



# Bethel

## Discipleship Series

# FAITH AND REPENTANCE

## I. WHAT ARE THE SCRIPTURAL STEPS FOR SALVATION?

A. Step #1: **Faith** in God – believing and trusting in God is the essential first step to salvation.

- **Hebrews 11:6** – “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”
- **John 3:36** – “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.”
- **James 2:19** – “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.”

(See also John 8:24; John 7:38; Luke 8:12; John 5:24; John 6:40; John 6:47; John 11:25-26; John 20:31; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9-11; 1 Corinthians 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:16; Hebrews 10:39)

B. Step #2: **Repentance** – asking forgiveness and turning away from sin is the next step after we have believed God and His Word.

- **Luke 13:5** – (Jesus said) “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
- **Acts 3:19** – “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.”

C. Step #3: **Baptism** – being immersed in water in Jesus’ name for the remission of sins.

- **Mark 16:15-16** – “And he (Jesus) said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
- **Acts 22:16** – “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

D. Step #4: **Holy Spirit Infilling** – being filled with the Holy Ghost; having God's Spirit living within us.

- **Romans 8:11** – “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”
- **Romans 8:9** – “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

### SCRIPTURE TEXTS:

**John 3:16** – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”

**Acts 2:38** – “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.”

## II. FAITH AND REPENTANCE

A. Salvation is God’s marvelous work of separating us from sin and reuniting us with Himself.

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- B. The first two steps of salvation will be examined in this lesson – faith and repentance.
- C. Jesus Christ preached these first two steps.
  - **Mark 1:14-15** – “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.”

## III. WHY DOES MANKIND NEED TO BE SAVED?

- A. First, we need to be saved from sin – which is rebellion, disobedience or offence against God.
  - **Romans 3:10, 23** – “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”
  - **Romans 5:12** – “Wherefore, as by one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”
  - **Matthew 1:21** – “And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
  1. Sin can be active or passive – there are sins of commission and sins of omission.
    - a. Sins of commission (active sins) – deliberate actions that are against God’s Word:
      - **Mark 7:21-23** – “For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”
    - b. Sins of omission (passive sins) – failing to do what God wants us to do:
      - **James 4:17** – “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”
- B. Secondly, we need to be saved from separation. Sin separates us from God. As unforgiven sinners we are estranged and isolated from God. When we are in sin, we cannot be in fellowship with God.
  - **Isaiah 59:2** – “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.”
  - **John 9:31** – “Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.”
- C. Thirdly, we need to be saved from death – which is eternal punishment. Webster's Dictionary defines salvation as "the spiritual rescue from the consequences of sin." The Bible teaches that there is an everlasting consequence of sin.
  - **Ezekiel 18:20** – “The soul that sinneth, it shall die ...”
  - **Romans 6:23** – “For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”
  1. The wrath of God will someday be visited upon all sin and all sinners. We need to be saved from death, the wrath and punishment of God.
    - **Romans 5:9** – “Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath (punishment) through him.”

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2. Being “saved from death” does not mean that we will be spared from physical death. Physical death is merely the “first death”. Being saved means we will escape everlasting punishment, which is referred to in scripture as the “second death.” (See also Revelation 20:6; 21:8)
  - **Revelation 2:11** – “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.”
3. However, while salvation does not necessarily spare us from physical death (the first death) it does promise us that we shall be resurrected from physical death!
  - **John 11:25** – “Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.”
  - **John 6:40** – “And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.”

## IV. FAITH – THE FIRST STEP TOWARD GOD

- A. Faith is the essential first step in the plan of salvation. Faith means to have simple trust and confidence in God and in His Word. To have faith is simply to believe – to depend and rely upon God.
  - **Acts 16:31-34** – “And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”
- B. Faith must be in God, the one true supreme power – not in people, institutions, events, or other things.
  - **Mark 11:22** – “And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.”
  - **1 Corinthians 2:5** – “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”
- C. Faith must be in the name of Jesus Christ:
  - **John 1:12** – “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.”
  - **1 John 5:13** – “These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”
  - **Acts 4:12** – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”  
(See also Acts 3:16; John 3:18)
- D. Faith must be an ever-continuing way of life. Our faith must remain constant and steadfast. We start in faith and we must finish in faith!
  - **1 Corinthians 16:13** – “Watch ye, stand fast (persevere, continue) in the faith...”
  - **Jude 1:20** – “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith...”
  - **Colossians 1:22-23** – (That Jesus Christ might) “...present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached ...”

