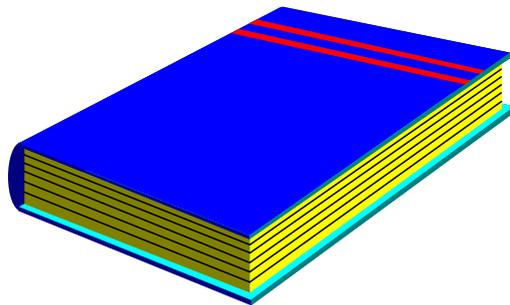


# THE WORD

## BIBLE TRAINING COURSE FOR LEADERS



## FIRM FOUNDATIONS COURSE

## PARTFOUR

### REPENTANCE

I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against Heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.(Luke 15:18-19)

## The object of this study is

### **TO DISCOVER AND PROVE:-**

That repentance is a necessary step for a man to take if he is to be born again.

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On completion of this study you will have:-

- Understood the meaning of repentance.
  - Know how a man repents and brings forth fruit of repentance.
  - Knowledge of God's response to repentance.
  - An understanding of repentance, sorrow and remorse.
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### **NOTES**

There are four practical aspects to these courses: exercises, Bible reading, learning and questions. The following notes are for your guidance:-

1. **Exercises** are to be written in your own words and returned to the Course Administrator through whom this course was given to you or returned to the address below.
2. **Bible Reading** is to be done at the point of the course where you are asked to read. Do not just read the passage but meditate upon it before continuing.
3. **Learning.** These are usually short passages of the Bible for you to learn so that you are able to speak them without reference to the Bible.
4. **Questions** are listed at the end of each study and are to be answered when you are satisfied that you have completed the study. Your answers are also to be sent back to the Course Administrator or posted to the address below.

Once you have completed the work you can e-mail it to [stangain@btinternet.com](mailto:stangain@btinternet.com) for assessment. On successful completion of the whole course a certificate will be sent to you.

If you were given this course by your Course Administrator then return your work only to him. If this course came to you direct from London then please post your work to:-

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The Word Bible Training Course  
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## **The Meaning of Repentance**

It is important from the very beginning to have a clear understanding of the true meaning of the word “repentance” as it is used in the Bible. The term “to repent as found in the New Testament is translated from a Greek word which whenever it is used has a very clear meaning.

**METANOIA** - to change one’s mind

If we remember the foundation scripture for this course we can see that there is a turning from and a turning towards something. This is further illustrated in Acts 20:21.

“Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ, let us go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance FROM dead works.....” (Hebrews 6:1)

“Testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance TOWARD God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Acts 20:21)

If repentance is a turn around then we are turning FROM something and turning TOWARDS someone.

Acts 20:21 shows us that repentance is **towards God**. This is Christian repentance.

Christian repentance is an inner action and not just an outward action. Appearances may be deceiving to those around us but God sees the heart. Many outward signs appear to be repentance but they can sometimes confuse the issue. Tears are a good example of this. It is possible for people to shed many tears and to feel great emotion but never to repent. Some people believe that religious practices will bring repentance but again without an inner attitude of repentance such action is valueless.

The term “to repent” as used in the Old Testament has a similar meaning as in the New Testament. “Nacham” is the Hebrew word and has the meaning of turning or returning. There is a fundamental difference in what we see between the Old and New Testaments. In the Old we see an emphasis on an outward form of repentance that is looked for as evidence of a turning around whereas in the New Testament the emphasis is on an inner change.

To get a complete picture of the meaning and nature of repentance we can put the two ideas together and come up with the following definition:-

## **Learn**

**“Repentance is an inner change of mind resulting in an outward turning around, to face and to move in a completely new direction”**

One of the most helpful stories for the understanding of repentance is the story of the lost Son which Jesus told.

**Exercise 1.** Read and study Luke 15:11-32 until you are thoroughly familiar with it. If Jesus was to visit your community and your culture he would have told the story in a way that would fit into your own culture. Write again the story as if Jesus were visiting your community today. The purpose of this exercise is to help you to realise that you are able to illustrate bible stories and principles in a way that is easily understood by all hearers, regardless of age, culture or education.

Let us now look at this story in detail. We will see the whole process of repentance outworked in the telling.

