

What Do We Need To Repent From?

There are four words in the Bible with which the act of repentance is related to.

Sin – Definition - To fall short/ to miss the mark

There are over 120 sins mentioned in the Bible.

Sins are both *Doing what you shouldn't and Not Doing what you should.*

We usually think of sin as things that we shouldn't do, but do anyway. But James 4:17 says *“Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins.”*

Sins of Action/Sins of Attitude

Many sins we know of are outward actions and can easily be seen, such as murder, sexual immorality, lying etc. But there are other sins which are in the heart and mind and cannot be seen, such as lust, greed, or unforgiveness. Jesus said in Matthew 5:27, 28 *“You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”* If those sins in the heart are not dealt with, they will eventually lead to some sinful action. Whether they are sins of action or attitude, they need to be confessed and repented of.

Transgression – Definition - To break God's law/ to rebel against God's law. *Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated (transgressed) the LORD's command and your instructions.* 1Samuel 15:24a

Iniquity – Definition - Iniquities are punishment, consequences and a bent or twisted part of character (usually inherited from a previous generation) that drives/compels/influences people to sin (the same sin as previous generations).

Iniquities pass from one generations to another. Only you can know what has been passed on to you from your parents and only you can stop the flow of those iniquities on to your children and their children. David said in Psalm 51:5 *“Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”*

Most people have probably experienced committing a particular sin over and over and even though they try their best to stand against it, it always seems to get the better of them. One of the main reasons for this is because that particular sin was also committed by one or more of their parents or grandparents and now is now influencing that person to do the same thing. David prays in Psalm 119:133 *“Order my steps in Your word; and do not let any iniquity rule over me.”*

We must understand that you and I are 100% responsible for our own actions and we cannot blame our sin on the previous

generation. Although iniquities do influence us or drive us, we still are responsible for our own choices.

In dealing with iniquities, we confess the iniquities from both our father and mother's family line. Confession is admitting to yourself and exposing the iniquity before God. Psalm 38:18 *I confess my iniquity; I am troubled by my sin.* Psalm 32:5 *I confessed my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, I will confess my transgression to the LORD; and You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah* We repent for the iniquities we have committed that also will pass on to our children. Confession is merely admitting to the wrong, while repentance is agreeing with God that it is offensive to Him and then turning away from it. Psalm 51:2 *Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*

Trespass - Definition - to lapse or stray from truth and uprightness. Trespass is also translated as unfaithfulness. This often has to do with wrongs that we have committed against other people.

“If anyone sins and is unfaithful (commit a trespass) to the LORD by deceiving his neighbour about something entrusted to him or left in his care or stolen, or if he cheats him,³ or if he finds lost property and lies about it, or if he swears falsely, or if he commits any such sin that people may do--⁴ when he thus sins and becomes guilty, he must return what he has stolen or taken by extortion, or what was entrusted to him, or the lost property he found, Leviticus 6:2-4

We would be sadly mistaken to think that we have dealt with our sins against the Father without reconciling with our brother whom we have offended. Relationships are the main ingredient in the Kingdom of God. When relationships are broken, His anger will be felt until reconciliation takes place. This can be on a personal level where there are differences between individuals but also goes on to families that have hurt each other and then to clans within the community at large.

Jesus said in Matthew 6:14,15 *“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

When we have either wronged someone or have not forgiven someone for the wrong they have done to us, we need to not only repent before God, but also go to that person and reconcile with them.

If my people, who are called by my name, will 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. 2 Chronicles 7:14

“Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from presence of the Lord,” Acts 3:19

Repentance

What is True Repentance?

What Do We Repent From?

How Do We Repent ?



³⁰*“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, says the Lord God. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin and so shall they not be a stumbling block to you. ³²For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!”*

Ezekiel 18:30, 32

What is Repentance?

In both the ministries of John the Baptist as well as Jesus Himself, the very first words in public were “*Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is near.*” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17)

Many people think that repentance is what takes place when someone is ‘born again’ and that is all. However, the truth is - repentance must become a lifestyle in this process of being set apart unto God for His purpose.

There are three words that may help us understand what and what repentance is not.

Regret – regret is what you feel that you have done against yourself. These are things that you wish you wouldn’t have done or wrong decisions that you wish that you wouldn’t have made. In fact if you could do it all over again, you would do things differently. This is not repentance.

Remorse – remorse is what you feel that you have done to others. These are either words or actions that you have said or done to someone and now you are so sorry and apologetic to the person you did them to. This is not repentance.

