

Christian Foundations
Lesson 3

True Repentance

This lesson belongs to: _____

Lesson 3

True Repentance

Key Verse: *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.” Acts 17:30*

Purpose: The purpose of this lesson is to help the disciple understand and experience godly repentance.

1. _____ is one of the foundational principles of the Gospel.
 - Hebrews 6:1-2 *“Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works...”*
 - Matthew 3:1-2 *“In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”*
 - Mark 1:14-15 *“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”*

2. Repentance is a _____ of God’s grace.
 - Acts 5:31 *“Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.”*
 - Acts 11:18 *“When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, ‘Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.’”*
 - Acts 26:18 *“to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me.”*
 - 2 Timothy 2:25 *“in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth.”*

3. Repentance is a _____ of God.
 - Acts 17:30 *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,”⁵⁶*
 - Because repentance made possible by a gift of God’s grace, He has made it a command for all.

4. Repentance is the _____ command of the Gospel.
 - Matthew 4:17 *“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”*
 - Mark 1:14–15 *“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, ¹⁵ and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”*
 - Mark 6:12 *“So they went out and preached that people should repent.”*
 - Acts 2:37–38 (NKJV) *“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ ³⁸ Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”*

5. Repentance is the _____ word in Jesus’ ministry.
 - Luke 11:32 *“The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.”*

6. After His resurrection, Jesus commissioned His disciples to go and _____ repentance and the remission of sins. How were they to do this?

⁵⁶ Sinners may be *ignorant* of their sin before hearing the gospel, but they are not *innocent* of their sin.

Luke 24:46–49 “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses to these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.’”

- In His _____
- To all _____
- Through the power from _____

7. **Repentance is a pre-condition of entering the _____.**

- Matthew 3:1-2 “In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”
- Matthew 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.’”
- Mark 1:14-15 “Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.’”

8. **Without repentance sinners will _____ in their sins.**

- Ezekiel 18:21-23, 27-28 “But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of the transgressions which he committed shall be remembered against him; because of the righteousness which he has done, he shall live...Again, when a wicked man turns away from the wickedness which he committed, and does what is lawful and right, he preserves himself alive, because he considers and turns away from all the transgressions which he committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.”
- Luke 13:1-5 “There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish. Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse sinners than all other men who dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.’”

9. **God has no _____ in the death of the wicked but that he should _____ from his ways and live.**

- Ezekiel 18:23 “Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? says the Lord God, and not that he should turn from his ways and live?”
- Ezekiel 18:32 “For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies, says the Lord God. Therefore turn and live!”
- 2 Peter 3:9 “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

10. **Repentance involves _____ of sin, _____ from sin and _____ what is right.**

- Ezekiel 18:21 “But if a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.”
- Proverbs 28:13 “He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”
- 1 John 1:9 “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

REPENTANCE: A word study

The Greek word for repentance is *metanoeo*. According to [The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words](#), this word means “to perceive afterwards, to change one's mind or purpose; always, in the New Testament, involving a change for the better, an amendment, and always, except in Luke 17:3,4, of repentance from sin.” Repentance means more than to turn from *wrong*. It includes a change of mind that embraces what is

right. The English word for “repentance” comes from two words “re” which means to “return” and “penitence” which means to be “truly sorry for having sinned or done other wrong and willing to atone” (Webster’s New World College Dictionary, Third Edition).

Repentance and Salvation

Repentance is often portrayed as someone wearing sackcloth while sitting in ashes. However, repentance is neither self-affliction nor simple remorse. Repentance is not optional. Repentance is an absolute New Testament requirement for salvation.⁵⁷ Repentance means turning from darkness to the light and from the power of Satan to God.⁵⁸ It means turning from the lie to embrace the truth. It is impossible to embrace both the truth and the lie simultaneously. True repentance means turning from sin, death, darkness, idols, and the lie to righteousness, life, light, God, and His Truth. Repentance is not only essential to the New Birth,⁵⁹ but it is essential to a daily walk with God.⁶⁰ Without repentance, the New Birth and Christian growth is impossible.

