

Coming to Christ

*A study of the Problem of Sin, Faith, Repentance,
Confession, Baptism, Christian Living*



Lesson 3 --- Repentance

Repentance

Just as faith is a condition for our salvation; so is repentance. Jesus said in Luke 13:3 and repeated in 13:5, "I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

These are serious words for none of us wish to perish, but that is the outcome absent of repentance. It is the desire of our Lord that everyone repents. In 2 Peter 3:9 we find these words: "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." We again note that there are two choices: repent or perish.

We understand that these kinds of statements are not politically correct and are not well received by non-Christians today. That does not make these words any less true.

1. Read the following verses and write down what you learn about repentance.

Luke 5:32 -

Acts 17:30 -

Acts 8:22 -

Acts 2:38 -

Acts 3:19 -

2 Cor 7:8-10 -

Greek words for Repentance

metanoia (noun) and metanoeo (verb)

--This word comes from the word "meta" which means "after" and "noeo" which means "to know, understand or think."

--The idea is that repentance causes a person to think differently; especially in regards to sin.

-- Repentance is sometimes defined as a change of mind or attitude about sin.

Dr. Jack Cottrell in *The Faith Once For All* shows what a changed thinking toward sin means.

1. A changed mind brings a **hatred** of sin. (Job 42:5-6)
2. A changed mind brings **remorse** for sins committed against God. (Ps 51:17)
3. A changed mind includes a sincere **desire** to refrain from sin and a **determination** to forsake sin.
4. Repentance is described as **turning** from sin. (Acts 3:19; 11:21; 14:15; 26:18)
5. Repentance is a change of **mind** about sin. This change of mind or heart should lead us to a change in actions. (Acts 26:20; Matt 3:8)

Repentance is essential to salvation because it involves a change of mind about sin. It is not possible to be forgiven of sin if one is holding sin favourably in their heart.

Just as faith is a condition of salvation, so is repentance. In Acts 2:38 we see repentance as a prerequisite of salvation and coming before baptism. So, repentance is necessary in the life of someone who has never been a Christian. It is also an important ingredient in the life of Christians who fall into sin.



An Example of Repentance

Fathers love their children and continually desire the best for them. The parable of the Prodigal Son serves as an illustration of the love God has for His children and in it we have one of the clearest examples of the effects of repentance.

Read the story of the Prodigal Son and discuss the following questions.

2. *Which of the five marks of changed thinking discussed above are found in the life of the Prodigal Son?*
3. *Which verses show that the son accepted responsibility for his actions?*
4. *What effects did repentance produce in the life of the Prodigal Son?*
5. *What does the reaction of the Father in this story tell us about God? (Also see Luke 13:6-9)*
6. *Personal Thought Question:
Of what if anything do you need to repent?*

The Parable of the Prodigal Son

Luke 15:11-32

11 And he said, "There was a man who had two sons.
12 And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.' And he divided his property between them. 13 Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living.
14 And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. 16 And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! 18 I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'"
20 And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 But the father said to his servants, 'Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. 23 And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. 24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.' And they began to celebrate.

25 "Now his older son was in the field, and as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. 27 And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and sound.' 28 But he was angry and refused to go in. His father came out and entreated him, 29 but he answered his father, 'Look, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed your command, yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him!' 31 And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 It was fitting to celebrate and be glad, for this your brother was dead, and is alive; he was lost, and is found.'"