

Understanding Repentance



I was only twelve years old when I trusted Christ as my personal Saviour. The next morning, I sat at the dining room table and wrote the following poem.

I was sitting there relaxed listening
to the preacher.
But my heart began to pound when
I heard the preacher say,
“Unless you’re born again you will
never get to Heaven,
Why don’t you come and be
born again today?”

My heart was getting heavy, and the
Devil said, “STAY HERE!”
But I heard the Lord whisper
softly in my ear,
“Don’t let the Devil keep you,
come on and take your stand,
I’ll guide you through your troubles,
I’ll always hold your hand.”

I began to think back
at all the sin I’d done.
My heart was loaded with them,
and I could no longer run,
So I took the Lord’s advice and
I stood up on my feet.
And back from the Lord
I would never, ever retreat.

I remember wrestling with God through all the verses of the invitational hymn. I was not about to walk that long aisle, because all of my school friends were watching. When the hymn was finally over, and I hoped the pressure to respond to the invitation would cease, the preacher said, “...*someone still hasn’t come,*

we will sing one more verse.” It was as if he had said, “*we are going to sing one more verse because a boy named Bob is sitting way back there at the back, and he needs to be saved.*” I remember thinking that the God who created the universe was talking to me, yet I was worried about what my school friends were going to think. How stupid is that? My brother whispered to me, “...*do you want to go?*”



That was all I needed. I said “Yes!” On that Friday evening, October 7, 1955, at about 8:30 PM, I walked that long aisle and received Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour.

The crusade reports stated that during the meetings, “*More than 7,000 men and women left their seats to stand for Christ.*” Only God knows how many of those “...*7,000 men and women*” were sincere; however, both God and I know that at least one twelve year old boy was.

I knew absolutely nothing about the Bible. I knew nothing about the subject of repentance, or our so-called easy-believism or Lordship salvation.

What I did know was that I needed to make a very serious decision.

I do not remember the preacher's text or anything he said in his message; however, I remember that, when the choir started singing "*Just As I Am*," and the invitation was given to receive Jesus Christ as my Saviour, God was dealing with me.

After I wrote my poem the Christian lady who was responsible for getting us to the meeting came by our home to visit. I showed her the poem and explained that I didn't know what to entitle it. She said, "*Why, that's conviction!*" Conviction, huh? I had never heard that word before. I asked her how to spell it, and wrote it at the top of the page.

I went to my dad later that morning and told him that I was a Christian now, I had quit smoking cigarettes and I wanted a Bible. He was stunned! Not because he found out that I had been smoking, but because I had said that I was a Christian.

On Monday morning, before going to school, I threw away the cigarettes I had hidden in the handlebars of my bike, put a New Testament in my shirt pocket, and headed back to face my school chums who had watched me go forward in the meeting on Friday night. One of my friends tauntingly shouted, so everyone could hear, "*...why do you have that Testament in your pocket?*" I shouted back, loud enough for everyone to hear, "*To testify!*"

It happened to be the day when school pictures were being taken. The teacher said I should take the Bible out of my pocket as it was pulling my shirt down and it would not look good in the picture. I said thank you, but the Bible stays.



The Easy-believism, And, The Lordship Salvation Issue.

The most important thing that is left out of the argument about easy-believism, or Lordship salvation, is the word **conviction**.

Was Jesus the Lord of my life following my salvation? Absolutely! Was He the Lord of my life five minutes before I was saved? **No, He was not!** Nobody said anything to me about Him needing to be Lord of my life.

Was it easy to get saved? The answer to that question is both yes and no. It is a matter of what the meaning of the word easy is. If easy means uncomplicated, then the answer is yes. All I had to do at that point was to believe. Was it easy to stand up in front of all of my school friends and trust Christ as my Saviour? No, it was the most difficult thing I had ever done in my life to that point.

I knew nothing about the subject of repentance; however, I definitely repented that evening. In this article we will look at the *who, what, when, where, and why* of repentance.

Here Is What Took Place In My Life When I Got Saved.

