

Thesis: Repentance is commanded by God. Through study of scripture, we notice three things about it. First, repentance is produced by godly grief. Second, it is a change of mind regarding sin. Third, repentance leads to reformation of life. This repentance leads to salvation.

Support: 2 Corinthians 7:8-11; Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20

1. Greeting

- a. Good morning!
- b.

2. Introduction

- a. Repentance is an oft-repeated theme in the New Testament.
 - i. As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus Christ and his kingdom, he preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 3:2**).
 - ii. After his baptism and his temptation in the wilderness, Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (**Matthew 4:17**).
 - iii. Sometime later (**Luke 13:3**), we again see Jesus preaching and teaching to the crowds. His message on that day, "No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."
 - iv. Repentance is given as part of the Great Commission as recorded by Luke (**Luke 24:47**).
 - v. At Pentecost, the apostle Peter preached the first full gospel sermon.
 1. The Jews and proselytes who heard him were cut to the heart when they realized they crucified the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
 2. They asked Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" (**Acts 2:37**).
 3. ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (**Acts 2:38**).
 - vi. The apostle Paul preached to the heathens in the midst of the Areopagus in Athens. He said, ³⁰ "The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent" (**Acts 17:30**).
 - b. The New Testament places much significance on repentance.
 - i. John the Baptist taught it.
 - ii. Jesus taught it.
 - iii. The apostle Peter taught it.
 - iv. The apostle Paul taught it.
 - v. In fact, the verb and noun forms of the word are found 56 times within the NT.
 - vi. Therefore, I must apologize.
 1. I have not given this subject matter the attention it deserves in our preaching and teaching.
 - vii. This will change this morning.
- ## 3. If you have your Bibles, please open them to 2 Corinthians 7. Let us look together at 7:8-11. This will serve as our primary passage in our study of repentance. 2 Corinthians 7:8-11. The apostle Paul writes:

- a. ⁸ For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. ⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. ¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. ¹¹ For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.
4. **This passage gives the most complete description of repentance in the entire New Testament. I submit to you three facets of biblical repentance. First, godly grief. Repentance is produced by godly grief.**
- a. Paul says there was a time when he regretted sending I Corinthians.
- i. I Corinthians is a firm, direct letter addressing significant problems within the church.
 - ii. Paul didn't know exactly how they would respond to it, so he had some regrets.
 - iii. This regret changed to rejoicing, though, when he learned of their reaction.
 - I. The church at Corinth was filled with grief.
- b. He rejoiced, not because of their grief, but because they were grieved into repenting (**7:9**).
- i. The Greek word for grief is a strong word.
 1. Bauer, Danker, Arndt, and Gingrich (BDAG) define it as, “pain of mind or spirit, *grief, sorrow, affliction.*”
 2. It is stronger than the Greek word used for regret, which Paul also uses in **7:8** to describe how he felt about the first letter.
 - a. This word means, “to have regrets about something, in the sense that one wishes it could be undone, *be very sorry, regret*” (BDAG).
 3. Grief (or sorrow) is stronger than regret.
 - a. It is possible to regret doing something and not be brought to the point of sorrow or grief.
 - i. Grief goes deeper; it suggests distress and inward pain and turmoil.
 - ii. Moreover, it typically motivates one to make changes, whereas regret may not.
- c. Paul goes on to say that grief may be godly or worldly in nature.
- i. Paul writes in **2 Corinthians 7:10**, “¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”
 - I. In order for grief and sorrow to do any good for an individual, it must have the proper motivation.
 - a. Grief may be of the world (Tiger Woods)
 - i. Perhaps an individual feels awful for getting busted.
 - ii. Maybe he really dislikes the punishment inflicted upon him.



- iii. Or he doesn't like people looking down at him because of his misbehavior.
 - iv. These things cause grief, but they don't cause the grief that is acceptable to God.
 - I. This type of grief produces death.
 - b. Godly grief stems from respect for and faith in God and his violated commandments.
 - i. Brother Jimmy Allen notes, "[Godly grief is] grief and sorrow which comes into our hearts because we have offended God. Whether we are punished for it or not, we are sorry about it. We have trampled the great heart of God under foot. It breaks our hearts to know that we have mistreated and offended him."
 - 2. Worldly grief leads to death; spiritually speaking it does not do any good whatsoever.
 - 3. Godly grief, on the other hand, produces repentance leading to salvation without regret.
 - d. Incidentally, in **Matthew 27:3-5**, the KJV reads, "³ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, ⁴ Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that. ⁵ And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself."
 - i. The KJV gives the impression that Judas actually repented but then went out and hung himself.
 - ii. The Greek word used here, however, is actually the word for regret (the weaker word used by Paul in reference to regretting sending the letter).
 - 1. Judas surely regretted his actions; he felt remorse.
 - 2. However, he was not filled with godly grief producing a repentance leading to salvation without regret (**2 Corinthians 7:10**).
 - 3. Sadly, Judas died regretting what he had done but never repented.
 - a. When he took his life the son of perdition (**John 17:12**) went to his own place (**Acts 1:25**).
 - iii. If you use the KJV, write regret or remorse in the margin. Judas did not repent.
 - e. Repentance is produced by godly grief.
5. **Second, repentance itself. Repentance is a change of mind.**
 - a. The Greek word translated as repentance is *metanoia* [met-an'-oy-ah].
 - i. *Metanoia* literally means "after-thought" and refers to a change of mind.
 - ii. Mounce elaborates in his dictionary, "Repentance denotes a radical turning from sin to a new way of life oriented towards God."
 - 1. Repentance is a change of mind regarding sin and regarding God, hating the former and loving the latter.
 - 2. The New Testament gives many, many examples of repentance, but the one that sticks out the most in my mind is the Parable of the Prodigal Son in **Luke 15**.



