

# Gospel Truth

Biblical Instruction and Encouragement for the Mission Field Worldwide.

## THY SOUL SHALL BE REQUIRED

*Illustration drawn from Luke 12:16-21*

A man, rich and prosperous in the things of this world, contemplated the future. His farmland had produced another bountiful return, and he had an abundance of goods. As he considered his wealth, he made plans to tear down his barns and build bigger barns to hold his possessions. "I have worked hard, and it is time to enjoy my wealth. I have enough money to last for many years. I will retire and relax—eating, drinking, and having fun." Thus, this rich man thought as he planned for tomorrow.

As he mused over his successes and future goals, the God of Heaven, creator of the universe, spoke to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?"

This man, with all his temporal blessings and great plans for the future, died that night. His wealth and prestige did nothing for him as he stood at the brink of eternity unprepared to stand before the judgment seat of God. Tomorrow never came, for in death he began a never-ending journey of darkness and despair.

God called the man a fool because he had made plans for the things of this life but had neglected to prepare his soul for eternity. What message might this man bring to us today from beyond the grave?

"Do not forget God. Eternity is real. When you die, it is not the end, it is just the beginning." Heaven, a place of wonderful peace and joy, awaits the righteous; and Hell, a place of misery and torment, awaits the sinner. Of what value are the things of this world which are so fleeting, when eternity looms at our doorstep? Death is no respecter of persons. All people, whether young, old, rich, poor, educated, uneducated, famous or unknown, will die and meet God. The things this world places value on will make no difference in the life to come. The only thing that will matter is whether you have turned away from your sin, accepted Jesus Christ as your savior, and are daily living for Him.

People are spending so much time and energy in pursuit of riches, prestige, education, and the pleasures of the flesh. Decisions are being made for the "here and now" without regard for the condition of the eternal soul. God has been forgotten by society, and people are living for the moment.

My friend, eternity is ahead of you—a never-ending experience where time is no longer counted, for there is no end. Are you ready to face God who will judge you for how you have lived your life? Neither your background, socio-economic status, church affiliation, nor religious beliefs will deliver you from the power of eternal darkness. You must accept Jesus Christ and live every day in holiness before God.

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**"The things that this world places value on will make no difference in the life to come."**

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# WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES ABOUT...

## Word of God

2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matt. 24:35

## Relationship of Love

Matt. 22:37-40; John 14:21-23; 1 John 4:7-11

## Repentance

Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 7:10

## New Birth

John 3:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 6:1-4;  
Eph. 2:1, 5-6

## Freedom From Sin

1 John 5:18; Matt. 1:21; John 8:11

## Infilling of the Holy Spirit

Acts 19:2; Acts 15:8-9; Acts 1:8

## Holiness

Luke 1:73-75; Heb. 12:14; 1 Peter 1:15-16;  
Titus 2:11-12; Rom. 6:22

## Kingdom of God

Luke 17:20-21; Romans 14:17; John 18:36

## The Church

Acts 2:47; Eph. 4:4-6; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Col 1:18

## Unity

John 17:20-23; Gal 3:28; Rev. 18:2-4

## Ordinances

Matt. 28:19-20; Matt. 26:26-30;  
1 Cor. 11:23-27; John 13:14-17

## Divine Healing

Luke 4:18; Isaiah 53:4-5; James 5:13-16

## Sanctity of Marriage

Matt. 19:5-6; Luke 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3;  
1 Cor. 7:10-11

## Outward Appearance

1 Tim. 2:9-10; 1 Cor. 11:14-15; Deut. 22:5

## End of Time

2 Peter 3:7-12; John 5:28-29; 2 Cor. 5:10;  
Matt 25:31-46

## Pacifism

Luke 6:27-29; Luke 18:20

## Worship

John 4:23-24; Eph. 5:19; 2 Cor. 3:17

## Great Commission

Mark 16:15

*(continued from page 1)*

The prophet Amos exhorted the people to “Prepare to meet thy God” (Amos 4:12). The rich man had prepared for retirement, and there was nothing wrong with that, but in all his plans he had not prepared to meet God. To prepare means to “make ready for.” Have you prepared to



“Every decision of every day should be made to please God and for the welfare of the soul.”

meet God? Are you living life with the Judgment and eternity in mind? It takes effort to prepare for something. Every decision of every day should be made to please God and for the welfare of the soul.