Repentance – True Repentance is what you know that you have done to God. True repentance happens when we begin to understand that what we have done and said has hurt God who is our Father.

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.”

2 Corinthians 7:10

Repentance is not just feeling sorry for what we have done. Repentance is a process that involves three things. **Firstly** we need to have a revelation of how God sees our heart. **Secondly**, repentance requires us to agree with God about our heart; that what God is revealing to us by His Spirit is true. **Lastly** it is to turn away from the kind of behaviour that we have been doing to hurt the heart of the Father.

Repentance has very little to do with emotions and many times we can be fooled by tears and feeling sorry. True repentance must be accompanied by the fruits of a changed life.

Repentance deals with three main areas of our lives.

1) Our Minds.

The Greek word for “Repent” actually means *to have second thoughts* or *to change your mind*. When we come to repentance, we find that God is much better than we thought, and we also find that we are much worse than we thought. Some people know that they are sinners and are quite content to remain so, but when they have a clear understanding of who they are

and who God is, then they begin to change their mind about wanting to continue in their sinful lifestyle.

We find that through the Word of God, not only do we need to repent for the bad things that we have done, but we also need to repent for the good things as well. Isaiah 64:6 tells us that our righteousness is as filthy rags. In other words, the very best that we could ever do and offer to the Father is filth. In Philippians 3 the Apostle Paul says that ‘his righteousness is as dung’. He likens his best deeds as human waste.

2) Our Mouths

1John 1:9 *‘If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.’* It is very necessary to confess our sins to God in repentance in order for forgiveness to be received.

REMEMBER: One thing you must realise is that when you confess and repent, you need to confess specific sins (*name them one by one, and when, how and where it occurred. For example, you broke into John’s house in Lae at 12 o’clock midnight through the window and stole his radio*). There is no such thing as repentance of general sin, so you must be specific. We need to name the specific sins that we have committed against the Father.

Our responsibility

We are taking responsibility for our sins when we confess them. It is time for us as individuals to begin to take responsibility for our own actions; When we come before God, there is no more finger pointing, but rather we admit that it is our fault.

That means-

- a). we need to stop blaming other people and circumstances for what we have done with our lives.
- b). we need to stop making excuses for our behaviour, as if it is someone else’s fault. It is not what has been done to us that makes us who we are, rather it is what we have done about what has been done to us that determines what kind of person we become. It is not the injustice or our environment that determines what we become. It is how we respond to that injustice or environment. We can choose to be angry, bitter, violent and sick or we can choose to forgive, extend love and have compassion.

God longs to heal, forgive and show compassion, but he can only do it when we begin to be responsible for what we have done and said.

James 5:16 tells us *“Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”* In this verse you see confession of sins to one another being connected to a righteous

man and his prayer. It may be necessary to confess your sins in the presence of someone else before God, to gain understanding, receive counsel and bring restoration to your life.

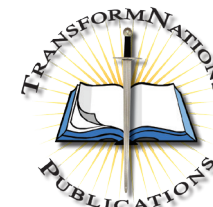
3) Our Actions

In Luke 3:10 John the Baptist makes a powerful statement. He says *‘produce fruit in keeping with repentance.’* In other words, if you have repented, it is not just enough that there have been tears or that the person is sorry for what you have done; there must be actions or deeds in your life that clearly show that you have repented. John the Baptist goes on to tell the crowd *“If you have too many clothes, then give some away. If you have been cheating in your finances, stop it. If you are abusing your power and are intimidating people, stop it. Stop grumbling and be content with your wages.”* (my paraphrase) There must be an outward change if there truly is inward repentance. The Apostle Paul says in Acts 26:19,20 *“... I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.”* Paul preached a gospel that required repentance that was proved by a change in actions.

What does this mean for us today.

- you have stolen anything, no matter how long ago it might have been, you will be required as a result of repentance to go back and replace what was stolen.
- If you said anything about anyone and you know that it was not right, go to that person and apologize.
- If you have cheated anyone, make restitution.
- If you have behaved wickedly, then turn and change your behaviour.
- If you have wronged anyone, apologize and make restitution. You may not be able to go back in your past and make everything right, but where you are able to, you should.

True repentance is not for what you can get out of it. You don’t just repent to stop God’s judgement or so you can go to heaven. True repentance comes because you see that He is a Holy and Just God and you have deeply offended Him with your sins, iniquities and transgressions and He requires repentance and a change of direction because He is worthy of your praise and adoration.



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