Repentance and Faith

The question has been raised whether repentance precedes faith or whether faith precedes repentance. Actually, in the process of salvation faith and repentance cannot be separated. The words *repentance* and *believe* both function as a “synecdoche” (*se-nek-de-ke*) —a figure of speech in which a part is used to refer to the whole (i.e. “wheels” as referring to an automobile). In his book *Redemption—Accomplished and Applied*, John Murray explains it well: “...an unnecessary question and the insistence that one is prior to the other is futile. There is no priority. The faith that is unto salvation is a penitent faith and the repentance that is unto life is a believing repentance...saving faith is permeated with repentance and repentance is permeated with saving faith.”⁶¹ In other words, faith includes repentance and repentance includes faith. The person who truly turns from sin will also believe in Christ and the one who believes in Christ will turn from sin. Repentance and faith are necessary *elements* of the same salvation while sorrow and joy are necessary *expressions* of the same salvation. Repentance and faith simply describe salvation from two different perspectives: *repentance* being the sinner’s perspective toward *sin* and *faith* being the sinner’s perspective toward *Christ*. Nevertheless each individual’s experience in salvation may differ in the level of sorrow and joy depending upon their personality and background.

Repentance: Mistakes and Misrepresentations

- 1) Disregarding the doctrine of repentance because of the charge that “doctrine divides”.
- 2) Neglecting the preaching repentance causing blatant sin to be unaddressed and spread in the church.
- 3) Removing repentance as a pre-condition to salvation leading to false conversions.
- 4) Distorting repentance as being “negative” and detrimental to a sinner’s self-esteem so that they feel good about themselves rather than experience the conviction of the Holy Spirit so that they might be saved.
- 5) Considering repentance to be detrimental to church growth so that “churches” are now filled with unconverted and worldly people.
- 6) Eliminating the necessity of repentance through a distortion of the message of God’s grace. (“Hyper-Grace”) This distortion asserts that sinners need not repent because they are already forgiven for all sins past, present, and future because of what Jesus did on the Cross. Believers need not repent of present sin because they are already the righteousness of God. Rather than repent, all a sinner or sinning believer has to do is to believe and confess that they are already forgiven and made righteous through Christ. In this view repentance is actually an act of unbelief and denial of God’s grace. This distortion of God’s grace is inconsistent with the gospel taught by Jesus and His disciples throughout the New Testament.⁶²

Types of False Repentance

- 1) “Quick Fix”: This type of false repentance seeks to ease the guilt of sin without a true determination to cease from sin.
- 2) “Pity Me”: This type of false repentance seeks pity from others by shifting the blame of sin to the influence and pressure of other people and/or circumstances.

⁵⁷ Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; 6:12; Luke 13:3, 5; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20

⁵⁸ Acts 26:17-18

⁵⁹ Matthew 3:2; 4:17; Mark 1:15; Acts 20:21

⁶⁰ Luke 3:7-14; Acts 26:20

⁶¹ John Murray, *Redemption: Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1955)

⁶² See Luke 24:45-49; Acts 3:19, 37-38; 5:29-32; 8:20-23; 11:17-18; 20:18-21; 26:14-20; Romans 2:3-4; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; 12:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Hebrews 6:1; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 1:8-10; Revelation 2:5, 16, 21, 22; 3:3, 19; 9:20, 21; 16:9, 11

- 3) **"Whoops!":** This type of false repentance comes only as the result of being exposed or "caught" in sin. Although regret may seem genuine at first, the remorse is the result of the consequences of being caught rather than by remorse for the sin itself.
- 4) **"What about?":** This type of false repentance expresses repentance only if everyone else repents also. Instead of dealing with their own sin before God, they feel unfairly singled out.
- 5) **"Let's get on with it!":** This type of false repentance is focused on negotiating the restoration process. They are irritated by the inconveniences that sin has brought into their life.
- 6) **"Who are you to judge?":** This type of false repentance discounts the severity of their own sin by comparing their sin to the sin of others.
- 7) **"Learned lots!":** This type of false repentance glories in testifying of deliverance from past lifestyles of sin. They fail to reflect the shame, hurt, and dishonor that their sin brought upon themselves, others, and God.

11. **Those who repent of their sin will find _____.**
 - Proverbs 28:13 *"He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy."*
12. **Those who repent of their sins will have their sins _____ and experience times of _____ from the Lord.**
 - Acts 3:19 *"Repent therefore and be converted, so that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*
13. **Those who repent of their sin will be granted eternal _____.**
 - Acts 11:18 *"When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'"*
14. **The repentance of one sinner is a source of great _____ in heaven.**
 - Luke 15:7 *"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."*
 - Luke 15:10 *"Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."*
15. **There is a difference between _____ and _____ . Worldly sorrow produces _____ while godly sorrow produces _____ leading to salvation.**
 - 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 *"Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter."*

