Laying the Foundation

Lesson 2

LEARNING TO TURN AROUND

Catechism Two, Lesson 2

Reading: Psalm 51

1. What Is Repentance?

Repentance is an about face from sin and dead works to the living God. It is an entire change of mind resulting in a total change of life.

A. Repentance is a command from God to all.

… God … now commandeth all men every where to repent (Acts 17:30).

Repentance is not optional; it is the first response we make to Christ’s Lordship. He is commanding us to turn around. Not until we have begun to turn have we acknowledged His right to rule over us.

B. Repentance is a gift from God; He enables us to repent.

… Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life (Acts 11:18).

In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth (2 Tim. 2:25).

When God gives us repentance, we suddenly realize that our actions and even our attitudes are not a private matter. We do not simply hurt ourselves and other people with our sin; we offend God. As this truth dawns upon us—as it did David—we begin to turn away from ourselves and to become concerned about our relationship to God. We begin to see sin as He sees it, a direct personal insult to His holiness and love.

2. What Do The Bible Words For Repentance Mean?

Repentance always means turning around, changing—turning from sin and our own ways to God. The common Bible words (O.T. Hebrew and N.T. Greek) bring out differences in emphasis; but they overlap in the basic meaning of change.

A. The Hebrew language uses two words to describe repentance; the first emphasizes emotional stirring, while the second emphasizes a moral decision to forsake sin and return to God.

(1) Naham means “to feel sorry, to lament, to grieve, to sigh, or to groan.” The word literally refers to difficulty in breathing while one experiences intense emotion. It includes, however, the results of emotion in urging a change of behavior and character. David did not stop with feeling bad—he turned around.

(2) Shubh means “to turn back, to make a radical change in attitude toward sin and God.” It includes both the conscious moral separation, and a personal decision to come back to God. This word was the one most often used by the Old Testament prophets when they called God’s people to turn to God once more, or return.

B. The Greek language uses two complementary terms to describe genuine repentance. The first word denotes the negative aspect of repentance; the second brings out the positive change of position and relationship which results from repentance.

(1) Metanoia expresses the intellectual and spiritual change which occurs when a sinner turns to God. The meaning of metanoia is “to have another mind” or “to change one’s mind, attitude, and purpose regarding sin.” It describes an inner turning around.

(2) Epistrepho indicates the distinct change which results from repentance—a change of position in relation to God. This word can be summarized as a spiritual transition from sin to God, from death to life.

3. What Areas Of Man’s Life Are Touched By Repentance?

We have defined repentance as a total change in man, and it is precisely that. Repentance changes four basic areas in us: emotion, will, intellect, and spirit. Repentance involves the complete transfer of our love and investment; from sin and selfish aims to God.

Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment (Matt. 22:37, 38).

4. How Are Our Emotions Affected By The Working Of Repentance?

Repentance changes the way we feel about sin, about ourselves as sinners, and toward a holy but merciful God.

A. True repentance includes godly sorrow for sin: a broken and a contrite heart. We experience contrition as the Holy Spirit causes us to realize the terrible affront our sin is to a holy God. He further breaks our hearts by showing us God’s love and mercy even while we are in this sinful condition.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psa. 51:17).

B. True repentance includes deep humiliation before the Lord in realization of our need.

For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15).

C. True repentance includes the sense of shame for the evil things we have done. We are ashamed of what we have made of ourselves.

O My God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up into the heavens (Ezra 9:6).

D. True repentance includes genuine hatred of sin and a loathing of our sinful ways.

Ye that love the Lord, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked (Psa. 97:10).

Often, when we find it difficult to be delivered from specific habits of sin, it is because we have not yet experienced sufficient hatred for sin.

5. How Does The Working Of Repentance Change Our Intellect?

Repentance is a complete change of mind regarding sin, a revolution in viewpoint.

A. Repentance includes recognition of sin for what it is. Through repentance we are brought to share God’s evaluation of us. We surrender our defenses against awareness, and agree with God in naming it.

O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips (Hos. 14:1, 2).

B. Repentance includes the realization that we not only “do” sinful things, but that we are sinful people. We come to our senses and see what God has been pointing out about our need for radical change from the inside out. We realize that God is right and we are wrong—we are sinners!

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom(Psa. 51:5, 6).

C. Repentance includes acknowledging God’s judgment regarding sin and our sinful condition to be right and just. We are able to agree with God and put away all excuse-making and self-justification.

For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest (Psa. 51:3, 4).

6. How Does Repentance Work Change In Our Will Or Volition?

Repentance involves the formation of a new purpose and determination. We deliberately turn away from sin and return to God. This is the decision of our will to turn around.

A. First of all, we accept moral responsibility for our own actions and character. We do not put the blame for what we do and are upon others. We agree with God’s judgment that we are responsible, free moral agents. Nor can we blame God for our sin.

But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death (James 1:14, 15).

B. Secondly, we determine to do something about our sins and the ruin of our character. We do not resign ourselves in helplessness to sin and its consequences. We embrace the provisions of God for change through redemption.

I will arise and go to my father … (Luke 15:18).

C. Thirdly, we decide to break from sin and throw ourselves upon the mercy of God. We reject the old habits of sin to receive new life-patterns from God.

… let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof (Rom. 13:12–14).

7. What Spiritual Change Results From The Working Of Repentance In Our Lives?

As we allow God to change us in our emotion, mind, and will, by consciously cooperating with Him, He changes our spiritual condition and makes of us literal “new creatures.”

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

Repentance is our response to God; regeneration is God’s response to us.

A. It is a change from death to life as the Holy Spirit quickens us.

And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).

B. It is a change from the kingdom of darkness to God’s kingdom of light.

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins (Col. 1:13,14).

C. It is a change from alienation to acceptance.

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:12, 13).

Home Study: Lesson 2

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. What is repentance?

2. In what areas does repentance change us?

We will review this by filling in a chart of the Hebrew and Greek words for repentance. You will only be responsible to memorize metanoia.

Bible Words For Repentance

HEBREW

GREEK

Naham—feel sorry

Metanoia—change of mind

This is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stirring

This is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ change of purpose

Shubh—turn back

Epistrepho—make a transition

This is a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_decision

This is a\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_change of position

3. Repentance is a total change; it involves the spirit, the intellect, the emotions, and the will. List briefly the three ways in which repentance affects the will or volition:

a. We accept\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

b. We\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_to do something about our sin.

c. We\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_from sin.

4. How does repentance differ from regeneration?

5. God makes us “new creatures” when we repent. Briefly describe the change this makes in our spiritual condition.