

Road to Emmaus

Biblical Counseling Center

Understanding Repentance Biblically

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What is Biblical Repentance?

Biblical Repentance is both a:

1. Prerequisite – essential to new life or salvation
2. Process – essential throughout the Christian life.

O.T. - Biblical repentance is a turning from sin and a turning to God

N.T. – Repentance is a changing of our mind, or a term we use is a change of heart. A change in our thinking, our will and desires.

Sin is rebellion against God, repentance brings us back into agreement with God.

Repentance is necessary for salvation- requires:

A. Understanding correctly (intellect):

1. **Who God is** – holy, perfect, majestic (Isa. 6:1-4); his character defines sin (Ps. 51:4, 1 John 3:4) – His law reflects His character, lived out by creatures made in His image.

We were created to _____ God.

Deuteronomy 5:7-10

1. "You shall have no other gods before me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Idolatry – What is an idol?

An idol is anything or anyone that captures our hearts, minds, and affections more than God

Brad Bigney says this:

Idolatry is a big deal because it infiltrates and takes over the heart, the nerve center, determining the way we sin, when we sin and with whom we sin.

2. **Who are we** – sinners in His sight, deserving of death and wrath (hell) (Isa. 6:5, Romans 3:23, 6:23, John 3:36b)

Sin/Rebellion is what Brad Bigney talks about in his book and series

Gospel Treason – Brad Bigney

Instead of surrendering to God and His truths we create our own God's to worship. In the Bible this is called IDOLATRY.

Idolatry is perhaps the Bible's most pervasive theme we must repent of.

Jeremiah 2:

¹¹ Has a nation ever changed its gods?

(Yet they are not gods at all.)

But **my people have exchanged** their glorious God
for **worthless idols.**

¹² Be appalled at this, you heavens,
and shudder with great horror,"

declares the LORD.

¹³ "My people have committed two sins:

They have forsaken me,

the spring of living water,

and have dug their own cisterns,

broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

3. God's provision of forgiveness through Christ's death which paid the penalty for sin and propitiates His Wrath (John 3:36, 1 Jn. 2:2, 4:10) to all who call on Him in repentance and faith. (Isa. 55:6-7, Acts 20:21, Heb 6:1) True repentance leads to salvation (2 Co. 7:10)

B. Agreement with God's assessment including the response of godly sorrow (will & emotion)

1. Agreement – (2 Co. 7:9-10, 1 Jn. 1:8, Job 42:5)
2. Response – a broken heart/spirit (Ps. 51:17, Isa. 57:15)

C. Decision to act: personally, renounce sin, confess it to God, avoid it (put-off) & replace it (put-on) with obedience (actions), and trust in Christ's complete sacrifice for acceptance with God (justification) (1 Jn. 1:9, Ro. 3:24, Acts 2:37)

Repentance and faith are different aspects of the one act of coming to Christ for salvation, turning away from sin to Christ by faith.

Notes:

Repentance is a life-long daily process

- Both faith and repentance are heart attitudes that continue throughout life. (Rev. 3:19, 2 Co. 7:10)
- Both continue to require the understanding, agreement and decision described above.
- The process of genuine repentance involves the following steps or components – “7 R's” the comprise a lifestyle, (Luke 15:11-21, Luke 22:60-62, Psalm 73, 2 Co. 7:7-11)

R 1 – Recognition of truth about the nature of our sin against God (Ps. 51:4).

Here is a test to see if a desire you have has become an idol?

1. Am I willing to sin to get it, whatever it is?
2. Am I willing to sin to keep it?
3. Do I turn to this thing as a refuge and comfort instead of going to God?

G.K. Chesterton quote:

When we cease to worship God, it is not that we instead worship nothing, we will worship anything.

Colossians 3:⁵ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.

We agree and want our counselees to agree with God and repent of all sin against Him. Once we identify sin, we...

1. Confess sin and ask God for help
2. Pursuing Godly sorrow
3. Ask God to forgive me
4. Purposefully ask God to change my thinking

Notes:

Richard Keyes writes:

“The natural human response to the true God after the Fall is rebellion and avoidance. Sin predisposes us to want to be independent of God, to be laws unto ourselves, to be autonomous, so that we can do what we want without bowing to His authority.”

