

Establishing a Firm Foundation



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Lesson Five:

Repentance From Dead Works

True repentance is an inward decision resulting in a change of mind. The word most commonly translated in the Old Testament “to repent” means literally “to turn,” “to return,” or “to turn back.” The New Testament emphasizes the inward nature of true repentance while the Old Testament emphasizes the outward expression in action.

Repentance is the first step in building a firm foundation. We have no choice or option concerning repentance. *“Therefore having overlooked times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent.”* Acts 17:30

I. FOUNDATIONAL FOR THE CHRISTIAN’S LIFE

A. Defining the Terms

1. Primary Old Testament word: shubh – to turn or to return, applied to turning from sin to God, an 180° turn around.
2. Primary New Testament words: metanoia (noun), metanoeo (verb) – basically a change of mind; often used with epistrepho (verb), which means “turning” as in the Old Testament sense.

B. Primary Scriptures

1. **Hebrews 6:1** – Listed with faith toward God as the foundation.
2. **Mark 1:1-4** – Jesus’ ministry was preceded the message of repentance preached by John the Baptist.
3. **Mark 1:14-15** – Jesus’ ministry of proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom began with a call to repentance.
4. **Luke 24:47** – Jesus’ final instructions to His disciples were to proclaim repentance into forgiveness of sins for all the nations.
5. **Acts 2:38** – Given as the first requirement for those who would be saved.
6. **Acts 17:30** – No exceptions, all people everywhere commanded to repent.

II. TURNING FROM SELF TO GOD

A. Renunciation of Self-Confidence and a turning towards God-Confidence.

1. Our own way leads us astray – **Isaiah 53:6**.
2. We must confess our sin, turn from sin and place our confidence in God – **Judges 10:15-16**.
3. We must repent and turn towards God – **Acts 26:19-20**.
4. We must turn from our idols and serve God – **I Thessalonians 1:8-9**.

B. The Importance of Repentance

1. Essential for salvation – **Mark 1:15**.
2. It is commanded by God – **Acts 17:30**.
3. It is a gift from God – **Acts 11:18, II Timothy 2:25**.
4. It was a reason for Christ's coming – **Luke 5:32**.
5. Necessary to avoid destruction – **Luke 13:3, 5**.
6. Part of the Lord's commission to us – **Luke 24:47**.
7. God desires it for all men – **II Peter 3:9**.

III. DEAD WORKS DEFINED

A. Going Our Own Way

1. Sin is going our own way, doing things by our own strength and initiative – **Isaiah 53:6**
2. Death is always the consequence of sin – **Romans 6:23, 3:23-24**.
3. Even our "righteous acts" are just "filthy rags" before God – **Isaiah 64:6**.

B. Man Made Laws, Works and Beliefs to Achieve Favor

1. One practices dead works in order to gain favor and earn grace in the eyes of God – **Ephesians 2:8-9**.
2. It is not by the works of our own hands that we obtain mercy – **Titus 3:5, II Timothy 1:8-9**.

C. Religious Works Apart from Faith

1. Though the Pharisees were extremely religious, their worship was in vain – **Mark 7:7-9**.
2. They transgressed the commandment within the realm of their traditions – **Matthew 15:1-9**.

D. Not to be Confused with True Works as Fruit of a Disciple

1. The scriptures encourage us to live fruitful lives – **Colossians 1:10**.
2. The works of disciples are inspired by the Holy Spirit rather than the effort of man – **Ephesians 2:10**.
3. Unfruitful branches are cast off while the fruitful branch is pruned so it will bear much fruit – **John 15:1-2**.
4. We demonstrated we have genuine faith by our works (corresponding actions) – **James 2:20-26**.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF REPENTANCE

A. Components of Repentance

1. **Godly Sorrow** – II Corinthians 7:9-10, the godly sorrow of David (Psalm 32:3-5) and Peter (Luke 22:62) brought true repentance, but the worldly sorrow of Esau (Hebrews 12:17) and Judas (Matthew 27:3-5) did not.
2. **Self-Examination** – Lamentations 3:40, Jeremiah 17:9, Psalm 139:23-24.
3. **Confession to God** – Proverbs 28:13, I John 1:9.
4. **Public Confession** – Acts 19:18, James 5:16, Acts 2:38, Romans 10:9-10.
5. **Forsaking of Sin** – II Corinthians 5:15, Acts 19:19, Proverbs 28:13.
6. **Reconciliation** – Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 6:14-15.
7. **Restitution** – Luke 19:8-9, Ezekiel 33:14-15.
8. **Good Works** – Luke 3:7-14, Acts 26:20, Daniel 4:27.

B. Repentance – A Gift from God

In the story of the rich young man (Mark 10:17-31), the disciples realize that the requirements of the Lord to enter His kingdom were so great that they asked, “*Who then can be saved?*” (Mark 10:26). *Jesus answered, “With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.”*

The Holy Spirit moves in our hearts to enable us to respond to the Gospel of the kingdom with total commitment.

1. Acts 5:30-31

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom you had put to death by hanging Him on a cross. He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

2. **Acts 11:18**
When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."
3. **II Timothy 2:26**
...and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.
4. **Titus 2:11-14**
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

Repentance begins with the convicting word of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11). Man cannot repent apart from God's help. Repentance is indeed an amazing gift granted by God Himself!

Reflective Questions

Lesson Five: Repentance From Dead Works

Answers to these questions can be found in the back of the study guide.

Fill in the blank

1. True repentance is an inward _____ resulting in a change of _____.
2. Repentance is a _____ from God.
3. _____ is going our own way, doing things by our own _____ and initiative.

Multiple Choice: Choose the best answer from the list below:

A. faith B. love C. works D. repentance

4. The first step in building a firm foundation is _____.
5. James 2:20-26 says that we demonstrate we have genuine faith by our _____.

True or False

6. Repentance is saying that you're sorry for what you have done. _____
7. Death is always the consequence of sin. _____
8. You cannot repent apart from God's help. _____

Scripture Memorization

9. Write out and memorize Ephesians 2:8-9.

Reflection and Prayer

10. Review the "Characteristics of Repentance" section in this lesson. Write down the components of repentance that describe your experience. Then ask the Holy Spirit to move in your heart to enable you to respond fully to the Gospel of the kingdom.

Answers to the Reflective Questions

Lesson Five

1. decision; mind
2. gift
3. Sin; strength
4. D – repentance
5. C – works
6. False
7. True
8. True