Firstly we can find 6 actions in this story that the Lost son followed:-

1. **Verse 13;** he was walking in the wrong direction
2. **Verse 17;** he came to his senses
3. **Verse 18;** he had an inner change of mind
4. **Verse 20;** he got up and turned around, walking in the right direction
5. **Verse 20;** action followed his decision
6. **Verse 32;** he came from death to life

In his natural sinful condition of not being born again men and women are in the same position as this son. We have seen in Part 3 of this course that “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way”. Every man that has ever lived has turned his back on God (the father) and His home (heaven). This is the state of every man before he is born again. Every step that he takes is in the wrong direction. He is walking away from God. The light and the truth is behind him and death and destruction is in front of him. Each step that he takes is one step nearer the grave, hell and an endless darkness of a lost eternity.

That is why the preaching of the Gospel is a must for the church. Men and women are walking towards a lost eternity. It is easy to talk about salvation but a vital element of the gospel is that man must repent. Every man has lived as the son in his early life. There is only one course of action that a man can take if he is to be saved.

1. He must stop
2. He must have a change of mind
3. He must change his direction
4. He must turn around
5. He must turn his back to the darkness and face the light
6. He must walk in this new direction

This essential course of action is what the Bible calls:-

## **REPENTANCE**

Repentance is the first move that every sinner who wishes to be reconciled to God must take.

**Exercise 2** Read the following three passages:-

Matthew Chapter 3  
Matthew Chapter 4  
Acts Chapter 2

What was the first message of a) John the Baptist; b) Jesus and c) Peter at Pentecost?

### **Why should we repent?**

There are clear reasons as to why we should repent. As we have seen we are walking in the wrong direction. We are living for ourselves and not for God. We are worshipping things that are created and not the One who created. We are living in rebellion against the one true and holy God. We are dying in our sin. We are on the broad road that leads to destruction. Logically, these are all very good and very obvious reasons why we should repent.

Yet none of these things appear to be sufficient to bring about repentance. Man does not find sufficient cause for repentance in these things. He continues to rush forward in the wrong direction as though blind.

There is one clear, strong and compelling reason that will cause a man to repent:-

### **GOD COMMANDS US TO REPENT**

**Learn** Acts 17:30:-

“Truly in times past God overlooked our ignorance, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”

The whole message of the Old Testament was of God calling His people to Himself whenever they strayed from doing His will and keeping His commandments. But now in the New Testament the whole message is now calling not just His own people but now ALL men everywhere to repent so that they may be born again.

We have seen in our study that the clear message of John the Baptist, Jesus and the early church was very clear “Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” The clear message of the written word is “Repent” the clear message of Jesus, the living Word is “Repent”.

He commands repentance because he loves all that He has made. He commands repentance because he does not wish to see anyone perish. He is the loving Father who loves the world so much that he sent His Son so that all who believe will not perish but have eternal life.

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long-suffering towards us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9)

### **Sorrow and Repentance**

Being sorry and being repentant are not the same thing although they are often confused.

We can have feelings of sorrow because the results of our actions have brought bad consequences to ourselves. This shows only self-pity and shows that the heart is still only concerned with self.

A fine example of sorrow which does not lead to repentance is found in the story of Judas Iscariot.

**Read** Matthew 27:3-5.

This account of Judas who betrayed Jesus is a good Biblical example of being sorry without repentance. Although it can appear that several of the steps of repentance were there, there was no action and no fruit of repentance.

The following appears to be evidence of repentance:-

- He was sorry for what he had done (remorse)
- He returned the payment that he had received (restitution)
- He knew that he had done wrong (conviction of sin)
- He experienced strong emotion (he was seized with remorse)

However the following essentials of repentance were missing:-

- He did not have a change of mind (he only acknowledged sin)
- He did not change direction
- He did not turn around (He hanged himself)

If there had been repentance he would have acted in a new way. However, he was only feeling sorry for himself. His subsequent actions which led to death show that he was still walking in the same direction away from God.

Therefore sorrow and emotion are a part of repentance but they are not repentance itself. If our only concern is sorrow that we have been found out or regret that we must endure the results of our actions then we have not reached the point of repentance.

## **Past the Point of Repentance**

There is a very dangerous situation that a man can find himself and that is to allow himself to go past the point of repentance. Judas, by his actions, had actually reached this situation. What a distressing and pitiful condition for a man to be in. It is possible for a man to walk continually and stubbornly in his own way and come to a place where there can be no repentance.

Esau is an example of such a man. He sold his birthright for a single meal and thus lost his inheritance and the blessing that went with it.

**Read** Genesis 25:29 through to Genesis 27:45

Concerning these events we read in the book of Hebrews that Esau had gone past the point of repentance because he despised something as important and God-given as his birthright. Although there were outward signs of repentance in the tears that he shed there was no repentance.

“Esau, who for a single morsel of food sold his birthright. For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, **for he found no place of repentance**, though he sought it with tears.”

