

Repentance

Turning from sin to God with genuine sorrow and changed life

Repentance marks the beginning of the Christian life and characterizes its continuation. The Greek word *metanoia* signifies a change of mind that produces a change of direction—not merely feeling sorry for sin but actually turning from it to God. John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles all proclaimed repentance as essential to salvation. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

True repentance involves several elements. First, **recognition of sin**—seeing transgression as God sees it, as rebellion against His holy law and character. Second, **godly sorrow**—genuine grief over having offended God, not merely regret over consequences. "Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of" (2 Corinthians 7:10). Third, **confession**—acknowledging sin specifically to God and, where appropriate, to others. Fourth, **turning**—actual change of behavior, forsaking the sin that grieves God.

Repentance is itself a gift from God, not something humans produce by their own will. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel" (Acts 5:31). This understanding humbles us—even our repentance flows from grace. Yet this does not excuse delay, for God "now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17:30).

Repentance is not a one-time event but an ongoing posture. Believers continually turn from newly discovered sins, deepening in awareness of their need for Christ. The repentant life grows increasingly sensitive to sin while simultaneously more confident in grace. True repentance produces joy, not despair, because it leads to forgiveness and restoration.

Call to Repentance

God's command to repent

Acts 17:30 — Commandeth all men everywhere to repent

And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

Luke 13:3 — Except ye repent, ye shall perish

I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

Matthew 4:17 — Repent: for the kingdom is at hand

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Acts 2:38 — Repent, and be baptized

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.

True Repentance

The nature of genuine repentance

2 Corinthians 7:10 — Godly sorrow worketh repentance

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

Joel 2:13 — Rend your heart, not your garments

And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Isaiah 55:7 — Let the wicked forsake his way

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.

Psalms 51:17 — Broken and contrite heart

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

God's Response

Divine grace toward the repentant

1 John 1:9 — Faithful to forgive

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Isaiah 1:18 — Though your sins be as scarlet

Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

Luke 15:7 — Joy in heaven over one sinner

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.

Acts 3:19 — Times of refreshing

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;

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