

The First Principles

*“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be **THE FIRST PRINCIPLES of the oracles of God**; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.... Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again **the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.**” (Hebrews 5:12; 6:1-2)*

The above scripture identifies The First Principles. There are (7) foundation stones of truth (principles of doctrine) that we will begin to throughout this course:

1. **Repentance From Dead Works**
2. **Faith Toward God**
3. **Water Baptism**
4. **Holy Spirit Baptism**
5. **Laying On Of Hands**
6. **Resurrection Of The Dead**
7. **Eternal Judgment**

REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

1. WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

As you can see, by definition, **REPENTANCE** involves **regret, guilt, sorrow** and **remorse** resulting in a **complete change of mind, purpose** and **direction**.

- **HEBREW: ‘nacham’**: **To breath strongly so as to sigh; to feel sorrowful**

*“Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent (**nacham**) in dust and ashes.” Job 42:6*

- **HEBREW: ‘shub’**: **To turn back, to return**

*“Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Repent (**shub**), and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.” Ezekiel 14:6*

- **GREEK: ‘metamelomai’**: **To be careful; to regret**

*“He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented (**metamelomai**), and went.” Matthew 21:29*

- **GREEK: ‘metanoia’**: **To have another mind; to have a complete change of opinion; to change direction**

“Repent (metanoia) ye therefore, and be converted...” Acts 3:19

2. HOW IMPORTANT IS REPENTANCE?

Repentance is the very first word of the Gospel and the first step of our Christian walk with God. No true relationship with God is possible unless repentance first takes place.

A. John The Baptist:

“In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:1,2

B. Jesus:

“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.” Mark 1:14,15

C. Peter:

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” Acts 2:38

D. The Disciples:

“And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits... And they went out, and preached that men should repent.” Mark 6:7,12

3. WHAT ARE WE CALLED TO REPENT FROM?

Basically there are two things that we are called to repent from; SIN and DEAD WORKS.

A. Repentance From SIN

The Bible teaches that the heart of man is both deceitful and desperately wicked (*Jeremiah. 17:9*). We are all born with a totally corrupt human nature (SIN) and as a result, we have committed actual sins, violating God’s will and His holy laws.

“But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.” Matthew 15:18,19

*“Then when lust hath conceived, **it bringeth forth sin**: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” James 1:15*

*“**For we ourselves also were** sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.” Titus 3:3*

*“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for **sin is the transgression of the law**.” 1 John 3:4*

*“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked **turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways**; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Ezekiel 33:11*

Notice, turning from **OUR WAYS** is the same as turning from **EVIL WAYS**.

B. **Repentance From DEAD WORKS**

Mankind has inherited both a **SINFUL** and a **RELIGIOUS** heart from Adam. Remember, Adam was the first to sin and the first man attempting to **COVER UP** his own nakedness by his own works (sewing fig leaves together; *Gen. 3:7*).

DEAD WORKS are those “good” religious works, including man made customs, rites, beliefs and traditions that we “**PUT ON**”. We think that these good works (fig leaves) will attract God’s favor. God commands that we repent from all **self-effort** and **self-righteousness**, so that we might embrace His righteousness which comes by grace, through faith.

*“But we are all as an unclean thing, **and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Isaiah 64:6*

- Romans 3:10

According to *Luke: 18:9-14*, briefly describe what truth Jesus is teaching us by comparing the actions of the Pharisee and the publican in the parable:

*“Knowing that **A MAN IS NOT JUSTIFIED BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW**, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Galatians 2:16*

*“**Not by works of righteousness which we have done**, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being **justified by his grace**, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” Titus 3:5-7*

*“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchers, **which indeed appear beautiful outward**, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.” Matthew 23:27, 28*

4. WHAT IS THE PROOF THAT A PERSON HAS REPENTED FROM DEAD WORKS?

Repentance always produces fruit that can be seen. When we repent from dead works, we no longer attempt to establish our own righteousness (covering) by our own works, but instead, fully embrace Jesus Christ **TO BE** our **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

-2 Corinthians 5:21

Righteousness is not something that we can produce by WORKS. It is something that we become when we are IN CHRIST!

