

REPENTANCE STUDY

The previous study identified The Problem in our relationship with God: Sin. Before studying our part in the Solution (Repentance and Baptism) it is good to study God's part of the Solution: the Cross (Level 3, DOCTRINE 2), which will emphasize the power of the gospel and the extent of God's love. Our part in the Solution (Repentance and Baptism) should be a gift to someone who truly understands the gospel: where we stand before God because of Sin and how much God loves us through the Cross.

Repentance is one of the greatest gifts God offers man – a chance to have a true change, a new start. However, due to many misconceptions, some people have a negative understanding that treats repentance as some form of penance (what you do to make up for your sin) combined with a heavy sorrow that makes Christianity more like a dragged-out apology than the joyful reconciliation of a beloved child to their parent. This study should establish a biblical definition of repentance, correct misunderstandings, and describe true repentance.

OPENING QUESTION: What do you believe repentance means or looks like? Why is repentance important?

WHO NEEDS REPENTANCE?

Luke 13:1-5

Who does Jesus say should repent? Everyone must repent.

- All have the same SIN problem.
- No matter how religious, successful, or "good" they are.

What is the choice Jesus gave each of us? Repent OR Perish.

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Acts 26:20-21 – What do you learn about repentance from this scripture?

- Definition: Metanoia (Greek) means "mind-change"; to turn, surrender, make Jesus Lord.
- Repentance is the message preached by Paul, Jesus, John, and the prophets.
- Repentance is demonstrated by deeds—your life reflects the change.
- Repentance leads to opposition. Some do not want to change. Many do not appreciate being told the truth about their lives.
- Repentance is a POSITIVE command—become what we were created to be—like Jesus.
- Repentance is an ONGOING command—an ongoing attitude. Can be done in an instant, though its effects can last a lifetime.

2 Corinthians 7:8-11 – What is the difference between worldly and godly sorrow?

- Describe "worldly sorrow"
 - Repentance is NOT the same as being sorry.
 - Worldly sorrow is being sorry you were caught in a bad situation.
 - Example: Speeding – worldly: you don't change, you'll be speeding again soon.
- Describe "godly sorrow"
 - Leads to repentance which brings salvation (repentance comes before salvation!).
 - Example: You or your girlfriend gets pregnant. Not just sorry about the consequences. Godly sorrow says, "I will never be immoral again." Denial of sin/selfishness, daily commitment, and following Christ.
 - Review each characteristic of godly sorrow: no regrets, produces an obvious change in character and lifestyle. You can tell if someone has really repented!

Mark 9:42-48

- How would you describe Jesus' attitude toward sin?
 - Repentance is radical – a radical attitude toward sin...

REPENTANCE STUDY

- Analogy: If you get cancer what type of attitude would you have?

What is a typical attitude about sin today? "Sin is okay in moderation."

What is God's attitude about sin? "Sin is always horrible—deal with it radically!"

Acts 3:19-20

- How would you describe repentance from this scripture?
 - *so that your sins may be wiped out* – repentance is necessary for forgiveness of sins.
 - *that times of refreshing may come from the Lord* – once we repent, there will be times of refreshing (repentance feels good!).

APPLICATION

- Do you know people who have repented?
- Have you ever repented like this?
- Do you want to repent like this?
- What do you need to repent of?

OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES

Acts 2:36-41

- How would you describe these first Christian's repentance?
 - They understood the consequences of their sin and what it did to Jesus on the cross.
 - When our hearts are cut by the Cross we are ready to whatever it takes to fix things.
 - Repentance is a necessary part of our response in God's solution! Therefore, we need to make sure we know exactly what it should look like in our lives.
 - Repentance (with baptism) leads to forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

John 3:3

- How does this scripture describe a person who has repented?
 - Born again: Repentance is not just making changes in life, but also becoming a new person.
 - Being born again means you have become a new creation. (*2 Corinthians 5:17*)
 - Repentance changes our lives and not just our habits.