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## V. REPENTANCE – TURNING FROM SIN TOWARD GOD

A. Repentance is a major theme of the Bible.

1. In both the Old and New Testaments mankind is called to repent. Noah was a preacher of repentance and righteousness. All the major and minor prophets were preachers of repentance. In fact, the prophet Nahum's name comes from a root word meaning "repentance."

B. The word "repentance" is translated from several different words in the Bible.

1. *Nacham* (Old Testament – Hebrew): to sigh or groan, to be sorry; literally to have difficulty in breathing while one experiences intense emotion.

- **Genesis 6:6** – “And it repented (*nacham*) the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”

2. *Shubh* (Old Testament – Hebrew): to turn back, to make a radical change in attitude toward sin and God. This is the Hebrew word used most frequently by the prophets in the Old Testament.

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

3. *Metanoeo* (New Testament – Greek): to think differently, to change one's mind or purpose, a reversal of direction.

- **Mark 1:15** – “And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye (*metanoeo*), and believe the gospel.”

4. The scriptural meaning of repentance incorporates all of these elements.

- Repentance involves remorse – being sorry for our sins, regretting our failures
- Repentance involves an inner change of thinking – a new mindset, a new way of thinking
- Repentance involves an outward change of direction – a new lifestyle and manner of behavior

C. We can experience remorse without repenting. Some people cry after they have done wrong, but they may only be crying because they got caught. While repentance always begins with regret and godly sorrow, it is important that we go beyond just mere regret to changing both our thinking and our behavior.

- **2 Corinthians 7:10** – “For godly sorrow worketh (leads to) repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.”

D. Repentance is a type of death – the death of the “old man,” “sinful man” or “carnal man.”

- **Galatians 5:24** – “And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”
- **Romans 6:6** – “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

1. Repentance is symbolic of “dying to sin” and crucifying the “old man,” our carnal nature.

E. Repentance is not optional – it is commanded and required for salvation.

1. John the Baptist commanded repentance.

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- **Matthew 3:1-2** – “In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
2. Jesus commanded repentance.
    - **Mark 1:14-15** – “... 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.”
  3. The apostles commanded repentance.
    - **Mark 6:12** – “And they went out, and preached that men should repent.”
    - **Acts 3:19** – “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...”
    - **2 Peter 3:9** – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, . . . but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
  4. Repentance is required of the Jew and the non-Jew. The apostle Paul proclaimed that repentance was not just for the Jewish people.
    - **Acts 20:21** – “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”
    - **Acts 26:20** – “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.”
  5. All people of all nations are called to repent. Jesus proclaimed that repentance was a universal call to all nations.
    - **Luke 24:46-47** – “And (Jesus) said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”
- F. Self-righteousness and good deeds do not exempt us from needing to repent.
1. Everyone needs to repent. Because of Adam's disobedience, all humans are born in sin (Psalm 51:5) and no matter how “good” we try to be, we have all sinned. Our “goodness” is not sufficient.
    - **Romans 3:10** – “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.”
    - **Isaiah 64:6** – “But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...”

## VI. THE SIGNS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

- A. When we genuinely repent, we should exhibit specific signs and evidence (fruit) of our repentance.
  - **Matthew 3:8** – “Bring forth therefore fruits (evidence) meet (worthy, suitable, indicative) for repentance.”
  - **Acts 26:20** – “But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the

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*coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet (suitable, worthy, indicative) for repentance.”*

1. Confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all – most especially, Lord of all of your life.
  - **Romans 10:9-10** – “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
  - a. Confessing Jesus Christ is part of repentance. When we confess Jesus Christ, we affirm and declare that we:
    - Accept Jesus Christ to be our Savior (redeemer) and Lord (ruler)
    - Renounce sin and the world (forsake, abandon sin)
    - Proclaim that we are now becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ
2. Confess your sins to God – specifically name each sin you can remember, admit you are wrong, and ask God’s forgiveness.
  - **1 John 1:9** – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
  - a. Scripture does not instruct us to confess or ask forgiveness for our sins to a man or to an intermediary between us and God – it tells us to confess and ask forgiveness directly to God.
    - **Romans 14:11** – “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”
  - b. We are instructed to confess our faults to each other and pray for each other that we may be healed. (James 5:16) However, we cannot forgive another person their sins, nor can they forgive our sins. We can forgive someone for the wrong they have done to us, but only God can absolve their sin.
3. Abhor (hate) sin – have an attitude of aversion and loathing toward sin..
  - **Romans 12:9** – “... Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.”
  - **Hebrews 1:9** – “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.”
4. Forsake all sin. True repentance means turning away from everything that displeases God. This is what is meant by turning *from sin toward God*. (See also John 8:10, James 1:21)
  - **Proverbs 28:13** – “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”
  - **2 Chronicles 7:14** – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”
  - **John 8:10** – “...Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.”
  - **James 1:21 (NIV)** – “Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”
5. Make restitution for wrong. When we truly repent, we will try to make things right with other people, as much as possible.

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- **Luke 19:8** – “And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.”

## VII. BIBLICAL PATTERNS AND EXAMPLES OF REPENTANCE

### A. Old Testament Patterns of Repentance

1. Jacob's return to Bethel (a symbol of repentance) Genesis 35
  - a. Jacob commanded the members of his household to do three things.
    - *To put away strange gods* – This is symbolic of removing anything from your life that stands between you and God.
    - *To be clean* – This is a type of purifying ourselves from the outward filthiness of the flesh.
    - *To change their garments* – This is symbolic of laying aside the “garments” of sin and being clothed with the “robe” of salvation.
2. King David's prayer of repentance
  - a. David was the great king of Israel, known for his beautiful Psalms and his success as a leader, but when he horribly failed God, he genuinely repented. Notice the elements of repentance in his prayer:
    - **Psalm 51:1-3,10-12,17** – “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me... Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”
3. The Prophet Isaiah's instruction on true repentance
  - **Isaiah 55:6-7** – “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

### B. New Testament Patterns of Repentance

1. The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32)
  - **Luke 15:17-20** – “And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”
    - a. The prodigal son “came to himself” – he confessed and acknowledged his wrong.

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- b. He made a decision – he decided what he would do (inward).
- c. He followed through on that decision – he arose and returned to his father’s house (outward).

## 2. The parable of the lost sheep

- **Luke 15:3-7** – “*And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.*”
  - a. Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, goes out of His way to bring the lost sheep back home.
  - b. There is great joy in heaven when a sinner repents.

## VIII. QUESTIONS ABOUT REPENTANCE

A. How often do I need to repent? To answer this question we must understand the difference between initial repentance and daily repentance.

1. Initial repentance is our first response to God that leads us to be saved.

- **Acts 2:37** – “*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?*”

2. Daily repentance is a continual response to God that keeps us saved. It is a daily attitude of “abhorring sin” and a daily action of walking in the “right direction.”

- **1 Corinthians 15:3** – “*(Paul said) . . . I die daily.*”
- **2 Corinthians 7:1** – “*Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*”

3. Daily repentance involves our attitude (*hating sin*), our actions (*endeavoring to abstain from sin*), and seeking forgiveness (*confessing to God*) when we do sin.

- **1 John 2:1-2** – “*My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*”
- **1 John 1:7-9** – “*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

B. What is the difference between penance and repentance?

1. Penance is the act of attempting to pay for sins by self-abasement. Penance involves rituals and works that afflict or torment the flesh. Penance is a form of punishment to appease God’s displeasure.
2. Neither the word “penance” nor the concept of penance is found in New Testament scripture. We

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cannot atone for or pay for our sins. God's response to our repentance is to forgive us – we do not earn His forgiveness, it is His free gift to us.

## IX. THE BLESSINGS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

### A. God forgives.

- **1 John 1:9** – “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”
  1. Forgive – to no longer hold resentment
  2. Remission – the cancellation of a penalty, debt or obligation

### B. God forgets.

- **Isaiah 43:25** – “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”
- **Hebrews 10:17** – “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

### C. God heals and restores.

- **2 Chronicles 7:14** – “If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal (cure, restore) their land.”

## X. CONCLUSION

According to Acts 2:38, remission of sins requires both repentance and water baptism in the name of Jesus. Repentance, which is a type of death, is incomplete without water baptism. When something dies, it needs to be buried (Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12). Similarly, when we repent, the process of remission of sins is complete only after Water Baptism—the subject of our next lesson.

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