The unfortunate reality is that most people are neglecting the soul. Many have a head knowledge of God and even a form of religion, and yet their decisions are based upon what will further their temporal status rather than what is best for them spiritually. What about you?

Life is uncertain, and none of us will know in advance when we will die and meet God. Let us not live the life of a

fool. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). When we die and stand at the judgment seat, having neglected to put God first in life, what will we be willing to trade for eternal life? We would give anything and everything to escape the torment of hell. Every soul in eternity would be willing to live life over if they had the chance. They would willingly change and give up any thing that had hindered them from living a righteous and godly life. They would give up all riches, education, pleasures, and attitudes that separated them from God. However, there are no do-overs for eternity. Today is our time; this is our opportunity.

What will you do with your soul right now? If you are living for the things of this world rather than living daily to serve God and minister hope in this world, you need to humble your heart and pray. Accept Jesus into your heart and let every choice you make not be dictated by this temporal world but by the eternal world that is quickly approaching. Time is short and Jesus is waiting for you! ■

The *Gospel Truth* is a quarterly periodical published in the interest of the Church of God for instruction and encouragement in the truths of the Bible. Visit us online at [www.thegospeltruth.org](http://www.thegospeltruth.org) and subscribe to the email notification list to receive current publications. The *Gospel Truth* is printed in many countries for local distribution and is supported by free-will offerings. A tax receipt will be sent upon request.

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# Editorial



*And Peter went out, and wept bitterly. — Luke 22:62*

While Jesus was being tried, Peter, who had followed afar off, denied the Lord three times. Afterward, Peter went outside and wept bitterly. His heart was broken, and he sorrowed deeply for denying his Lord and Savior. The beauty of this incident is that the story was not over. After Jesus rose from the dead, He especially wanted Peter to get the news that He was alive. While Peter had denied the Lord, God had accepted his repentant spirit, and Peter would have another opportunity to serve Jesus. Glory to God!

The subject this quarter is on the topic of biblical repentance. While there is national, family, and congregational repentance, this issue deals primarily with the general doctrine of repentance as it relates to the individual. I would that there be more sorrow for sin committed. People are in trouble and are turning to the things of this world in a vain effort to find solutions. The answer is found by falling on one's knees and with sorrow of spirit seeking God for forgiveness.

Where there is personal repentance, marriages will be restored, relationships renewed, wrongs righted, and holiness will abound. The lack of these things is because people are not sorrowing to repentance. Religious organizations preach Christ, and yet they are silent about repentance. May true ministers of God not hold back in preaching about the necessity of repentance. People want God's blessings but are too often not willing to pay the price to attain them. There is an experience that supersedes having to daily pray for forgiveness of sin. Shall we preach to turn away from sin only to turn back to the very things we left behind? God forbid. Forsake sin, and there is power through the blood of Christ to live a victorious life over the power and influence of sin.

I am blessed to see people pray for salvation and am happy to hear of people making a start for God, but too often I see people's experience not lasting. I believe there is a lack of repentance. We need to understand the egregiousness of sin and disobedience and forsake it with sorrow. With joy we need to cling to the Savior. A lasting experience of salvation necessitates a radical turn from all sin.

If you are sinning, you are not saved. Regardless of what others think about your spiritual life, you know if you are a sinner, backslider, hypocrite or a saint of God. If you are not clear in your conscience and heart before God, I entreat you to seize the moment and repent. Turn away from the sin which has beset you and give your heart and life 100 percent to the Lord. He will be faithful to help you maintain and grow in your experience. Will you repent today before it is too late? Will you pray?

Michael W. Smith

October 2021



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IF MY PEOPLE, WHICH ARE CALLED BY MY NAME,  
SHALL HUMBLE THEMSELVES, AND PRAY, AND SEEK MY FACE,  
AND TURN FROM THEIR WICKED WAYS; THEN WILL I HEAR FROM HEAVEN,  
AND WILL FORGIVE THEIR SIN, AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND.