Godly Sorrow vs. the Sorrow of the World

Paul makes a clear comparison between "worldly sorrow" and "godly sorrow" in 2 Corinthians 7:9-11. A person experiencing worldly sorrow feels bad about being caught in sin because of the consequences incurred. Worldly sorrow does not lead to repentance because it still loves its sin. Once consequences are relieved, worldly sorrow will lift and the person will seek "smarter ways to sin" in the future. Worldly sorrow leads to spiritual death. A person with godly sorrow, on the other hand, feels a deep conviction and remorse for the sin itself. They understand that their sin has offended a holy God to whom they must give account. They also understand how their sin has hurt others in the process. Godly sorrow produces true repentance that leads to salvation. A person with godly sorrow turns away from sin never intending to return again. In this passage, Paul lists seven evidences of godly sorrow that produces repentance:

- 1) Diligence: This refers the earnest determination to get things right.
- 2) Clearing of oneself: This refers to making a verbal declaration of one's intention to change by admitting one's sin, accepting personal responsibility, and making a sincere commitment to change.

- 3) Indignation: This refers to being personally irritated and angry with oneself because of a decision to sin.
- 4) Fear: This refers to a state of severe distress and concern in regard to the impending pain, evil, danger, and accountability resulting from one's sin.
- 5) Vehement Desire: This refers to a heartfelt longing to be reconciled and restored.
- 6) Zeal: This refers to a passionate effort or quest to please God.
- 7) Vindication: This refers to the commitment to make just amends or restitution for wrongs committed.

16. True repentance will be accompanied by _____ worthy of repentance.

- Luke 3:7-14 *"Then he said to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, 'Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones. And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' So the people asked him, saying, 'What shall we do then?' He answered and said to them, 'He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise.' Then the tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Collect no more than what is appointed for you.' Likewise the soldiers asked him, saying, 'And what shall we do?' So he said to them, 'Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages.'"*
- The "fruits worthy of repentance" is equivalent to Hosea 10:12: *"Sow for yourselves righteousness; reap in mercy."* This means to stop sowing the seeds of sin and rebellion that results in a harvest of iniquity and to start sowing seeds of righteousness that results in a harvest of mercy.
- When the German Reformer Martin Luther nailed his 95 Thesis to the church door in Wittenberg Germany in the 16th Century, the first two thesis read as follows: 1) "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' (Matthew 4:17), He desired that the entire life of believers to be one of repentance", and 2) "Repentance does not mean solely an inner spiritual activity. Such inner repentance is worthless unless it produces various outward mortification of the flesh."
- Heartfelt repentance on the inside will be evidenced by the evidence of a changed life. If there is no change on the outside, then it is clear that there has been no repentance on the inside.
- Matthew 7:18–20 (NKJV) *"A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Therefore by their fruits you will know them."*

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

This parable illustrates clearly the nature of repentance as demonstrated in the life of the youngest son and the forgiveness and restoration that the Father gives. This parable speaks of a son who became discontent at home and asked for his portion of the inheritance before its time. The father did so and soon the son left to a distant land. The son squandered his entire inheritance in sinful living. When he had spent all he was forced to take a job feeding pigs—a total humiliation for a Jewish man. He was so hungry that he even desired to eat what was being fed to the pigs, but even this was refused him. In the midst of his mess he became broken. Verses 17-19 says, *"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"* His repentance was evident in the following ways:

- 1) He recognized the error of his way.
- 2) He realized what he had lost.
- 3) He made a freewill choice to return to his father.
- 4) He confessed his sin toward God.
- 5) He confessed his sin against others.
- 6) He came with an attitude of humility rather than pride.
- 7) He came on the basis of mercy rather than rights.
- 8) He submitted to any consequences deemed necessary for reconciliation and restoration.

What was the father's response? Verses 20-24 says, *"But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry."* The father's response to the son's repentance was as follows:

- 1) The father was waiting for the son to return.
- 2) The father had compassion (mercy) for the son.
- 3) The father ran to meet the son and kissed him.
- 4) The father planned a party to celebrate his son's return.
- 5) The father restored the dignity and honor that his son had lost.
 - a) Robe of righteousness
 - b) Ring of authority
 - c) Sandals of ministry

17. God rebukes and chastens those whom He _____ . Therefore believers should be _____ to repent.

- Revelation 3:19 *"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent."*

18. It is the _____ of God that leads us to repentance.

- Romans 2:4 *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?"*

19. People must repent now before _____ and _____ ends.

- Genesis 6:3 *"And the LORD said, 'My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.'"*
- Revelation 2:21 *"And I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent."*
- John 6:44 *"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day."*
- Romans 2:4–5 *"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? ⁵ But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"*
- 2 Corinthians 6:2 *"For He says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*