

Exploring Christianity Study 4

What is repentance?

Introduction

Hopefully through the previous studies God has helped you to appreciate what sin is; and what sin has done in separating men from God and bringing them under His judgement. Most people are on the broad road to destruction. A few people find the road to life. Repentance is necessary for a person to get off the broad road and onto the narrow one. This is why this study is on the subject of repentance. Have you prayed before starting this study?

Section 1 — What does it mean for a person to repent?

1a The Biblical use of the word is illustrated in Matthew 21:28-29

(please turn to this passage in your Bible or New Testament):

v29 *“He answered and said I will not; but afterward he **repented**, and went.”*

What does “repent” mean here?

Repent means to have a _____ of mind. Thus repentance is basically a change of heart, mind, and direction. In this case above (Matthew 21:28-29), it was toward a human command. In the Bible, the word “repentance” usually means a change of attitude toward God.

1b Repentance Illustrated further.

Read the account of the young man in Luke 15:11-24. Notice the steps:

(i) v17 “And he came to _____.” He woke up to his situation.

(ii) v18 “I will arise...and will say unto him, Father I have _____.”

He decided to admit his sinful actions.

(iii) v20 “And he _____ ...” He started to carry out his plan.

Notice that the change of mind resulted in a change of behaviour. Repentance is always a turning from one thing to another thing. Repentance will always result in a change of behaviour. Repentance is not just negative (turning from)—it’s positive as well (turning to). This is shown from the fact that in the Bible, repentance is often mentioned with faith.

For example, repentance and faith are mentioned together in the following verses—

...**repent** ye, and **believe** the gospel (Mark 1:15).

*Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance** toward God, and **faith** toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).*

Section 2 — Repentance is commanded.

2a How many people are commanded to repent? (Acts 17:30b)?

God now commands _____ men in _____ place to repent.

Thus repentance is not an option for you to just take or leave as you feel like it. It is a clear command of God, which of course He intends to be obeyed.

2b How many people does God wish to come to this repentance (2 Peter 3:9)?

God wishes _____ men to come to repentance.

What does God not wish to happen to any person (2 Peter 3:9)?

He does not want them to _____ .

Section 3 — What Should Break the Heart of Sinful Man and Lead Him to Repent?

3a What great characteristic of God should cause people to repent? Read Romans 2:3-4.

The _____ of God leads men to repentance (v4b).

3b What two things are stated in the Bible about the lost person who does not repent of his sinful ways and accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour?

He is _____ already (John 3:18)

He will _____ in his _____ (John 8:24b)

3c Unless people repent, what will happen to them (Luke 13:1-5)?

They will all likewise _____ .

Section 4 — What About Those who Think They are “Good People?” Do They Need to Repent also?

The immoral person, the thief, the murderer etc. will repent by changing his/her mind about his sin, hating it and turning to Christ for cleansing. But the person who is leading an apparently “good life” also needs to repent of their sin because they also come short of God’s standard, and are sinners.

4a God views the righteous (good) deeds of the lost as _____ rags (Isaiah 64:6).

4b How many people are righteous? There is _____ righteous (Romans 3:10).

4c How many people have sinned? _____ have sinned (Romans 3:23).

A genuine repentance will include a rejection of any trust that a person has in his or her own supposed goodness as the basis for acceptance with God.

4d Salvation is **not** of _____ but is a _____ from God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

True repentance means a three part change:

1. **A change of mind** — you review the past and admit that you have come far short of God perfect standards as shown by Jesus Christ. You accept God’s verdict that you are a Hell deserving sinner. You admit that you have depended on your works to get you right with God.
2. **A change of heart** — you see how a holy God hates sin, and yet loves you — a sinner. You are willing to turn to God with all your heart.
3. **A change of direction** — With God’s help, you are willing to put away those things that God shows you to be sinful in your life.

4e What is the result of a soul repenting and being saved (Luke 15:10)?

There is _____ among the angels in Heaven over one sinner that repents.

Conclusion

Repentance is turning from all known sin in your life—including sinful actions & thoughts. Repentance is also turning from any trust in your own supposed goodness for acceptance by God. Repentance requires a forsaking of known sin (of which you are now ashamed and sorry), and a turning toward God whom you have offended. On the other hand, repentance means a positive trust in God, and a willingness to now trust His way of salvation through the cross of Christ. You will learn about this in the next study.

Consider — if to repent means:

- You accept that you are a sinner and deserve God's judgement in Hell.
- You are truly sorry for all of your sins.
- You are willing right now to forsake anything in your life that God shows to be sinful.
- You are willing to no longer depend on your own "supposed" goodness to gain acceptance with God.

Then have you really repented yet (according to the Bible meaning of the word)?

If doing this study by post, please write your name & address here so that the study can be returned to you:

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