–2 CHRONICLES 7:14



# Bible Study Guide

## Subject: Repentance

**Scripture Reading:** *Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.* — Acts 3:19

**Definitions:**

**Repent:** To change one's mind; heartily to amend, with abhorrence of one's past sins (*Thayer's Greek Lexicon*).

**Repentance:** Contrition or regret for past wrong accompanied by a change of mind that involves a turning away from or a reversal from sin and a turning toward that which pleases God.

**Summary:** All sinners are called of God to repent and turn away from sin. The message of the gospel is to reject and forsake all ungodliness and to follow Jesus in holiness. Without repentance there is no true salvation.

### I. Who is to Repent?

- A. Matthew 9:12-13 The sinners.
- B. Acts 17:30 All men every where.

### II. Preaching of Repentance

- A. Luke 3:3 John the Baptist—repentance for remission of sins.
- B. Mark 1:14-15 Jesus—repent and believe the gospel.
- C. Mark 6:12 The disciples—men should repent.
- D. Acts 20:20-21 Paul—repentance toward God.

### III. Necessity of Repentance

- A. Luke 13:3 Except ye repent, ye shall perish.
- B. Acts 3:19 That your sins may be blotted out.
- C. Revelation 2:5 For God's blessings and anointing.

### IV. Fruit of Repentance

- A. Luke 3:8 Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.
- B. Acts 26:19-20 Do works meet for repentance.
- C. James 4:8 Cleanse your hands, ye sinners.

### V. Attribute of Repentance: Sorrow

- A. 2 Corinthians 7:9-11 Godly sorrow worketh repentance.
- B. Psalm 51:17 A broken and contrite heart.

### VI. Attribute of Repentance: Confession

- A. 1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins.
- B. Proverbs 28:13 Whoso confesseth and forsaketh.

### VII. Attribute of Repentance: Forsaking Sin

- A. Isaiah 55:6-7 Let the wicked forsake his way.
- B. Ezekiel 18:30 Turn yourselves from all your transgressions.

### VIII. Attribute of Repentance: Separation from Ungodliness

- A. 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 Be ye separate.
- B. Ezekiel 14:6 Turn yourselves from your idols.

### IX. Attribute of Repentance: Restitution

- A. Leviticus 6:4-5 Restore that which was taken.
- B. Luke 19:8-9 Zacchaeus makes restitution.

### X. Examples of Repentance

- A. Luke 15:21 Prodigal son—"I have sinned against heaven."
- B. Luke 18:13 The publican—"God be merciful to me a sinner."
- C. Jonah 3:8 Nineveh—"Turn every one from his evil way."

### XI. Call to Repentance

- A. Acts 2:37-40 Repent...Save yourselves.
- B. Revelation 3:19 Be zealous therefore, and repent.

### XII. Opportunity to Repent

- A. Revelation 2:21 God gave space to repent.
- B. 2 Corinthians 6:2 Now is the day of salvation.
- C. Romans 2:4 Goodness of God.
- D. 2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not willing that any should perish.

### Conclusion

*I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*

— Luke 15:7



# BIBLICAL REPENTANCE

Turn away from sin, reject the wrong, and be saved by the power of God. Wherever the message of Jesus Christ is preached, the message of true repentance must be heralded; for without repentance, there is no true salvation.



“Repentance infers a reversal or a change of direction.”

## Turning Around

Repentance occurs when one is sorry for past sin and turns away from it in pursuit of Christ. It involves actively turning away from that which is wrong and a decision to never go back. Repentance infers a reversal or a change of direction. Many professed Christian churches are preaching Jesus Christ as the atonement for sin but are not preaching the message of repentance. It is one thing to accept Christ, but it is another to make a change and quit doing those things which are displeasing to God. While salvation is not attained by good works and is a divine gift of God, we also have personal responsibility. The apostle Peter told the people, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out” (Acts 3:19). God will only forgive people who are serious about their salvation to the extent that they are willing to completely forsake all ungodliness.

Jesus came to this earth and died for the sins of mankind so that all people might be saved. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Jesus came to call the “sinners to repentance” (Matthew 9:13), and God “commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). No one is exempt from the call to repentance, for all have been separated from God through sin and wrongdoing. Without an abhorrence of that wrong and a sorrow for that which was displeasing to God, there is no salvation.