According to **Romans 3:24**, we are JUSTIFIED by _____

According to **Romans 5:1**, we are JUSTIFIED by _____

According to **Romans 5:9**, we are JUSTIFIED by _____

5. WHAT DOES THE PROCESS OF REPENTANCE INVOLVE?

Repentance does indeed describe a thorough process that takes place within our lives. Whether it happens quickly or over a period of time, true repentance will be thorough. To begin with, we must understand that Repentance is a **GIFT** from God. Without God's working within our lives, there can be no true repentance.

*“Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for **to GIVE REPENTANCE** to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31*

*“When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, **Then hath God also to the Gentiles GRANTED REPENTANCE** unto life.” Acts 11:18*

*“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if **God peradventure WILL GIVE them repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.” 2 Timothy 2:26*

Let us consider the following process involved in Repentance:

A. Conviction in our Conscience by The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the one who convicts us of all that is wrong and not in accordance with the will and purpose of God (*John 16:8*). God, by creative design has given all men a conscience. Our conscience is what makes us sensitive to the absolute laws of God that are expressed in His Word. This is the place where **CONVICTION** of sin takes place. Our conscience can be **GUILTY** or **CLEAR** (*free from offense*).

Briefly describe what truth is being taught in *Romans 2:14-15*:

See also: *John 8:9; Romans 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Tim. 1:19*

Most of the times conviction is brought about by the anointed preaching of God's word:

*"Now when they heard this, **they were pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Acts 2:37*

B. Godly Sorrow

Godly sorrow is a deep remorse and sense of true guilt that has been produced by God's operation within our lives. This type of sorrow fuels passion for authentic and thorough changes to be made. Unlike a worldly sorrow that is momentary and fleeting and usually occurs simply because we got caught.

*"Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye **sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner**, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. **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, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter.**" 2 Corinthians 7:9-11*

King Saul (*1 Sam. 15:24-30*) and **King David** (*2 Sam. 12:7-13*) are two outstanding examples of **worldly sorrow** versus **godly sorrow**. King Saul was sorry for his sin, but was more interested in maintaining his honor before the people. Whereas David, sorrowed deeply and *Psalms 51* shows that he was more concerned with His relationship to God.

C. Confession of Sin

Confession of sin is the first actual step that we take in turning from sin. When we confess our sins we are bringing them out in the open before God and no longer attempting to hide them or justify their existence within our lives. As you will see, true confession takes place, when we call our sins what God calls them.

*"I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, **I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD**; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Psalms 32:5*

*"And were baptized of him in Jordan, **confessing their sins**." Matthew 3:6*

-1 John 1:9

CONFESS: (GK: *homologeō*): *To say the same thing*

The literal definition of **CONFESS**, is; '*to say the same thing*'. In other words we must begin to come into agreement with God concerning our sin by calling sin what He calls it.

One of the tragic consequences of being part of a society that no longer desires to retain God within their knowledge is the 're-invention' of terms for sin. New and softer terms are being invented in order to elevate any sense of personal guilt or shame for our sins.

Much of the psychology today (both in and out of the church) seeks to reinforce a "**victim's**" mentality, attempting to make a person feel good about themselves, instead of producing a "**Godly sorrow**" which will lead to true repentance, thereby bringing deliverance and initiating a true Christ-like transformation.

Remember, what society calls a half truth, God still calls a full lie! What society calls a sexual fantasy, God still calls the sin of lust! What society calls a moral failure, God still calls the sin of fornication or adultery!

When you call your sin what God calls it, you are taking the first step of walking in the light of truth, establishing truth in the inward parts (*Psalm 51:6*) and moving away from the deceitfulness of sin (*Hebrews 3:13*).

E. Turning From Sin

Following confession, we then 'make an about face' and begin to actually forsake our sin. We receive God's grace that enables us to make those changes that need to be made. Remember, if the actual sin involves something done against someone, then asking for their forgiveness and attempting to make restitution (if possible) is in order.

-Proverbs 28:13

In [Luke 19:1-10](#), how did the wealthy sinner, Zacchaeus demonstrate authentic repentance to Jesus?

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.” Matthew 5:23-24

F. Walking in God’s Ways

As we keep in mind the ‘about face’ concept of repentance, we must understand that repentance involves a **TURNING FROM SIN** and a **TURNING TO GOD**. We forsake sin and begin to walk in God’s ways by His grace. When this happens, the repentance is complete and thorough. It began in the heart but is now showing good fruit to God, ourselves and to others.

