

Repentance Required

Why do we need to repent?

Aside from the fact that we are taught and commanded to repent, the following statements identify other benefits which result from the act of repentance.

1. **Sin “opens” holes in our hedge, or armor, repentance “closes” them.** When we sin, or someone sins against us, a door in our spiritual hedge is opened (Job 1:10) and a spirit of darkness is able to enter our spirit allowing bondage to take root. The only way we can close this open spiritual door and regain the “ground” we have inadvertently given to Satan is to repent and to ask God to close and heal this open door. It is impossible to close these doors and receive complete healing of spirit or emotions or healing from darkness without the act of repentance.
2. **God thinks repentance is very important.** Whatever else you may believe... believe that repentance is not an option. The word repent (or repentance) is used 69 times in the Bible. God must have thought we needed to be reminded often of this principle. Be ever-mindful as well that God desires “*truth in the inward parts*” (Ps. 51:7). Eight times (and two of those times spoken directly by Jesus) the scriptures enjoin us to, “*Take heed [meaning, “to pay close attention to] “to yourselves”*” (Ex. 19:12, Deut. 4:23 and 11:16, Jer. 17:21, Luke 17:3 and 21:34, Acts 3:19, Acts 5:35 and 20:28). The act of repentance is something we must do for ourselves.
3. **Our whole relationship with God depends upon our state of repentance.** Where there is no sin, there is no need for repentance. However, scripture infers that God does not hear our prayers if we don’t repent (Ps. 66:18, 1 Pet. 3:12). Likewise, John the Baptist preached “*the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*” (Mark 1:4; see also Luke 24:45-47). God’s plan for our reconciliation with Him begins with the act of repentance for “*the remission of sins.*”
4. **God commands us to be cleansed and sanctified to come into his presence.** The processes of cleansing and of sanctification are based upon repentance; many references speak about our need for cleansing (Ps 32:5, 38:18, 41:4, 51:1-3, 66:18, and 139:23-24, Mat. 23:26, 2 Cor. 7:1, Jas. 4:8, 1 John 1:9, Lev. 11:44).
5. **Renewal and revival begin with repentance.** A study of major religious revivals show that they always began with repentance.
6. **Our emotional and physical health depends upon repentance.** “*Confess your faults one to another... that ye may be healed*” (Jas. 5:16). It is likely that our bodies may not be healed without confession and repentance.
7. **Partaking of Communion “unworthily” can cause serious problems.** With regard to being repentant before taking Communion, 1 Corinthians 11:25-30 admonishes us: “*... But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*” Examining ourselves and repenting of our sinfulness (in preparation for partaking of Communion) is a life-long endeavor.

Steps in Repentance

If repentance is so important, how then do we go about it? There are six steps involved in the process of repentance.

1. **Conviction:** Conviction refers to being convicted or knowing in your heart that something is wrong. Providing conviction is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit. A majority of this booklet has been prepared to assist you in identifying the areas of your lives that need repentance. (Read the following scriptures for instances of conviction: (Ps. 51:3, John 8:9, John 16:8, Acts 2:37 and 5:38, 2 Cor. 7:9-10).

2. **Confession—to God and to your brethren:** I believe there is no repentance without confession. If you disagree, read the following scriptures. (Lev 5:5, Lev 5:26-40, Num 5:6-7, Neh 9:1-3, Ps 32:5, Prov 28:13, Mark 1:4, James 5:16, I John 1:9, Acts 19:18)