(Hebrews 12:16-17)

**Exercise 3** As a result of the fall of man as we have studied in Genesis Chapter 3, we understand that God was grieved that He had made man and purposed to destroy him from the face of the earth. Read and study Genesis Chapters 4-6 and comment on the following:-

“God will not destroy the righteous. If a man is in Jesus Christ and his righteousness is in Him is it possible for a man once he is saved to lose his salvation?”

Many argue that this is all very well for reading the Old Testament, but now that Jesus has come we live under a new covenant. This is very true for those who have repented and whose life is now hidden with Christ in God. However, many men and women are still living outside of this covenant because they have not received the salvation of Jesus Christ.

It is only in Him that we have assurance of our salvation; it is only in Him that we receive forgiveness for our sins; it is only in Him that we find true healing and wholeness.

A study of Romans Chapter 1 will demonstrate that even today men and women sin and reject God so clearly that there comes a point when they will no longer find repentance.

## **Read** carefully Romans Chapter 1

In this passage which is about the Gospel and the reasons for preaching it, Paul is writing about the situation in which some men and women find themselves because they continually reject God, His ways and His knowledge.

There are many reasons given why the wrath of God has been revealed against such men and women (and why the gospel needs to be preached):-

- Verse 18 - They suppress the truth in unrighteousness
- Verse 21 - They do not glorify God by their lives
- Verse 21 - They are not thankful to God
- Verse 21 - They are futile in their thoughts
- Verse 25 - They exchange the truth of God for a lie
- Verse 25 - They serve the created rather than the Creator
- Verse 27 - They have received in themselves the penalty of their perversion
- Verse 28 - They do not retain God in their knowledge

What a disastrous list of rebellion against God. It is no wonder that God has “revealed his wrath from heaven”.

But even more frightening for Godless men and women is the statement that is made three times in this chapter:-

1. God gave them up to uncleanness in the lusts of their hearts (verse 24)
2. God gave them up to vile passions (verse 26)
3. God gave them over to a debased mind (verse 28)

What a frightening thought that a man may get into such a state of rebellion against God and his ways that God will give them up. Like Esau they will find no repentance even though they seek it with tears.

**Exercise 4** Listed above are eight reasons why the wrath of God is revealed against ungodliness and unrighteousness. In what ways do men and women today live in ways suggested by this list?

### **Evidence or Fruit of Repentance**

When the Pharisees and Saducees came to John the Baptist to be baptised he said to them “Bear fruits worthy of repentance”. It was not enough for John to baptise someone as an act of repentance he first wanted to see that there was evidence of repentance in the life of the people that were being baptised. The baptism did not give repentance to those who received it. To those who had an inner repentance and an outward and visible change of direction, baptism was a witness to such change

(FOR YOUR OWN REFLECTION AND NOT FOR SUBMISSION TO YOUR COURSE ADMINISTRATOR) **Is there anything in your own life or in your own witness that could be seen as not being a fruit of \repentance? What steps should you take to ensure that your whole life is a testimony to your repentance?)**

The “General Confession” of the Anglican Church which is also used by many other churches states that “I have sinned against You (God) and against my fellow men in thought and word and deed”. Mentioned here are three areas in which we sin - thought, word and deed. It is reasonable therefore when thinking about the fruit of repentance that we should expect to see evidence of a change of direction in thought, word and deed. In fact, Biblical repentance demands that repentance is seen in these three areas. There should be an outworking from the inner heart to the outer life.

To express outer change without the reality of the inner change is the “dead works” of Hebrews 6:1. God tells us in Joel 2:13 to rend our hearts and not our garments. An outer expression of repentance without this inner change is hypocrisy.

Let us then look at these three elements of fruit of repentance.

### **1. Thought - Conviction of Past Sins**

We have established that to repent means to bring about a change of mind. Therefore after repentance we begin to think about things the way that God thinks about them. When God says “Yes!” we say “Yes!” When God says “No!” we say “No!” It is to say “Amen!” to God’s Word.

It is seeing that God is infinitely holy, pure, right and just and that man in his sinful unregenerate state is infinitely sinful, rebellious, and self-centred. The bible shows God in all His holiness and man in all his sinfulness.

This Holy Spirit inspired revelation will lead man to a conviction of sin in the face of a holy God and will bring about a change of mind and a confession of sin and sinfulness before God. This act enables God to forgive and to give new birth. This new birth will bring about action in the life of the born again believer.