“But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.” Ezekiel 18:21

Once repentance has thoroughly taken place, we will acquire a deep hatred toward sin and a love and zeal for righteousness. The result of repentance is joy and gladness!

“Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” Hebrews 1:9

6. WHAT ARE THE MEANS OF BRINGING ONE TO REPENTANCE?

God can deal with a person’s conscience in order to bring about repentance in many different ways. But some of the primary ways include:

A. Through The Anointed Ministry Of The Word ([Acts 2:37](#); [Heb.4:12](#))

B. Through The Goodness Of God ([Rom. 2:4](#))

In [Luke 5:4-9](#); Peter realized his own sinfulness in light of seeing the blessing of God and a demonstration of God’s goodness toward him.

C. Through Godly Reproof and Chastisement ([Rev. 3:19](#))

7. ARE THERE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF REPENTANCE?

Yes, there are basically three levels of repentance:

A. Initial Repentance

This describes the initial repentance experience that takes place in our lives as sinners and unbelievers, when we first come to Christ for forgiveness and to be justified by Him.

B. Specific Acts of Repentance

This describes the specific repentance that is required when we commit sin as believers.

C. Spirit of Repentance

This describes the 'spirit' of our hearts as we walk with God. We learn to live very sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and we are ever mindful to be always turning from our own (self-centered) ways and to be ever turning to God's ways. The spirit of repentance is what causes us to keep short accounts with the Lord and helps us to maintain joy and a good conscience.

"And herein do I EXERCISE MYSELF, TO HAVE ALWAYS a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men." Acts 24:16

-Hebrews 13:18

8. IN WHAT WAY CAN WE DAMAGE OUR CONSCIENCE IF WE REFUSE TO REPENT?

The Bible teaches us that the condition of our conscience is extremely important and must be properly maintained. The following are different conditions of human conscience that the Bible identifies:

- WEAK conscience (1 Cor. 8:5-7)

Explanation: bondage; outward form is important

- WOUNDED conscience (1 Cor. 8:12)

Explanation: pummeled by repeated blows

- SEARED conscience (1 Tim. 4:2)

Explanation: To be permanently damaged; burned and scarred; loss of sensitivity to right or wrong (reprobate).

- **DEFILED conscience** (*Titus 1:15*)

Explanation: Compromised by worldly standards; contaminated

- **EVIL conscience** (*Heb. 10:22*)

Explanation: Vicious, hurtful, morally culpable; only the blood of Jesus can cleanse an evil conscience.

- **GOOD conscience** (*1 Tim. 1:19*)

Explanation: Trustworthy like a compass or good rudder, holding True to the faith

- **PURE conscience** (*1 Tim. 3:9*)

Explanation: clean and cleared of any obstruction

- **A CONSCIENCE TOWARD GOD** (*1 Pet. 2:19*)

Explanation: Always being mindful of God's verdict concerning our actions, even while we suffer wrongfully. Having a conscience toward God will cause us to endure suffering instead of reacting in self defense, even as Jesus suffered.

WHEN YOU REPENT, REMEMBER TO...

Confess your sin and unrighteousness
and to

Declare His Righteousness
and to

Turn from your sin and unrighteousness
and to

Turn to Him , fully embracing His Righteousness,
And then

OBEY GOD'S WORD AND MOVE ON!

TRUTH IN REVIEW

DEAD WORKS	GOOD WORKS	WORLDLY SORROW
SPIRIT	CONSCIENCE	REPENTANCE
GOODNESS	CONVICTS	GIFT
HATRED	ACTION	SUFFERING
COVER UP	JOY	SEARED
GODLY SORROW		

1. The word, 'REPENT' is an _____ word .
2. Repentance is a _____ from God.
3. God has given every man a _____ .
4. The Word of God often _____ us of our sins.
5. Adam sinned and sought to _____ his own nakedness.
6. John the Baptist, Jesus and his disciples all preached _____ .
7. The _____ of God will often lead men to repentance
8. The First Foundation stone mentioned in Hebrews 6:1, is Repentance from _____ .
9. Dead Works include _____ .
10. We can experience _____ for our sin or _____ .
11. As believer's God wants us to walk, with a _____ of Repentance.
12. A _____ Conscience is no longer sensitive to the conviction of what's right or wrong.
13. When we possess a 'conscience toward God' we will even endure _____.
14. The fruit of repentance produces _____ toward sin in us.
15. As a result of repentance, we'll be anointed with _____ and gladness .