Most Christians believe their sins are forgiven because Jesus died on the cross for them. This may not necessarily be so. Just as salvation is conditioned upon confessing with our mouth the Lord Jesus and believing in our heart that God raised Him from the dead (Rom 10:9) repentance and forgiveness requires confession. God requires confession from us in order for us to receive forgiveness of our sins. If you did not confess your sins at baptism or later, you may not have received the forgiveness that Jesus provided on the cross. Most people are willing to confess their sins to God but many are reluctant to confess them to their brethren. James 5:16 advises, “*Confess your faults one to another... that ye may be healed.*” Unfortunately, if you are unwilling to allow your sins to be brought into the “light,” the opened doors may not be able to be closed. I believe the blood does not cover what we leave hidden in darkness and refuse to uncover. 1 John 1:7 says “*But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, . . . and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*” Two verses later (1 John 1:9) the bible says “*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* It does not say we are forgiven for unconfessed sins. Satan works in the dark. He hates the light. Of course, wisdom also needs to be used; we should not get carried away and stand in the pulpit glorifying Satan by testifying of all the bad things we’ve done, yet we do need to be willing to honestly confess that part of our testimony if God asks us to do so. (This may be for the benefit of one or more persons God has chosen to hear it). Confess to your pastor, bishop, or church leader. Some believe that “confessing” to God is all that is needed. God knows our sins already why do we need to confess them only to him. It is confessing them to others that brings them into the light, and qualifies us to have them forgiven. In this process, we are heeding the many scriptures that require us to cleanse our heart and hands: (Psalms 32:5, 38:18, 41:4, 51:1-3, 51:7-10, 66:18, 139:23-24, James 4:8, 2 Cor 7:1)

3. **Repentance:** Tell God out loud that you are sorry for your sin(s). God knows you are sorry because he knows your heart, but the reason you are to speak these confessions “out loud” is because Satan needs to hear them. He doesn’t know your heart

and can't read your mind. Sometimes you must be precise in telling the Lord you are sorry for specific sins from particular times and places. At other times you can group similar sins together and tell the Lord you are sorry for all the times you have, for example, lied (refer to Ps. 38:18, 2 Cor. 7:9).

4. **Renunciation:** In cases of serious sin, such as with the occult Satan worship, or witchcraft you will need to take the additional step of renouncing the sin, telling Satan that you take back the spiritual permission (or ground) given to him (Is. 55:7).
5. **Redirection:** Repentance means more than turning away from sin. "Metamora" means a change of mind, to see things differently, a paradigm shift, to stop wrongdoing and choose to be obedient to God's righteousness and will. If you tell God you are sorry (repent) but continue in the same behavior, the door will remain open and you cannot receive healing. True repentance requires a 180 degree change in attitude and behavior (see Luke 15:11-24, John 4:7-29 and 8:11).
6. **Restitution:** You may need to **make restitution if the Lord tells you to do so**. Follow God's leading (Lev. 6:5, Luke 19:8—Zacchaeus' example of restoring fourfold; 2 Cor. 7:9-10).

The Process of Repentance

Repentance is a process that demands continual attention. Other sections in this study will help you identify sins in your life and open doors in your spiritual hedge that may need to be closed and healed. Address only those areas where you may have need.

The first step of repentance is to become convicted of wrongdoing, to identify that which needs repentance. Therefore, make a list of those sins that God brings to your attention as you review the other sections and as you make use of the sample checklists. Once you have identified the things God wants released and healed, pray the prayer for confession of sin, which follows. Since we "all sin and fall short of the glory of God" (Rom 3:23), we will need to repeat this process from time to time. The author did this first many years ago. Since then, he has repeated the process a number of times. It is interesting that the sins listed in previous efforts didn't appear on subsequent lists. Apparently the Lord doesn't want us to see all our "stuff" at once, else we would perhaps give up. Repentance is a continual process.

On the other hand, too much introspection is detrimental as well. We can depend upon the Holy Spirit to convict us of sin. Then we need to deal with it immediately.

Prayer for Confession of Sin

For each sin or group of sins identified, pray something along the lines of the following:

Lord God, I confess and acknowledge _____ as a sin in my life. I am sorry for my sin and I repent of it. I renounce _____ and take back the spiritual ground I gave to Satan when I sinned, and I give it to you Heavenly Father. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

Afterward, find a trustworthy friend or a pastor and share your list for the purpose of confession. You need not go into specific details but you do need to confess these sins. Ask your friend or pastor to pray for you, that the Lord might forgive and heal you of all your sins; pray that your spiritual gates in each of these areas may be healed and closed. And give the praise to Jesus.