The Ministry of The Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 1:26 we read, "*And God said, Let us (The Trinity) make man in our image, after our likeness.*" When God made us in His image, He made us a three-part being. We have a body, a soul and a spirit.

We read in First Thessalonians 5:23 - "*I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Our spirit is what God communicates with. **On October 7, 1955, at about 8:30 PM, the**

Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin. God did not communicate with my mind or my emotions. The Bible says, *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit...”* (Romans 8:16).

At that point I needed to make a decision. Although, I knew nothing about the terminology of conviction or repentance, I repented of my sin. The only reason I did that was because the Holy Spirit had awakened me to my need of a Saviour and had convicted me of my sin. I made a conscious decision to repent. **Repentance is simply a positive response to Holy Spirit conviction.**

The Bible Is Plain Concerning God’s Warning Against Those Who Reject The Holy Spirit.

Romans 2:4 - *“...despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”*

The Bible Is Plain Concerning Our Responsibility As Christians.

Second Timothy 2:25 - *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”*

The Bible Is Plain Concerning The Seriousness of Rejecting God’s Gift of Repentance.

Hebrews 12:17 - *“For ye know how that afterward, when he (Esau) would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.”*

The Bible Is Plain Concerning Who Needs To Repent.

Acts 2:38 - *“Repent, and be baptized every one of you...”*

Acts 17:30 - *“God...commandeth all men every where to repent.”*

Acts 2:38 - *“But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.”*

The Bible Is Plain Concerning What Repentance Is.

Second Timothy 2:25 - *“...if God peradventure will give them (“all men” v.24) repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”* Repentance is simply a positive response to Holy Spirit conviction.

The Bible Is Plain Concerning When Men Need To Repent.

John 16:13 - *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth...”* We are commanded to repent when the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin.

The Bible Is Plain Concerning Where People Need To Repent.

Acts 17:30 - *“God...commandeth all men every where to repent.”*

The Bible Is Plain Concerning Why We Need To Repent.

- **Philippians 2:11** - *“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*
- **First Corinthians 10:31** - *“...whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”*

The reason we need to repent is because we have sinned against God. The person who presents Christ to lost people as an escape plan from Hell is promoting a perverted Gospel. Getting saved is not all about *us* - it is all about *God* being glorified.

Mark 1:15 - *“...repent ye, and believe the gospel.”*

Why Does The Book of John Not Mention Repentance?



Why Is Nothing Said About Repentance In John?

One argument used against repentance concerning the subject of salvation, is the fact that the word *repent* does not occur in the Book of John. The argument is, if repentance is crucial to the gospel message, should we not suppose John would have included a call to repent? They suggest that repentance is not necessary for salvation because the word *believe* occurs forty-six times in John, and the word *repent* is not found one time.

Why Is There Nothing About Faith In John?

Ephesians 2:8 says we are, *“...saved through faith.”* The fact that John did not mention faith does not mean we do not need *faith* to be saved, and the fact that John did not use the word *repent* does not mean we do not need to repent in order to be saved. Jesus said, *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* (Luke 13:3)

It is an interesting fact that the word *believe* is in the Book of John forty-six times and the word *repent* occurs forty-six times in the Word of God.

The Inspired Word of God.

Second Timothy 3:16 tells us that, *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God...”* Therefore, we must accept that God, in His wisdom, chose to leave the word *repent*, and the word *believe*, out of the Book of John. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that He wanted us to understand the simplicity of believing in Christ when convicted of our sin.

“Written, That Ye Might Believe.”
John 20:31 says, *“But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”*

“They Believe Not.”

- **John 3:12** - *“...ye believe not.”*
- **John 5:38** - *“...him ye believe not.”*
- **John 5:47** - *“...believed not.”*
- **John 6:36** - *“...and believe not.”*
- **John 6:64** - *“...you that believe not.”*
- **John 6:64** - *“...believed not.”*
- **John 8:24** - *“...ye believe not.”*
- **John 10:26** - *“...ye believe not.”*
- **John 10:38** - *“...ye believe not me.”*
- **John 12:47** - *“...and believe not.”*
- **John 16:9** - *“...they believe not.”*

If we are going to believe Christ, we must believe Him when He said...