- a. In the parable, we see a young man demanding from his father, his share of the inheritance.
 - b. He took it, journey to a far away country, and squandered his entire inheritance in reckless living.
 - i. Think sex, drugs, and rock-n-roll.
 - ii. He spent every last dime and found himself feeding pigs (which is a big deal for a Jewish man)
 - iii. Things were so desperate that he wanted to get down with the pigs and eat their food.
 - c. Notice the change in the prodigal in **Luke 15:17ff**:
¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants." '
 - i. This young man "came to himself."
 - 1. He recognized his plight; he was destitute and wallowing with the pigs.
 - 2. As a result, he was filled with grief.
 - a. This was godly grief, because he recognized that he had sinned against his dad and his heavenly father.
 - 3. This godly grief engendered repentance as he came to himself.
 - a. He had a change of mind regarding sin as he turned from it and back to God and his father.
- b. Repentance is a change of mind, a radical turning in one's mind from sin and towards God.

6. Third, reformation. Repentance leads to reformation.

- a. Genuine repentance leads to a radical change in one's life.
 - i. As John the Baptist was immersing the penitent for the forgiveness of their sins, the scripture says that crowds were going out to receive his baptism (**Luke 3:7**).
 - 1. Notice what he told them in **3:8**, "Bear fruits in keeping with repentance."
 - 2. He went on to explain himself in **3:11ff**:
¹¹ And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise."
¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages."



- a. Repentance, strictly defined, is the change of mind regarding sin and God.
- b. That being said, true biblical repentance leads to reformation in one's life.
 - i. Repentance has to bear fruit, if it is to be considered biblical repentance.
 - ii. The apostle Paul confirms this. As he defends himself before king Agrippa, he says he declared to Jews and Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance" (**Acts 26:20**).
 - 1. For a person to be truly penitent, he must perform deeds consistent with repentance.
 - 2. The mindset change is insufficient, if it not reflected in one's actions.
 - 3. Repentance necessarily leads to reformation of one's life.
- b. Additionally, restitution is a biblical principle; it is part of the reformation of one's life.
 - i. Suppose in my years of professional investing I bilked my clients out of tens of millions of dollars.
 - ii. Further suppose, I realized the error of my way, and I was filled with godly sorrow.
 - iii. This godly sorrow welled up within me and brought about repentance.
 - 1. I changed my mind regarding sin and God.
 - iv. Acting on this repentance, I then reformed by life.
 - 1. I started doing those things I ought to be doing, and I ceased doing those things that I shouldn't.
 - 2. As part of this reformation, would I not need to try to make my clients whole to the best of my ability?
 - a. Would the golden rule not demand it?
 - i. Of course, it would.
 - ii. Jesus says in **Matthew 7:12**, "¹² So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."
 - 1. If someone bilked me out of money, I would want him to return it.
 - 2. Therefore, the golden rule demands restitution when possible.
 - a. Restitution is part of the reformation of life.
- c. Repentance leads to reformation of one's life, including restitution whenever possible.

7. Conclusion

- a. God demands that each and every one of us repent.
 - i. In fact, our individual salvation requires it.
- b. This morning, in our study of repentance, we learned:
 - i. Godly grief produces repentance.
 - ii. Repentance is a change of mind.
 - iii. It leads to a reformation of life.

- c. Brother Guy N. Woods summarizes, “Sorrow for sin causes a person to repent, and repentance prompts to reformation of life; sorrow for sin is the cause; reformation of life, the effect.”
 - i. Godly grief begets repentance, which, in turn, begets reformation.

8. Invitation

- a. In **2 Corinthians 7:10**, Paul writes, “¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.”
 - i. Paul says here that repentance motivated by godly grief results in salvation.
 - 1. Something good can actually come out of the sin that is tearing you up inside.
 - 2. You can be grieved by it to the point of repenting, by turning away from sin and turning toward God.
 - 3. You can emulate the early Christians at Pentecost.
- b. Luke records in **Acts 2:37-38**, “³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart [faith and godly grief], and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸ And Peter said to them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
 - i. If you are here this morning, and you have faith and godly grief and want to know what to do next, then I echo Peter’s words:
 - 1. Repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - a. Your sins will be forgiven.
 - b. You will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. You will be added by the Lord to his church.
 - d. You will possess salvation without regret.
- c. If you are ready to obey the gospel this morning or you have a care you’d like to bring before the church, won’t you please come forward as we stand and sing.
- d. Let us stand and sing.

