

Rock Training Center: School of Foundations

Session Four: Part Two

February 14th, 2010

Repentance from Dead Works

"The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now He commands all people everywhere to repent," [Acts 17:30](#)

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I. What is repentance?

Repentance is a central and foundational theme of the Scriptures.

A. **Old Testament prophets**- "...This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!" [Ezekiel14:6](#) (NIV)

"If a man does not repent, God will whet his sword; he has bent and readied his bow; he has prepared for him his deadly weapons," [Psalm 7:12,13](#)

B. **John The Baptist**-the forerunner of our Lord came, "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins." [Mark1:4](#)

C. **Jesus**- What was his primary message? "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." [Matthew5:17](#)

D. **Peter**- "Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord," [Acts3:19,20](#)

E. **Paul**- "testifying both to Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." [Acts20:21](#)

The word repentance is not too common in 21st century American vernacular. So what does it mean?

Jesus said in [Luke13:1-5](#) that unless you repent you will die, therefore, we had better find out.

To repent is to have a change of heart and mind and to turn toward God.

II. What do we need to repent of?

We need to repent from dead works. (i.e. sin or unrighteousness)

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." [Galatians5:19-21](#)

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power." [2Timothy3:1-5](#)

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God." [1Corinthians6:9-10](#)

"No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother." [1John3:9-10](#)

"None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'...'There is no fear of God before their eyes' " [Romans3:10-12,18](#)

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," [Romans3:23](#)

Sin is not a joke. [James 1:15](#) tells us that sin, when it is fully grown brings forth death.

Sin is not to be laughed at, flirted with, or 'managed'. Our motto for sin intake should not be like the top triangle of the food pyramid, 'use sparingly' where we are trying to limit our intake to a 'healthy' level.

Rather, sin is to be put to death. [Colossians3:5](#), [Romans8:13](#)

[1John3:8](#) tells us, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy** the works of the devil."

The scriptures also tell us that, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" [1Peter5:5](#). Therefore the correct response to the realization of our sinful, fallen condition before a Holy and glorious God is to humble ourselves before Him, acknowledging and

confessing where we are at. It is proper for us to grieve over our misdeeds, to be truly sorry for what we have done.

Those of us who are Christians now, are we full of spiritual pride, thinking that somehow by our own goodness and effort we have become good people? Or do we rightly remember the state we were in prior to coming to Jesus? "...having no hope and without God in the world." [Ephesians 2:12](#)

[2Corinthians7:10](#) contrasts two different kinds of grieving:

"For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death."

Even Judas felt terrible after the full realization of his sin hit him, but he did not repent, and so his grief produced only death. Ask The Lord to turn your grief and shame into 'repentance that leads to salvation without regret.'

III. Biblical examples of repentance

John the Baptist told the religious people of his day to, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance" [Matthew3:8](#). In other words he was saying, "Talk is cheap. Going through religious ceremonies can be done without a true change of heart, so prove it- if you are really repentant, there will be evidence of that in your life."

[James2:17](#) tells us that "...faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."

Here are a few examples of repentance that did bear fruit:

The church in the city of Thessalonica:

[1Thessalonians1:9](#) "For they themselves report concerning us the kind of reception we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,"

Zacchaeus:

See [Luke 19:8-10](#). When Zacchaeus was in the presence of Jesus, he repented and decided to give 1/2 of his goods to the poor, and he also repaid four times over all those he had cheated out of money.

New believers in Ephesus:

These people confessed their sins, and then brought out their books of magic arts that they had formerly practiced, and they publicly burned them. What makes this even more amazing is that they could have sold those books for a good deal of money. See [Acts19:18-19](#).

IV. What is the alternative to dead works?

All of us are doing works of some type. The question is, what reward are we getting for

them?

Romans2:6-10

"He will render to each one according to his works: to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury. There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil... but glory and honor and peace for everyone who does good,"

Romans6:20-23

"When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

According to Ephesians2:10 we have been created by God for good works. Not that we are saved by them (see Ephesians2:8,9), rather they are the resulting overflow of a transformed life.

John15:8 "By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."

Matt5:16 "...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Question:

Will you be truly satisfied in life if you are not fulfilling your God-given purpose?

Trying to use something for a purpose other than what it was created for usually results in frustration.

Would you try to mow your lawn with garbage disposer? How effective would you be at painting your wall with a keyboard instead of a paintbrush?

Things have specific purposes. Ovens are made to heat and cook food. Pens are made to write down thoughts and ideas. Human beings were created in the image of God to bring Him glory, and one of the primary ways we do that is through good works done in faith, which we do as a result of the life of God dwelling within us.

Jesus came that we might have true life.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they might have life and have it abundantly." John10:10

Although we must not be offended by the paradoxical way in which He chooses to give it to us.

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
Matthew 10:39

V. A call to consecration

Excerpt taken from Mark Driscoll's book, Porn-Again Christian:

' In 125 AD, Athenian philosopher Christian Aristides reported on the sexual practices of the Christian church to his king. He said, "They (Christians) do not commit adultery or immorality... Their wives, O king, are as pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from all unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hopes of recompense that is to come in another world." '

Would that be said of us today? If an unbelieving journalist were to examine the evidence in our lives, would there be a marked difference between us and those who do not claim to know Christ? Or would we appear to this outsider to be making many of the same decisions, to be participating in the same activities, and additionally go to church?

Christ wants a spotless bride in His Church. Ephesians5:27

2Timothy2:19-21

Let this passage provoke you to set yourself apart for God's purposes.