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## RESTORING THE CHURCH - PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH LIFE

# *Repent From Dead Works*

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this lesson is to help us to recognize that the only true foundation on which to begin to build the Christian life and by which to maintain it is that of repentance from everything that hinders us from becoming all that God desires for us to become.

### **KEY VERSE:**

*“And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”*

**Mark 1:15**

### **I. WHAT IS THE FIRST WORD OF THE GOSPEL?**

The first word of the Gospel is **repent**. The second word of the Gospel is **believe** (Mark 1:15).

- A. The message John the Baptist gave to prepare the world for the coming of Jesus was **repentance** (Matthew 3:1-8).
- B. The first message that Jesus proclaimed as a prerequisite for entering the Kingdom was **repentance** (Matthew 4:17).

- C. The message that the disciples carried wherever they went was the message of **repentance** (Mark 6:7-13).
- D. The call that went out on the first sermon after the outpouring of the Spirit was of **repentance** (Acts 2:38, 39).
- E. Paul began his preaching with the message of **repentance** (Acts 20:20, 21).

*“And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*  
**Luke 24:47**

*“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:”*  
**Acts 17:30**

Repentance is the first step in the believer's life. God commands it. If the foundation is not properly laid, the whole structure will be shaky, unable to stand the tests and trials that come (Luke 6:46-49). The Psalmist declares, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Psalm 11:3). We must firmly lay this “foundation of repentance from dead works” if we are to be strong. (Hebrews 6:1-2).

## II. WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR A PERSON TO “REPENT”?

- A. The word “repent” means to change one's mind, thought, purpose or views regarding a matter. It refers to a change in **heart attitude**, which results in a new direction for the whole life.
- B. Charles Finney defined repentance as an “intellectual and hearty giving up of all controversy with God upon all and every point. It implies a conviction that God is wholly right, and the sinner is wholly wrong, and a thorough and hearty abandonment of all **excuses and apologies for sin**.”

### III. WHY IS REPENTANCE NECESSARY FOR MAN?

- A. Because of the **fall of Adam**, the first man, Adam, into sin there is an inborn desire in the mind of man to go his own way and rebel against the right way of God (Ephesians 2:3, Colossians 1:21).

*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*

**Proverbs 14:12**

*"All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."*

**Isaiah 53:6**

- B. Because **every individual** has erred from the right ways of God by virtue of his own decisions in life. (Romans 7:18-25).

*"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"*

**Romans 3:23**

- C. Because **in himself** man does not have the power to live a life pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6).

### IV. WHAT ARE SOME OF THE WRONG CONCEPTS ABOUT REPENTANCE?

There are many concepts that have been confused with true repentance. The tragedy is that if we accept any one of these false concepts it will keep us from experiencing genuine repentance.

True repentance is not:

- A. **Conviction of sin**. Conviction of sin will always precede genuine repentance, but not all who are convicted will truly repent.

*"And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."*

**Acts 24:24-25**

- B. **Worldly sorrow**. Worldly sorrow is simply being sorry for “getting caught”, but not being sorry for the actual crime committed. Given the same set of circumstances this person would probably repeat the same sin.

*For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.*  
**2 Corinthians 7:10**

- C. **Mere reformation**. Reformation in this sense is simply trying to “turn over a new leaf” in the strength of the natural man. This will never be successful without genuine heart change.

- D. **Being religious**. The Pharisees in Christ’s day were very religious but they were hypocrites. It is possible to maintain a form of religion but never experience genuine power of repentance.

*“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.”*  
**2 Timothy 3:5**

- E. **Mental faith**, or “only believism”. Mental faith is merely the mental acceptance and assent to a set of creeds or doctrines, but without any real change of heart and life.

*“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”*  
**James 2:19-20**

Oswald Chambers writes that repentance “describes that deep and radical change whereby a sinner turns from the idols of self and sin to God, and devotes every movement of the inner and outer man to the captivity of His obedience.”

## V. WHAT ARE THE FRUITS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE?

If genuine repentance has taken place on the inside of man there will be outward signs, or fruits, of this inward work. Although no one can judge the heart of another, there should be external evidence that the heart has been truly changed. John the Baptist did not merely accept the Pharisee’s confession that they desired a baptism unto repentance, he challenged them to also “bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.” Matthew 3:8.

If genuine repentance has taken place, it should be evidenced by the following:

- A. A godly sorrow for sin (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).

- B. A confession of sin and a plea for mercy (1 Jn 1:9; Luke 15:21; 18:13, 14).
- C. A turning from, or forsaking, of sinful ways (Prov 28:13; Acts 19:17-20).
- D. A godly hatred for sin (Ezekiel 36:31-33).
- E. A turning unto the ways of righteousness (1 Thess 1:9; Col 3:1-14).
- F. A restitution for the wrongs done, wherever possible. (Lev 6:1-7, Lk 19:8).

Without these fruits being manifest, there is no genuine Bible repentance.

## VI. WHAT ARE THE RESULTS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE?

- A. There is great joy in Heaven

*"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. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."*

**Luke 15:10**

- B. There is a pardon and remission of sins

*"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."*

**Isaiah 55:7**

- C. There is great refreshing from the Lord

*"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; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."*

**Acts 3:19-21**

- D. There is a clearing of the conscience

*“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.”*

**2 Corinthians 7:10-11**

## **CONCLUSION:**

Repentance is something that is absolutely necessary if we are to be founded on the Rock, Christ Jesus. It begins as a one-time experience when we accept the Lordship of Christ in our life, but it continues to be important in the process of sanctification as the Holy Spirit is faithful to point out many other areas that are in need of change. Every believer needs to be prepared to respond in repentance as often as there is need for it. In this way we will progress daily in our Christian walk toward God's ultimate will for our lives.