- **Matthew 4:17** - *“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*
- **Mark 1:15** - *“...repent ye, and believe the gospel.”*
- **Luke 13:3** - *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*
- **Luke 13:5** - *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*

If we are going to believe Christ, we must believe Him when He said there can be no forgiveness without repentance.

- **Luke 17:3** - *“Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and **if he repent**, forgive him.”*

- **Luke 17:4** - *“And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, **saying, I repent**; thou shalt forgive him.”*

John Taught About Holy Spirit Conviction.

- **John 16:8** - *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin...”*
- **John 16:9** - *“Of sin, because they believe not on me...”*
- **John 16:13** - *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth.”*

There can be no salvation unless we are first convicted of our sin. Jesus said, *“No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him...”* (John 6:44) Christ also said, *“But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:”* (John 15:26) Christ also said, *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin...because ye believe not on me.”* (John 16:8,9)

The only purpose for the Holy Spirit to reprove or convict us, is that we would repent and believe. Jesus said, *“...the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”* (Mark 1:15)

Job Repented

When God gave us an example concerning the need of repentance, He used Job. God said, *“...there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil.”* (Job 2:3) However, when Job saw himself as God saw him he said, *“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.”* (Job 42:6)

You would think David would have been a better example of someone who needed to repent. He was guilty of adultery and

murder. Noah got drunk. Peter cursed and denied the Lord. Abraham lied. Paul killed Christians before he was saved, and all the disciples forsook Christ; however, God used Job as an example so that it would not be a surprise to us that, *“God...commandeth all men every where to repent.”* (Acts 17:30)

Repentance In The Old Testament God Repented.

The first reference in the Bible concerning someone repenting refers to God repenting. In Genesis 6:7 we read, *“And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it **repenteth** me that I have made them.”* There are over thirty references in the Bible concerning God repenting.

Israel Was Commanded To Repent.

In Ezekiel 14:6, we read Ezekiel was commanded to tell the nation of Israel, *“Thus saith the Lord GOD; **Repent**, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.”* In at least seven other places we read of God referring to Israel repenting.

Repentance In The New Testament.

A Man Named Simon.

Acts 8:13-21 - *“Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip...”*

In verses 18-22 we read, *“When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, Saying, Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.”*

*Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. **Repent** therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.” **The purpose of repentance is to be forgiven.***

The Carnal Corinthians.

Second Corinthians 12:21 - *“I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not **repented** of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.”* In First Corinthians chapter seven, Paul made five references to repenting.

The Pastor At Ephesus.

Revelation 2:1-5 - *“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write...Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou **repent**.”*

The Pastor At Pergamos.

Revelation 2:12-16 - *“And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write...I have a few things against thee...Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly...”*

The Pastor At Sardis.

Revelation 3:1-3 - *“And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write...Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent.”*

Unsaved People.

Luke 13:1 tells us that Christ was focusing on some “Galileans” when He said, *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* In verse 5 we read He repeated the warning saying, *“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”*

Paul Repented.

Second Corinthians 7:8 - *“For though I made you sorry with a letter...I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.”*

The Corinthians Repented.

In Second Corinthians chapter seven Paul said, *“Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”* (Verses 9,10)

What Is Repentance?

Obviously, the subject of repentance must be looked at within the context in which it appears. God repenting and Christians repenting is far different than people repenting to be saved.

Repentance - A Gift From God For His People - Israel.

Concerning Israel, we read in Acts 5:31, *“Him (Christ) hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince (Someone in line for the throne) and a Saviour, for to **give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.**”* Notice, repentance precedes forgiveness of sins

Repentance - A Gift From God For The Gentiles.

Acts 11:17,18 - *“Forasmuch then as God gave them the like **gift** as he did unto us...”* (Israel) *Then hath God also to the Gentiles **granted*** (Translated “give” 365 times) *repentance unto life.”*

Repentance - A Gift For All Men.

Second Timothy 2:25 - *“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them (“all men”verse24) repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.”*

Repentance is simply a positive response to Holy Spirit conviction.