Help your counselee’s see the way they are building idols, drifting away from God.

Have them answer this question:

- *Has something or someone besides Jesus Christ taken the title deed to your heart?*
- *Does something of someone else hold your heart’s trust, loyalty, and desire?*
- *Why do I do what I do? Why do I want what I want?*

The sin underneath my sin

- *For homework - Ask them to list the areas in their life right now that seems to have the most chaos (worry, confusion, strife, drama, etc.) surrounding them.*
- *List the areas in your life right now where you find yourself doing the most complaining.*
- *What makes you angry? Why?*

Notes:

R 2 – Remorse – over sin in relation to God and others – feel Godly sorrow for our sin and desire to make things right with God and others (2 Co. 7:7-11, James 5:16).

2 Corinthians 7: ⁶ But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, ⁷ and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever. ⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, **but because your sorrow led you to repentance.** For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us.

¹⁰ **Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**

Here Paul is telling us there are two types of sorrow, one that leads to death and one that leads to life.

W_____ sorrow – is sorry for being caught and losing things of this world eventually leading to death.

G_____ sorrow- brings repentance leading to salvation and eternal life.

1. **Godly** sorrow - (lit. “sorrow according to God” =the response He wants); “broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God” (Ps. 51:17).
 - A. Sorrow that God approves & requires.
 - B. Arises appropriately from viewing sin as He does; grief over offending Him, **learning to HATE our sin.** (Ps. 32:4, Ps. 38 – unresolved guilt); not primarily others but extends to others. Note: - God’s hand is in (assigns, causes) his suffering.
 - C. Leads toward God for forgiveness, consolation, and change (Ps.51:7-12) not toward other sources (Ps. 32:5-7). It is “repentance toward God and faith...” (Acts 20:21) that are required for salvation.
 - D. Leads to repentance, not just regret, pain, shame, loss etc.; to permanent, not temporary change (2 Co. 7:8); sorrow is not repentance in itself, but leads to real change (“fruits,” 7:11); extreme sorrow without change is not adequate; **must hate the sin,** not just the consequences; produces zeal for obedience out of love (Ps. 32:10-11).

2. **Worldly** sorrow – (Ps 32:10a)

- A. Arises from losses of friends, property, etc. and from disappointment – loss of what I wanted; "i.e. the other side of idolatry which is" willingness to sin to get what I want, or sin because I don't get what I want."
- B. Sorrow from personal guilt feelings, disagree on self or others; can be regret, remorse, etc. but from selfish reasons and does not lead to God.
- C. Considers earthly consequences only; loss of only what we valued in this world; it is all we had; begins and ends with this world; fear of consequences.
- D. Leads to death, not life; distress without consolation; destroyed peace, broken spirit and heart pining away without happiness, depression; leads to death, can even lead to suicide, and also eternal death.
- E. Examples: Judas, Cain, Esau (Heb. 12:11-13, 17)

"It is important to realize that mere sorrow for one's actions, or even deep remorse over one's actions, does not constitute genuine repentance unless it is accompanied by a sincere decision to forsake sin is being committed against God." Systematic Theology, Wayne Gruden, p.713

Note: Continuing below constitutes the necessary **fruit** of repentance (Acts 26:20)

Notes:

R 3 - Renunciation of the sin, mentally and verbally by confession to God, and to others when appropriate (Luke 15:18-21, 1 Jn. 1:9).

The Prodigal's Progress Luke 15:11-21 - The Parable of the Lost Son

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So, he divided his property between them. **(a desire, give me my share)**

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. **(sin, self-indulgence)** ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. **(discipline/suffering)** ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

(Making Life work – without repentance...yet)

¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. **(worldly sorrow? – not sure yet).**

¹⁷ “When he **came to his senses**, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

(thinking...leading toward... understanding? ...Agreement?, we want our counselees to come to their senses about their sin.)

¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **(decision ...to act)**

¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

(Ready to Repent- but no action yet)

²⁰ So he got up and went **(first step of action)** to his father. **(humility)**

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. **(Ready to forgive)**

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ **(Repentance)**

²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. **(Restoration)**

Notes:

R 4 – Rejection (in action) of the sin towards God and towards others – **put-off** or turn away from the sin turning towards, God and towards others (see R 7 below)

We want to help our counselees to cultivate a real relationship with Christ. **A deep love so that the things of this world are seen for what they really are, trinkets, reprints, not authentic, counterfeits.**

R 5 – Renewing of the mind in the truth – meditate on the truth so as to learn the new direction by which we are to lovingly obey God and love others (Ps. 73, Ro. 12:2, Heb. 5:13-14).

