

# Exploring Christianity Study 4

## What is repentance?

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### Introduction

Hopefully through the previous studies, God has helped you to appreciate what sin is, and what sin has done in separating men from God and bringing them under His judgement. Most people are on the broad road to destruction. A few people find the road to life. Repentance is necessary for a person to get off the broad road and onto the narrow one. This is why this study examines the subject of repentance. Have you prayed before starting this study?

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### Section 1 — What does it mean for a person to repent?

**1a** The Biblical use of the word “repent” is illustrated in Matthew 21:28-29,

(please read this passage in your Bible or New Testament):

v29 “He answered and said I will not; but afterward he repented, and went.”

What does “repent” mean here?

Repent means to have a \_\_\_\_\_ of mind. Thus repentance is basically a change of mind which leads to action. In this case above (Matthew 21:28-29), it was toward a human command. In the Bible, the words “repent” and “repentance” usually mean a change of attitude toward God.

**1b** Repentance Illustrated further.

Read the account of the young man in Luke 15:11-24.

Notice the steps involved:

(A) He woke up to his situation, v17, “And he came to \_\_\_\_\_.”

(B) He decided to admit his sinful actions, v18,

“I will arise...and will say unto him, Father I have \_\_\_\_\_.”

(C) He started to carry out his plan, v20, “And he \_\_\_\_\_”

Notice that the change of mind resulted in a change of behaviour. Repentance is always a turning from one thing to another thing. True repentance will always result in a change of behaviour. Repentance is not just negative (turning from), it’s positive as well (turning to). This is shown from the fact that in the Bible, repentance is often mentioned in association with faith.

For example, repentance and faith are mentioned together in the following verses—

...repent ye, and believe the gospel (Mark 1:15).

Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20:21).

## Section 2 — Repentance is Commanded to All

**2a** How many people are commanded to repent (Acts 17:30b)?

God now commands \_\_\_\_\_ men in \_\_\_\_\_ place to repent.

Thus repentance is not an option for you to just take or leave as you feel like it. It is a clear command of God, which of course He intends to be obeyed.

**2b** How many people does God wish to come to this repentance (read 2 Peter 3:9)?

God wishes \_\_\_\_\_ men to come to repentance.

What does God not wish to happen to any person (2 Peter 3:9)?

He does not want them to \_\_\_\_\_.

Repentance is for all, because all men are sinners and are in need to salvation. Remember study number 2?

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## Section 3 — What Should Break the Heart of Sinful Man and Lead Him to Repent?

**3a** What great characteristic of God should cause people to repent? Read Romans 2:3-4.

The \_\_\_\_\_ of God leads men to repentance (v4b).

**3b** What two things are stated in the Bible about the lost person who does not repent of his sinful ways and accept Jesus Christ as his Saviour?

He is \_\_\_\_\_ already (John 3:18).

He will \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_ (John 8:24b).

**3c** Unless people repent, what will happen to them (Luke 13:1-5)?

They will all likewise \_\_\_\_\_ (v3, 5).

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## Section 4 — What About Those who Think They are “Good People?”

The immoral person, the thief, the murderer etc. will repent by changing his/her mind about his sin, hating it and turning to Christ for cleansing. But the person who is leading an apparently “good life” also needs to repent of their sin because they also come short of God’s standard, and are sinners.

**4a** God views the righteous (good) deeds of the lost as \_\_\_\_\_ rags (Isaiah 64:6).

**4b** How many people are righteous? There is \_\_\_\_\_ righteous (Romans 3:10).

**4c** How many people have sinned? \_\_\_\_\_ have sinned (Romans 3:23).

A genuine repentance will include a rejection of any trust that a person has in his or her own supposed goodness and/or religious practices as the basis for acceptance with God.

**4d** Salvation is not of \_\_\_\_\_ but it is a \_\_\_\_\_ from God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**4e** What is the result of a soul repenting and being saved (Luke 15:10)?

There is \_\_\_\_\_ among the angels in Heaven over one sinner that repents.

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Thus true repentance means a three part change:

1. **A change of mind** — you review the past and admit that you have come far short of God perfect standards as shown by Jesus Christ. You accept God's verdict that you are a Hell deserving sinner. You admit that you have depended on your works and/or religious practices to get you right with God.
  2. **A change of heart** — you see how a holy God hates sin, and yet loves you — a sinner. You are willing to turn to God with all your heart. You adopt God's attitude of distain and hostility toward sin. You are willing to trust your eternal destiny and salvation solely on Christ's Calvary work for your cleansing.
  3. **A change of direction** — with God's help, you are willing to actively put away those things that God shows you to be sinful in your life.
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## Conclusion

Repentance is turning from known sin in your life — including sinful actions & thoughts. Repentance is also turning from any trust in your own supposed goodness and/or religious practices for acceptance by God.

Repentance requires a forsaking of known sin (of which you are now ashamed and sorry), and a turning toward God whom you have offended. Repentance also includes a positive trust in God, and a willingness to now trust His way of salvation through the cross of Christ. You will learn about this in the next study.

Consider — if to repent means:

- You accept that you are a sinner .
- You are truly sorry for all of your sins.
- You accept that you deserve God's judgement in Hell.
- You are willing right now to forsake anything in your life that God shows to be sinful.
- You are willing to no longer depend on your own "supposed goodness" or religious practices to gain acceptance with God and entrance to Heaven.

Then consider, have you really repented yet, according to the Biblical meaning of the word?