and reconciliation with God.
- **Concern:** Concern for those that sin hurts, including God.
- **Readiness to see justice done:** Willingness to take responsibility for one's sin and to face the consequences.

#### CHALLENGE

- Take some time to focus on the love and grace of God displayed on the Cross.
- Also take some time to reflect on the sins that you struggle with.
- What changes is God asking you to make in response to His kindness and patience with you?
- What would Godly repentance look like for you? Be as specific as possible.

#### FURTHER STUDY (can be given as homework)

**Ezekiel 18:30-32.** Repentance means turning away from our sins and undergoing radical change (getting a new heart and spirit). What according to this passage does repentance bring? What will be the result of not repenting?

**Acts 3:19.** Repentance brings forgiveness and times of refreshing from God. Why do you think repentance is refreshing?

**2 Timothy 3:1-5.** Repentance often requires us to remove ourselves from those who live in sin. Are there any people in your life who are bad influences who you may need to remove yourself from?

**Mark 9:43-47.** God is radical about sin and expects us to also be. If we do not repent, our sin will cause us to go to hell.

**Revelation 2:4-5; 3:3,19.** Jesus is addressing Christians who have gone back to some of their sinful ways, and is calling them to repentance. What do you learn from this about the nature of repentance?

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#### **Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Peter 2:24-25**

- Repentance is made possible by Jesus bearing our sins on the cross
- Before repentance we are like sheep going our own way - repentance is turning away from that life and returning to the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls
- How does this picture help you to understand the heart of God?