

# “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

## Repentance

Repentance is said to be one of the hardest commands of God—it involves the will of man! Repentance is commanded by God (Acts 17:30). The subject and principles of repentance are often mentioned throughout God’s book, the Bible. The word *repent* with its many different forms is found in the Bible over a hundred times. Repentance has been commanded by God in every age. One must repent to be accepted by God. The world before the flood refused to repent and perished (Gen. 7:23). The Prophets taught repentance (Isa. 1:16; Jonah 3:8-10). John the Baptist taught the Jews of his day to repent (Matt. 3:1-2). Jesus taught repentance (Matt. 4:17), and emphasized that if one does not repent, they will perish eternally (Lk. 13:3, 5). In this short article we will consider the following:

- The definition of repentance
- What repentance is and what it is not
- The fruits of repentance and applications
- Conclusion

## Repentance Defined

Repentance is defined as, “*The change of the mind of those who have begun to abhor their errors and misdeeds, and have determined to enter upon a better course of life, so that it embraces both recognition of sin and sorrow for it and hearty amendment, the tokens and effects of which are good deeds...*” (*Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon*, pg. 406).

## What Repentance Is and Is Not!

As we consider the definition by Thayer. It is important to understand and consider what repentance *is* and *is not*, because there is much confusion on this subject.

**First, repentance is not just sorrow.** It is not just shedding tears on the front pew when one comes forward to confess sin and wrongs committed or to render obedience to the gospel.

**Second, repentance is not just regret.** Many people regret the evil they have committed or that they were caught in an sin but have regret. When you talk to some prisoners, they regret they were caught, but have no regret for the crime they committed.

**Third, repentance is not just reformation.** Many who have reformed their lives and many good ways have not repented. The Bible teaches that Godly sorrow, produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; cf. Acts 26:20).

**Fourth, repentance is not just fear.** Fear alone does not keep the commandments of God (Eccl. 12:13).

**Fifth, repentance is not just praying a prayer.** Many a person who has prayed for forgiveness has not repented. Prayer is of no avail if the one praying is not penitent (Acts 8:33; Ps. 15:29; Prov. 28:9).

**Sixth, repentance is not just conviction.** Many individuals in the Bible who had conviction were commanded to repent (Acts 2:8).

What is repentance you might be asking? It is ALL of these. They ALL are required. One must have Godly *sor-*

row. They must *regret* that they sinned against God and others who may suffer the consequences of their sins. They must *reform* their lives and follow God's will. They must *fear* and respect God, evidenced by their doing all things according to Divine authority, not human authority alone. They must earnestly *pray* to God for forgiveness and guidance and seek His grace and mercy through obedience to the gospel. They must be *convicted* and smitten in heart and mind and be humbled to do the will of God, not do their own will.

### The Fruits of Repentance and Applications

Now that we have a better understanding of repentance—what it is and what it is not, let us consider the fruits necessary for true repentance in the eyes of God (cf. Matt. 3:8; Acts 20:26).

**First, the fruit of repentance includes restitution.** One must make *restitution* where it is possible. If a man steals a car, he must give it back. If a man commits murder, he cannot restore the life of those he murdered, but must pay the penalty of his sin, up to and including punishment by death (Gen. 9:5-6).

**Second, the fruit of repentance includes separation.** One must separate himself from all things that are sinful. Paul commanded the Romans to cease the servitude of sin. Said he, *“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God”* (Rom. 6:11-13). An alcoholic cannot continue to drink alcohol. A homosexual cannot continue the depraved practice of homosexuality, even though two homosexuals may love each other and be married according to the laws of the land. Likewise, a married couple cannot remain in an adulterous marriage and be pleasing to God—they must separate and dissolve the marriage, even though they love each other (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Heb. 13:4).

**Third, the fruit of repentance includes confession.** One must confess their sins and admit sin. Saul, David, Judas and other Bible characters did (1 Sam. 15:24; 2 Sam. 12:13; Matt. 27:4; cf. Ex. 9:27; Num 22:34; Joshua 7:20; Lk. 15:18, 21). The apostles commanded Christians to confess their sins (Jas. 5:16; 1 Jn. 1:9).

**Fourth, the fruit of repentance includes resolve.** One must *resolve* with the heart to turn from sin and cease the practice of it! This involves the *will* of the individual. This fruit is demonstrated by the course of action one takes. For example, in the parable of the two sons, the first son said that he would not go and work in his father's vineyard, *“but afterward repented, and went”* to work in his father's vineyard (Matt. 21:28-31). True repentance demands that we have the resolve to follow the will of the Father, not our own will.

**Fifth, the fruit of repentance includes contrition.** This is the expression of deep sorrow for sinning against God. The psalmist David wrote, *“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise”* (Psa. 51:7). I believe this was said as David remembered and described his sorrow for committing adultery with Bathsheba, a sin against God (2 Sam. 11-12; cf. Gen. 39:7-9).

Other fruits of repentance could be mentioned and discussed but space does not allow in this short article.

### Conclusion

As I mentioned, there is much misunderstanding and confusion regarding this requirement by God. True repentance (that which will result in one's forgiveness of sin by God) must be on God's terms, not man's. The only path to true repentance is by following God's commands. And, fruits *“meet”* or worthy (those accepted by God) must be brought forth, as the Bible teaches (Matt. 3:8; Acts 20:26; 2 Cor. 7:8-11). Remember, the words of Paul, *“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead”* (Acts 17:30, 31). — *tgm* ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Tommy Glendol McClure, Editor and Evangelist - 925-759-4357

Web Site: [www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com](http://www.lodiCAchurchofchrist.com) - Email: [lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com](mailto:lodicachurchofchrist@gmail.com) - Phone: 209-365-9250