

## The Nature of Repentance

R. Watson

Repentance, as explained by John the Baptist's ministry, is a conviction of the fact of sin — a sharp and painful realization and understanding.

A conviction that never produced humility, never sighed, never wept, and never sought solitude for prayer and reflection is not that which is an element of true repentance. Repentance is a serious and painful apprehension of the danger of sin's involvement. Hence John asked the Pharisees and Sadducees that came to his baptism, "*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees* ['religious' but ungodly sect members] *come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?*" (Mat. 3:7) One can experience the wrath of God for continuance in sin.

Repentance is a humble confession of sin. The people confessed to John, for it was impossible for him to enter into the particulars of each case, but to God they confessed their sins in detail.

Repentance is fruitful. Under its influence, the churl (bad-

**"God never cured a spiritual leper when he did not fall down first and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!'"**

— George Swinock

mannered people) become kind and considerate. The unjust become righteous, and those who had formerly been careless of spiritual interests wait upon God in the use of every means of grace.

### Incomplete Repentance

Clarkson

One does not completely turn from his sin when he:

- Does not attempt to leave all sin.
- Leaves sin outwardly only.
- Does not sin only because his current situation does not allow him to.
- Leaves one sin, but trades it for another.
- Leaves sin for only a time.
- Leaves a sin, but does not turn to God.

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### When Your Sin Breaks Your Heart

Bill Brinkworth

Psalm 51 recorded a time in David's life when the king had a broken, repentant heart over his sin. It occurred after the leader had been rebuked by Nathan, the prophet, for the sins of adultery and making the death of a woman's husband possible (II Sam. 2:1-19).



King David's sins, which he tried to keep private, were brought out in the open by Nathan's words, and what he was reminded of broke David's heart. Although he lived with the guilt of his sins, Nathan's accusation helped change the heart of the leader.

Most are also guilty of sin against God, but many hide it, forget about it, and never get it right with the Lord. David could not hide it any longer and did

what every person in his situation should do. He was honest with himself about how he sinned against God and he purposed to turn from his wickedness.

Although many, when caught or exposed with their hands in the sin jar, ignore guilty feelings (which may be the Holy Spirit bringing it to light so it can be dealt with) and justify it, David did not. Many say they are sorry, but there is never a serious change in their life. The leader's admission of sin changed his life.

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### Repent

Bill Brinkworth

Repentance is the "... pain, regret, or affliction which a person feels on account of his past conduct ..." (American Dictionary of the English Language, Noah Webster, 1828). This regretful attitude was a vital part of John the Baptist's ministry and is important today when one is saved from their sins.

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## When Your Sin ...

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David knew he had crossed the sin-line (“transgressions” — vs. 1,3) God forbids all to pass. He recognized he had committed unrighteous behavior (“iniquity”— vs. 2) and acknowledged his sin as “evil” (vs. 4). The king knew he was responsible for the shed blood (“bloodguiltiness”) of Bathsheba’s husband. The leader recognized he could not take back the damage he had done, but he was so broken in spirit that he would never forget what he had done. All he could do then was beg for God’s mercy (vs. 1) in dealing with the matter, and he did.

So many are sorry they got caught in their sins, but are not crushed nor repentant of what they had done. From their actions and attitudes, it may appear that they would do it again; many do. However, when one is grieved over how they sinned against God and others, their heart usually changes. When a heart is transformed, a life is altered also.

All have sinned. We may be forgiven of our trespasses and have God’s forgiveness, but often our guilt is temporary and not life-changing. God is never fooled by false sincerity. He

**“God hath yoked to guilt a pale tormentor: misery.”** — William Bryant

knows if we are ashamed of what we have done and if we mean to change our behavior to one that is pleasing to Him.

What truths does God know about how you feel about sinning against Him? Do you intend never to let it happen again, or are you just experiencing a flash of guilt that you will soon forget?

## Repent

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Although a truly repentant person will change his behavior, just changing behaviors alone will not get one saved. If it were a change in lifestyle that was important, then those acts would be a type of good works, and no good works will save anyone from their sins (Ephesians 2:8-9).

John the Baptist illustrated that a broken heart over sin would produce a better life (not the other way around) when he spoke to four types of people:

☞ To the religious, but not righteous, he told them that if they were convicted over their sins they would prove it by a

lifestyle that would show “fruits” from their inward changes. Their changed heart would change how they lived, and others would be able to see what the changes had done in their life (Luke 3:8).

☞ To the common people, he told them that a giving attitude would show a changed heart (Luke 3:11). John must have known that they were covetous of the things of this world and that they were not trusting God daily for their needs.

☞ To the publicans, he also said that there would need to be some changes in their lives. Publicans were notorious, dishonest tax-collectors. John said for them the change would include their being honest (Luke 3:13)

☞ To soldiers, he did not tell them to quit the army. He told them their change of heart would include lack of unneeded violence (perhaps John was referring to their practice of unnecessary cruelty), lying, and dissatisfaction with their salaries.



A changed, repentant heart is proof of one’s salvation. The areas John said should change in lives over 2,000 years ago, should still change when one’s life is truly altered by salvation today.

*“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold,*

*all things are become new.”*

*II Corinthians 5:17*

## Repentance

*Bill Brinkworth*

- ◆ Stopping sin, bad behaviors, and habits alone do not get one forgiven.
- ◆ Stopping sin, bad behavior, habits, and living a better life, do not give anyone entrance into Heaven. One must be saved (John 3:3) to go to Heaven.
- ◆ Stopping sin, bad behaviors, and habits may ease your guilt, but it will not ease your guiltiness between you and the Father unless you ask for forgiveness (Romans 10:9).
- ◆ Stopping sin, bad behaviors, and habits can be good “works” if you think it will clear your sin-slate with God. Good works that we can do will not get anyone to Heaven: *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.” Eph. 2:8 -9*
- Not stopping sin, bad behaviors, and habits when the Holy Spirit convicts one’s heart, may harden one’s heart from further hearing His convicting “voice.”

**“Repentance is absolutely necessary for salvation ....”** — W. Carey



**ou cannot repent too soon, because you do not know how soon it may be too late.”**

— Fuller