Help your counselee answer these questions:

- Lord, why do I do what I do?
- Why do I want what I want?
- Why do I fear what I fear?
- Love what I Love?

1. Do these things please you Lord or just me?

2. Does your counselee love Christ first, desire Him first?

3. Do they love Jesus more today than yesterday?

Notes:

Jeremiah 17:9 ponders: “The heart is deceitful...and desperately wicked; who can know it?”
God know it,

Ask your counselee...

- *How much do feelings influence your decision making? Is that good or bad, and why?*
- *How seriously do you take God’s commands to guard your heart?*
- *Do you blindly trust your own heart?*
- *How important is it that you question yourself and your motives before God in prayer?*
- *Have you ever used the statement “That’s just who I am”? As a Christian, should we ever use that statement? Why or why not?*
- *Is there anything in your life that you think God is denying or blocking you from having?*
- *Why do you think that might be the case?*

R 6 – Replacement of the sin with obedient living – **put-on** the replacement action – obey God and love others in the area where we have disobeyed God and been unloving towards others (Luke 19:1-10, Eph. 4:23-24ff, Col. 3;10,12-14ff)

How can we help our counselee’s start to deal with Idolatry in their life? (Brad Bigney - Gospel Treason)

Psalms 139:²³ Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my **anxious** thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

Romans 1:²¹ For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools ²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Notes:

Homework have your counselee – Journal the trail of their time, money, and affections

Matthew 6:²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Whenever something in our lives makes that idolatrous leap, it often shows up in one more of the following ways:

- You’ll sacrifice for it.
- You’ll spend time on it.
- You’ll spend money on it.
- You’ll talk about it (“Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks” Luke 6:45).
- You’ll protect it/defend it.
- You’ll serve it.
- You’ll perfect it.
- You’ll think about it.
- You’ll worry about it.
- You’ll get angry when someone blocks you from it or messes with it.
- You’ll build your schedule around it.

Look for Chaos

James 3:¹⁶ For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

Notes:

R 7 Restoration or repair of relationships – Sin ruins relationships - **First with God then with others.** Repentance restores our relationships with God then with others.

1. Confess sin to God then to the offended person (James 5:16); include nothing about the faults of others or reasons for sin, i.e. justifying it (Luke 15:18-21).
2. Invite accountability – “the wounds of a friend” (Proverbs 27:5,6)
3. Ask others for prayer, healing in community. (James 5:16)
4. Be ready & willing to forgive the offenses of others against us (Mt. 6:12,14,15);
 - a. Cover sin (forgive inside) even if not asked (1 Pet. 4:8, Lk. 23:34, Acts 7:60).
 - b. Forgive if asked (Mt. 18:21-22)
5. What are some ways we can help our brothers and sisters learn the process of repentance? (2 Co. 7)
 - Biblical motivations – Godly sorrow produces repentance. Sorrow that we have sinned against God, pursues God’s truth about our sin.
 - The offer of mercy is a gift from God meant to lead you to repentance and restoration.
6. Help them realize the wrong ways to repent.
 - i. a type of penance self-punishment or good works to weigh out our sin.
 - ii. Pray for stronger try harder our will power to resist sin.

The gospel is turning to Christ realizing what Christ’s has done, they by faith repenting and replacing sinful behaviors with Biblical truth and actions

How do we help someone stuck in a sin?

- Help them see the truth, do they hate their sin or are they trying to manage it?
- Are they sorry they got caught or sorry for grieving God?
- Are they pushing God away and creating a plan to flee the sinful behavior?
- **Radical Amputation** – Doing whatever it takes to remove the avenue to sin.
Learning to hate the sin and replace the patterns and avenues that feed the sinful behavior, doing whatever it takes.

“There is no true faith without true repentance”

“Jesus cannot be your Savior unless He is also your Lord.” (Mt. 11:28-29, Isa. 55:6-7, Acts 20:21, Heb. 6:1)