## Integral to the Gospel Message

The message of repentance was not a one-time message preached in a corner. John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, “came into all the

country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3). Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God with a clear message: “Repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:14-15). The disciples were sent out and “preached that men should repent” (Mark 6:12). Paul testified “both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). This message is far different from a simple message of just believing in Jesus, which alone relieves mankind of the responsibility of change. Thus, many false churches today teach that one cannot live without sinning. The very power of the gospel is that through repentance and belief in Christ, there is power to go and “sin no more” (John 8:11). God will accept nothing less, for without holiness “no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

## Required for Salvation

Repentance is a necessary part of the salvation experience for one to have eternal life. Jesus said in Luke 13:3 “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” It is not enough to join a religious fellowship and worship the Lord with a form of godliness. There must be a life-changing experience that begins with personal repentance. It is the only way for sin to be “blotted out” (Acts 3:19). Unless they repent the anointing and blessings of God will be removed from individuals and congregations who have backslidden and fallen. This is exemplified in the letter to the church of Ephesus: “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” (Revelation 2:5).

John the Baptist warned the Pharisees to, “Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and

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begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father” (Luke 3:8). Position and recognition do not exempt anyone from the need to repent. There are people in leadership in religious organizations that need to humble their hearts and cry out to God. Pastors, singers, and teachers will perish and lose their souls if they have not with true contrition turned away from their public and private sin.

The works of repentance are our responsibility—changing the heart and mind and following through in word and deed. “Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance” (Acts 26:20). “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners” (James 4:8), and turn to the Lord to be saved.

### Godly Sorrow

Repentance is a multifaceted word that has various attributes and characteristics. Godly sorrow is an integral part of repentance that brings salvation. “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves” (2 Corinthians 7:10-11). Clearly, godly sorrow is more than the surface sorrow of the world when someone feels guilt for doing wrong and yet continues in the pattern of transgression. Godly sorrow is deep, heartfelt contrition that brings forth change. God will accept and receive that sorrow and humility for “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart” (Psalm 51:17).

### Confess and Forsake

Repentance includes confession and open acknowledgment of sin committed. Without confession there is no forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 states: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” However, “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Proverbs 28:13).

Confession of sin without forsaking sin is empty and vain. Many are willing to confess but not to forsake. The scripture is very clear on this point. “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly

pardon” (Isaiah 55:7). Even in the Old Testament the prophet told the people to “Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin” (Ezekiel 18:30). Sin will still be your ruin unless you turn from your transgressions.

Another aspect of forsaking sin in repentance is that of separating from all ungodliness and evil influences. Paul instructed the church at Corinth to separate themselves from close association with unbelievers, idolatry, and all uncleanness (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). Similarly, Ezekiel instructed the people of Israel to, “Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols” (Ezekiel 14:6). Repentance still requires turning away from the modern-day idols of riches, fashion, sports, entertainment, etc. that are captivating the hearts and minds of people.

### Make Things Right

Restitution is another attribute or fruit of repentance. When Zacchaeus pledged to restore the money to those he had wronged, Jesus responded by saying, “This day is salvation come to this house” (Luke 19:8-9). Restitution is correcting the wrongs of the past and indicates a true spirit of repentance which motivates to action.

Scripture illustrates the beauty of sincere repentance. The prodigal son expressed, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son” (Luke 15:21). The publican praying in the temple was justified, as he could not even lift his eyes to heaven and cried for God to “be merciful to me a sinner” (Luke 18:13). The mercy of God was extended to the wicked city of Nineveh when they repented and turned away from their evil ways (Jonah 3:8). God is merciful and gives sinners space to repent (Revelation 2:21) and receives them with great joy and rejoicing in Heaven (Luke 15:7). God is “longsuffering...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).

### Repent Today

God’s longsuffering will one day end in judgment. The message of Peter on the day of Pentecost, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), is still the message to this generation. If you have not truly repented, “now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6:2). There is wonderful peace and rest that comes with real repentance. ■



“Repentance still requires turning away from the modern-day idols... that are captivating the hearts and minds of people.”



“It is not the work of God that is insufficient, it is the lack of repentance prior to salvation.”

## Of What Value is Repentance to Salvation?

Repentance is unequivocally tied to an experience of salvation throughout the scripture. Jesus said to “repent...and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). God made provision for our salvation through the death of Jesus on the cross. He is willing and ready to forgive us our sins and to give us the gift of eternal life. However, that gift is only given to those who

“People that seek salvation without true repentance are plagued with up-and-down experiences.”

are sorry for their wrong and make a conscious decision to turn away from their sins.