**Exercise 5** Many evangelists are so keen to “get results” and to see many people responding to the Gospel that they are not always faithful to preaching the whole Gospel. We are instructed to make disciples - not converts. In the course of discipleship:-

- A) What are the main steps that a man must take if he is to be saved?
- B) What evidence of repentance would you expect to see as a man starts to walk in the Christian life?

## **2. Word - Confession of Past Sins**

The conviction of sin leads to a confession of sin. It means that we will speak differently about our former actions. We will agree with God about them and see them as sin. It is necessary to acknowledge all our sin and not to just generalise by saying “Well, of course, I have sinned. Hasn’t everyone?” This is not sufficient. It does not bring forward an acknowledgement of our responsibility in our sin. It is no other person’s fault that I have sinned.

There is a tendency today for us to blame others for our sin. “It was because my mother died when I was young” “It was because I was born into the wrong family.” This has been happening since the beginning of time when Adam and Eve were caught out in their sin by God. (Genesis 3).

“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate.” - Adam

In other words “It is your fault God. It is not my fault. You gave me the woman. She made me eat. If you had not given her to me I would not have eaten the fruit!”

“The serpent deceived me, and I ate!” - Eve

In other words “It is your fault God. It is not my fault. If you had not allowed the serpent into the garden he would not have deceived me. It is the serpent’s fault. He deceived me!”

It is essential that we take the blame for our own sin and do not put the blame on another. If we sin it is our own fault and we are responsible. King David, after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba and arranged the murder of her husband did not blame anyone else but himself and was able to know and to live in the forgiveness of God.

**Read** 2 Samuel Chapter 11

**Read and study** Psalm 51 and Psalm 32

## **3. Deed - Correction of Past Sins**

If we have sinned in deed then we ought to also bring forth evidence of repentance in our deeds. There are three major ways in which this can be worked out in our lives:

- Positive action
- Negative action
- Reconciliation

It would be good to look at all three aspects of the correction or putting right of past sins.

## A) **Positive Action**

### **Read** Luke 19:1-10

This is the story of Zacchaeus. He was a tax collector and he had become rich on the cheating he practised in collection of taxes. However, he had heard about Jesus and when he met Him, he “received Jesus with joy” (verse 6). This receiving of Jesus was accompanied by repentance. The result of this repentance was that Zacchaeus gave half his goods to the poor and paid back more than he had cheated. He repaid four times the amount. Jesus saw not only repentance but the fruit of repentance and therefore was able to say “Today, I have seen the fruit of repentance and that salvation has indeed come to this house”.

This is positive action.

## B) **Negative Action**

### **Read** Acts 19:11-20

This situation followed the preaching of the Word of God with miracles, signs and wonders following. As a result the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified in Ephesus (verse 17) and many believed (verse 18). Here now we see the three stages of repentance - convicted of their sins they confessed them and told of their deeds. They admitted their wrong doing. Then they took action by collecting together all their occult books and possessions and burnt them. This resulted in the Word of the Lord growing mightily and prevailing.

This was negative action

## C) **Reconciliation**

Forgiveness from God does not necessarily set a person free from his obligations towards man, whether these are marital, commercial or criminal.

God’s grace has led many to restore their broken marriages, repay outstanding debts and confess to crimes for which they have not been punished. Some of these deeds of repentance are not always easy. Some suggest that it is too much to expect of a new believer. However, where there is repentance there is the grace of God

These words come with a warning to leaders, however. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict a believer when such steps are needed. The work of the preacher is to preach God’s Word as it is written and not to add to it to fit the personal needs of the individual.

You preach faithfully and the Holy Spirit will convict faithfully.

## Questions - Part 4

1. What do you understand by the Greek word **METANOIA**?
2. Repentance is away from ..... And towards .....
3. Name four things that can look like repentance but are not.
4. Complete the following: "Repentance is an inner change of mind resulting in....."
5. What are the six steps that a man must take if his repentance is to bring him salvation?
6. What is the most important reason that we should repent?
7. What is the difference between being sorry and being repentant?
8. Esau was unable to receive the blessing of his father. Why?
9. What are the reasons given in Romans 1 that the wrath of God has been revealed against those that reject his ways?
10. What fruit would you expect to find in the life of someone that has repented?
11. Does baptism give repentance?
12. In what three areas does the "General Confession" suggest that men sin?
13. An outer expression of repentance without an inner change is.....
14. Who is to blame for your sin?
15. In what three ways are we able to make correction for the results of our past sin?
16. If you preach faithfully the Holy Spirit will.....

**Remember:** When you return the answers to these questions please return the answers to the 5 Exercises that are included in this study.

Write your name here.....