

ELEMENTS OF REPENTANCE

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TEXT: [Act 17:30](#), "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:"

INTRODUCTION:

1. Repentance is a concept which is easily introduced; and yet which is, for any number of reasons, misunderstood or practiced incorrectly.
2. In this lesson we first wish to see the purpose of repentance, contrasting what repentance is not and what it is; second, we wish to see the practice of repentance, contrasting why some do not repent with why some do repent.

I. THE PURPOSE OF REPENTANCE.

A. What repentance is not.

1. Repentance is not merely reacting to having been caught in wrong doing.
 - a. Such is "the sorrow of the world" in [2Co 7:10](#), which sorrow "worketh death" for it does not motivate a proper reaction to sin.
2. Repentance is not simply changing one's mind.
 - a. Judas repented that he had betrayed Jesus ([Mat 27:3](#)), but only in the sense of changing his mind; few would foolishly argue that he has a place in heaven (cf. [Joh 6:70](#); [Act 1:25](#)).
3. Repentance is not simply admitting wrong.
 - a. Like Judas ([Mat 27:4](#)), Pilate knew his actions were wrong ([Mat 27:24](#))--even before they were committed; few would argue that he ever truly repented.
4. Repentance is not simply paying a price for sin.
 - a. Judas tried to return the price he was paid for betraying Jesus ([Mat 27:3-10](#)); few would argue that he ever truly repented.
 - (1). [Act 1:18](#) speaks of Judas as the purchaser of the field--Scripture never wholly credited him with having returned the money.
5. Repentance is not simply quitting a sin.
 - a. One may stop actively participating in a sin, but never concern himself with changing his affections ([Gal 5:24](#)) or stop enjoying seeing others in that sin ([Rom 1:32](#)).
6. Repentance is not one step salvation.
 - a. Men must believe and confess ([Rom 10:10](#)).

- b. Men must be baptized "for the remission of sins" ([Act 2:38](#)).
 - c. Men must walk faithfully ([1Jn 1:6-7](#); [Rev 2:10](#)).
- B. What repentance is.
 - 1. Repentance is godly sorrow in action.
 - a. Note the contrast of [2Co 7:10](#), "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - b. The Corinthians' sorrow was a genuine one which motivated them to hate their sinful situation and clear themselves of that weight ([2Co 7:11](#))
 - 2. Repentance is a change of lifestyle.
 - a. Note the penitent son of [Mat 21:28-29](#) who was not going to work in his father's vineyard but repenting did: "But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went."
 - 3. Repentance is a Good Father's patient plan for His beloved children.
 - a. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" ([2Pe 3:9](#)).
 - b. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" ([Rom 2:4](#)).

II. THE PRACTICE OF REPENTANCE.

- A. Why some do not repent.
 - 1. Some do not repent because they are so hardened by sin that they cannot even blush.
 - a. Jerusalem had become so degraded that she would be described in this very way: "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush"--accordingly he inhabitants would "fall among them that fall" ([Jer 6:15](#); [Jer 8:12](#)).
 - b. Contrast Ezra's righteous attitude exhibited not due to his own sins, but his people Israel's: "And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and

spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over *our* head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" ([Ezr_9:5-6](#)).

2. Some do not repent because they were never truly convicted and converted.
 - a. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" ([Mat_13:15](#)).
 - b. "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;" ([Act_3:19](#)).
3. Some do not repent because they do not want to pay *any* price for sin.
 - a. John upbraided the Pharisees and Sadducees for their insincere attention to his ministry instructing them to "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:" ([Mat_3:8](#)).
 - b. "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and *then* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" ([Act_26:20](#)).
4. Some do not repent because they do not appreciate or adequately respond to what God, their Father, has done for them.
 - a. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" ([Rom_1:21](#)).

B. Why some do repent.

1. Some repent because it is a command of God.
 - a. "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" ([Act_17:30](#)).
2. Some repent because certain judgment is at hand.
 - a. "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"

([Act_17:31](#)).

3. Some repent because they are impressed by the gravity of sin.
 - a. "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" ([Rom_6:23](#)).
4. Some repent because they are enamored by the idea of liberty from sin.
 - a. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" ([Rom_6:22](#)).
5. Some repent because they recognize the folly of the would-be righteous one's remaining in sin.
 - a. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" ([Rom_6:1](#)).

CONCLUSION:

1. Today, it is possible to understand repentance; more importantly, it is possible to practice repentance.
2. If you are in the position of one outside of Christ due to never having obeyed or due to returning to the world of sin, repent and be converted today!