

Flint Hills Bible Church
Biblical Soul Care Sunday School
Repentance Part 1

I. Introduction

Repentance is probably in the top ten most used words in Christian churches. But it is at the heart of one of the more dangerous doctrinal errors that professing Christians make. A common statement that religious people in our culture make is that Jesus is their Savior. There is one word that is often missing from their understanding. It is that Jesus must be their Lord.

Many of our neighbors, co-workers, and family members want Jesus to be their Savior, but they lack repentance. What are some possible reasons why people don't repent of their sins?

Consider people who you disciple or counsel. What biblical (or nonbiblical) concepts might they confuse with repentance?

Objectives:

We will consider the definition and components of biblical repentance.

II. The Meaning of Repentance

Definitions:

What is repentance?

“Repentance is a thorough change of man’s heart, upon the subject of sin” - J.C. Ryle

Repentance is an act of acknowledging past wrongdoing, expressing regret or contrition, and committing to right behavior and obedience to God. It is a transformative process that involves turning away from sin or transgression and turning back to God.

Lesley DiFransico, [“Repentance,”](#) in *Lexham Theological Wordbook*

“Repentance is a heartfelt sorrow for sin, a renouncing of it, and a sincere commitment to forsake it and walk in obedience to Christ. (Systematic Theology, Grudem pg 713)

What stands out to you about those definitions?

Hebrew Words in the OT	Greek Words in the NT
<i>nakham</i> : to be sorry; to change one's mind	<i>Metamelomai and metanoia</i> : to change one's mind, often includes sorrow
<i>shub</i> : to turn back, to return	<i>epistrepho</i> : to turn, change direction

“...biblical repentance is not a mere change of thinking, though it does involve an intellectual acknowledgement of sin and a change of attitude toward it. Neither is it merely shame or sorrow for sin, although genuine repentance always involves an element of remorse. True biblical repentance is also a redirection of the human will, a purposeful decision to forsake all unrighteousness and pursue righteousness instead. Thus, genuine repentance involves the mind, the heart, and the will. (*Biblical Doctrine*, Macarthur, Mayhew, pg 593)

What are some differences between the above descriptions and definitions of repentance, and the way that some unbelievers might think of repentance?

III. The Importance of Repentance

Next we will survey a few texts to highlight the foundational nature of repentance.

a. *Repentance in the ministry of Jesus and other key NT figures:*

Mark 1:4–5 (ESV) — **4** John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. **5** And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

Mark 1:14–15 (ESV) — **14** Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

Describe John's call to repentance. What do you notice? How did the people respond?

Compare Jesus' call at the beginning of His ministry? What is similar/different?

What does the emphasis on repentance at the beginning of the New Testament tell us about it?

Acts 2:37–40 (ESV) — **37** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” **38** And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized

every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.” **40** And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, “Save yourselves from this crooked generation.”

In Peter’s first sermon, what is the connection between repentance and salvation?

Hebrews 6:1 (ESV) — 1 Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Summary: We see the testimony of Scripture that repentance has been a crucial part of the gospel message from the beginning of Christ’s ministry and of the ministry of the apostles. It is foundational in the Christian church. If we are to faithfully spread the gospel and make disciples as Jesus commanded, we must continue to keep this doctrine clear and central.

Now we will see how Paul continued to emphasize the need for repentance throughout his ministry and as he saw his death on the horizon:

Acts 20:18–21 (ESV) — 18 And when they came to him, he said to them: “You yourselves know how I lived among you the whole time from the first day that I set foot in Asia, **19** serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials that happened to me through the plots of the Jews; **20** how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you in public and from house to house, **21** testifying both to Jews and to Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

What are the clues in Paul’s testimony of the critical role of repentance in Paul’s teaching?

Paul’s testimony to King Agrippa: **Acts 26:14–20**

What would be the effect of his preaching on the Gentiles in vs 18?

What is the practical fruit of biblical repentance according to Paul in vs 20?

See also Acts 3:19, 17:30,

Deuteronomy 30:1–3 (ESV) — 1 “And when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God

has driven you, **2** and return to the **Lord** your God, you and your children, and obey his voice in all that I command you today, with all your heart and with all your soul, **3** then the **Lord** your God will restore your fortunes and have mercy on you, and he will gather you again from all the peoples where the **Lord** your God has scattered you.

What is God teaching the people about genuine repentance before they go into the promised land?

Isaiah 55:6–7 (ESV) — **6** “Seek the **Lord** while he may be found; call upon him while he is near; **7** let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the **Lord**, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

Jeremiah 18:8–11 (ESV) — **8** and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. **9** And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, **10** and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it. **11** Now, therefore, say to the men of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem: ‘Thus says the **Lord**, Behold, I am shaping disaster against you and devising a plan against you. Return, every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds.’

In these texts, what is God commanding His people to do?

What is God's response to the repentant?

Summary: We can clearly see that repentance is a foundational teaching in the Scriptures. We don't want to get this wrong! Next we will zoom in and see the different pieces of repentance.

IV. The Components of Repentance

After looking at a few passages about repentance, let's zoom in to see how repentance is a whole person response

a. Mind

Job 42:1–3 (ESV) — **1** Then Job answered the **Lord** and said: **2** “I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. **3** ‘Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?’ Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.

Job 42:6 (ESV) — **6** therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”

How does Job describe his thinking about God before and during his repentance?

b. Heart

Psalm 51:12 (ESV) — 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Psalm 51:17 (ESV) — 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

2 Corinthians 7:10 (ESV) — 10 For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

David and Paul testify to emotions that accompany repentance. What are they?

What do the emotions signify? What might the lack of emotion signal in the person?

c. Will

Luke 3:8–14 (ESV) — 8 Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. **9** Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.” **10** And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” **11** And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” **12** Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” **13** And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” **14** Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

*See also Acts 26:20

Genuine repentance always includes a change of the will, demonstrated by behavior change. Why is this important?

Thought questions:

After a brief overview of repentance as a whole-person response to God’s grace, how have you heard or seen people distort this important doctrine?

What are some ways that a counselee may have wrong ideas or misunderstandings about repentance in their walk with the Lord?