Those that ask God for salvation but do not have godly repentance, will not have a true life-changing experience. There must be a

desire above all else to leave sin and follow Christ. Jesus once told a rich, young man who desired to follow Him that he should go and sell all his possessions first. This man’s obedience would have been fruit of repentance and an indication that he was willing to forsake everything for the cause of Christ. Unfortunately, this young man was not willing to turn from the things of this world.

Often people confess their belief in Jesus Christ, and yet they continue in their sins. These people are not truly saved, for salvation is only given to the repentant heart. There might be an initial change of desire, but people that seek salvation without true repentance are plagued with up-and-down experiences. There must be an acknowledgment of wrong done and a godly sorrow for displeasing God. There must be a desire to forsake the sin of the past; if there is not, those same sins will creep back in.

People then think that God’s work of salvation was not sufficient. It is not the work of God that is insufficient, it is the lack of repentance prior to salvation. Hence, repentance is of great value to getting saved, for without it one cannot be truly delivered from the power of sin.

The sinner must first open his heart to God and reject all unrighteousness. This paves the way for God to work the miracle of salvation that will enable an individual to walk in newness of life. It is for this reason that Jesus instructed the multitudes to count the cost. Consider what it means to take up your cross and follow Jesus. Give serious thought before making the decision. When you decide that you are willing to go all the way for God in repentance, you open the door to receive the fullness of God’s grace of salvation.

## Is Feeling Bad About My Sin the Same as Repentance?

No. An unrepentant person can feel bad or sorry about doing something sinful, but there will be no lasting change. Consider the abusive husband that cries and tells his wife he is sorry after abusing her in a drunken rage. That sorrow only lasts until he gets drunk again, and the story is repeated. This is the sorrow of the world. Godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10) is that which galvanizes the sinner to change no matter what the price. When someone is under conviction of the Holy Spirit they might feel bad and even cry because they know they are living in sin. However, tears or feelings of regret are not sufficient. There must be sorrow of a godly sort due to the recognition of wrongdoing accompanied with a purpose never to return to that life of sin. This is the only kind of sorrow that will bring true repentance.



### DID YOU KNOW?

When Jonah preached in Nineveh that the city would be overthrown in forty days, the people believed God and proclaimed a fast. No living being in the city, neither man nor beast, ate food or drank water. Man and beast were covered with sackcloth in a sign of contrition and repentance. God spared the city! (Jonah 3:4-10).



A Word  
in Season

## THE GOODNESS OF GOD

*Despise thou the riches of his [God's] goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? —Romans 2:4*

There is no way to escape the judgment of God, for it is certain that “we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10) and give an account of how we lived life. However, the Lord in His infinite mercy is prolonging time that more people may be saved from the power of sin and have opportunity to prepare for eternity. God’s mercy is extended to the worst of evildoers, and His love reaches to the most despised of society. He has compassion on the vilest of sinners, and He cares for the ostracized and rejected.



So many are despising the goodness of God by ignoring His love and longsuffering and refusing to accept the beautiful plan of salvation. Indeed, it is the goodness of God that leads people to a condition of repentance. When one’s eyes are opened to the great love of God and to the gift of eternal life, it softens the heart and creates a desire to embrace all that God has provided.

We do not deserve kindness, longsuffering, or mercy because we have all been in a state of rebellion against God. It is in that state of rejecting God that He so often manifests His love by helping the sinner during difficult times of life. When the storms come like a tornado, wreaking havoc, God once again demonstrates His care. When people’s actions cry out for judgment due to the harm and pain they cause others around them, God offers mercy and is longsuffering. He delays His judgment and withholds punishment with infinite kindness. The riches of His goodness are revealed time and time again to fallen mankind.

Why is God so longsuffering? Why is He so good to people when they do not deserve it? Because it is His goodness that will lead people to repentance (Romans 2:4). His goodness and love draw people and encourage them to turn around. It leads people to forsake wrong and cling to those things that please the Lord.

The door of mercy is open and forgiveness awaits the repentant heart. Praise God for His goodness! ■

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HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD