



The Good News

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Understanding the Need for Repentance

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Man's modern definition of "repentance" means "*deep sorrow or regret*". However, when we consider the New Testament definition for the same word, we receive a slightly more in-depth definition: "*to change one's mind or purpose as a result of looking back on past conduct with sorrow or regret*". Perhaps it is assumed in man's modern definition that a change of mind or purpose has taken place because of the deep sorrow, but it is important to note that the New Testament's intent by using such a word includes the understanding that change must take place for it to qualify as true repentance. In other words, saying "I'm sorry for my sins" is not enough; I must be so sorry that I set my mind and heart towards never committing that sin again. In pursuing a more thorough understanding of repentance in the New Testament, let's consider a few more points:

"What have I done when I commit sin?"

- 1) I have fallen short of God's glory and expectation. In **Gal. 5:1-4** Paul expresses his disappointment that the Galatians had so quickly fallen away from the truth and explained to them that they had fallen from grace by sinning.
- 2) I have failed in what must be my goal – to not sin. John explains his purpose for writing to the brethren in **I John 2:1**, "*My little children, these things I write to you, so that you will not sin.*" My goal must be to remain pure and spotless from the world (Jas. 1:27). Sometimes I may stumble and falter. Which is why John concludes **vs.1** by saying, "*But if anyone sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*"

- 3) I have severed my relationship with God and the brethren. In **I John 1:7** we find that our fellowship with God and the brethren is dependent upon our walking in the light as He is in the light. If I sin and I refuse to repent, then for as long as I refuse to repent, I am no longer in the light.

"What must I do after I commit sin?"

- 1) Have godly sorrow! In **II Cor. 7:10**, Paul says that "*godly sorrow worketh repentance*". It is necessary for me to be truly remorseful for my conduct, and so much so that I will set my mind against ever committing it again.
- 2) Confess my sin to God! In **I John 1:9** we find the encouraging Scripture that informs us if we confess our sins to the Father, He will be faithful and just to forgive us.
- 3) Set my mind to avoid further temptation! As we mentioned earlier, my goal must be to not sin. To do this, I must be watchful and aware of temptation and be prepared to fight it at every turn. In **Col. 3:1-7** Paul encourages the Colossians to set their minds on spiritual pursuits and not on the flesh, realizing that those who constantly fill their minds with heavenly, godly thoughts will be far more likely to not give any place in their hearts to temptation.

It is vital that we remind ourselves of the seriousness of sin and how important it is that we always maintain our faithfulness to God. We must always be on our guard, realizing that the devil never takes a break, and neither should we. We must strive for perfection, realizing that God will help us if we only set our minds and hearts on Him.