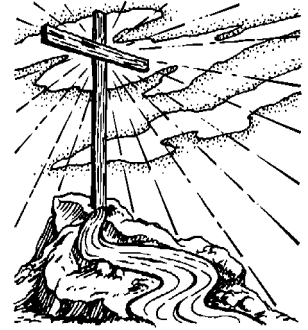


REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

I. WHAT IS THE MAJOR EMPHASIS OF THE GOSPEL?

A. The first major emphasis of the Gospel is repentance.

1. John the Baptist's first message was repentance.
"Now in these days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea saying "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (**Matthew 3:1-2**)
2. Jesus Christ's first message was repentance.
"From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'." (**Matthew 4:17**)
3. The first twelve apostles preached repentance.
"And He summoned the 12 and began to send them out in pairs; and He was giving them authority over unclean spirits; And they went out and preached that men should repent." (**Mark 6:7,12.**)
4. Peter's first message on the day of Pentecost was repentance.
"And Peter said unto them, "Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (**Acts 2:38**)
5. Paul's first message was to repent.
"And how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both the Jews and Greeks of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."
(**Acts 20:20-21**)



B. God commands that repentance is the first step in a believer's life. If this foundation is not properly laid, the whole structure will be shaky, and unable to stand the tests and trials that come.

"Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent." (**Acts 17:30**)

II. WHAT ARE SOME FALSE CONCEPTS CONCERNING REPENTANCE?

A. Repentance is not just conviction of sin. Conviction precedes repentance, but not all who are convicted repent.

"And as he was discussing righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened and said, Go away for the present and, and when I find time, I will summon you." (**Acts 24:25**)

B. Repentance is not worldly sorrow, remorse, regret, or just feeling bad.

"For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death." **(II Corinthians 7:10)**

- C. Repentance is not being religious. The Pharisees in Christ's day were extremely religious, yet they were hypocrites. They never experienced repentance.

"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." **(Matthew 5:20)**

"But when He saw many of the Pharisees and Saducees coming for baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Therefore bring forth fruit in keeping with repentance'." **(Matthew 3:7-8)**

- D. Repentance is not "believe-ism" or mental faith (regret). Mental faith is merely a mental acceptance of a set of creeds, without a corresponding change in the life. This is dead faith!

"You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?"
(James 2:19-20)

III. WHAT IS THE ROOT MEANING, THE WORD "REPENTANCE"?

- A. The root meaning of the word "repentance" is "a change of mind", or "a change of heart". It means a complete change of direction, or turn about.

"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conducts, declares the Lord God. 'Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.' " **(Ezekial 18:30)**

- B. The fall of Adam caused man to have a mind in rebellion against God and His law; man now desires to get his own way.

"Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." **(Ephesians 2:3)**

- C. Repentance, brought about by the Holy Spirit, is a change of mind; a

facing toward God. No man can or will repent of himself, but true repentance is brought about by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. God grants and demands repentance.

"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance."

(Romans 2:4)

- D. Repentance is the illuminating and changing of the mind, the stirring and directing of the emotions to urge the required change, and the action of the will in turning the whole man away from sin and toward God.

"But when he came to his senses, he said "How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.' And he got up, and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him, and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him."

(Luke 15:17-20)

IV. HOW DOES REPENTANCE COME ABOUT?

Repentance is the result of conviction, which is the Holy Spirit's making us aware of our sinfulness (**John 16:7-8**). It is important for us to know the difference between conviction and condemnation. Conviction is a positive experience always accompanied by grace which enables us to change. Condemnation is either a product of the flesh or a direct attack of Satan (the accuser) against us. In either case, it leads to negativism and a loss of spiritual power. (**Romans 8:1**)

- A. Conviction may come by:

1. Reading or hearing God's Word.
"Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Brethren, what shall we do?'" (**Acts 2:37**)
2. The sovereign work of the Holy Spirit.
"For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
(Matthew 9:13)
3. Recognizing the judgment that has come upon us because of wrong attitudes, ungodly living, etc. In other words, the bitter fruit of our lives may cause us to turn to God.
4. The revelation of God's goodness leads to repentance.

"Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

(Romans 2:4)

5. God uses reproof, rebuke and chastening to prod men to repentance.

V. WHAT IS THE FRUIT OF GENUINE REPENTANCE?

- A. The fruit of repentance is evidenced in "Godly sorrow for sin."

"I now rejoice, not that ye were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance: for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong? In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter."

(II Corinthians 7:9-11)

- B. The fruit of repentance is evidenced in confession of sin.

"For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." **(Psalm 51:3,10)**

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **(I John 1:9)**

- C. The fruit of repentance is evidenced in the forsaking of sin.

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper: but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." **(Proverbs 28:13)**

- D. The fruit of repentance is evidenced in the hatred of sin.

"Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good and you will loathe

yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations." (Ezekiel 36:31)

- E. The fruit of repentance involves restitution. Without this fruit being manifest, there is no genuine Bible repentance.

"And Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord half of my possessions I will give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I will give back four times as much'." (Luke 19:8)

VI. WHEN PERSONAL SIN IS REVEALED, WHAT ARE THE COMMON RESPONSES?

- A. Deny its existence and put on a "front".
- B. Admit its existence, then try to change by striving.
- C. Admit its existence, but give up in frustration.
- D. Admit its existence, then give it to Jesus with a yielded heart.