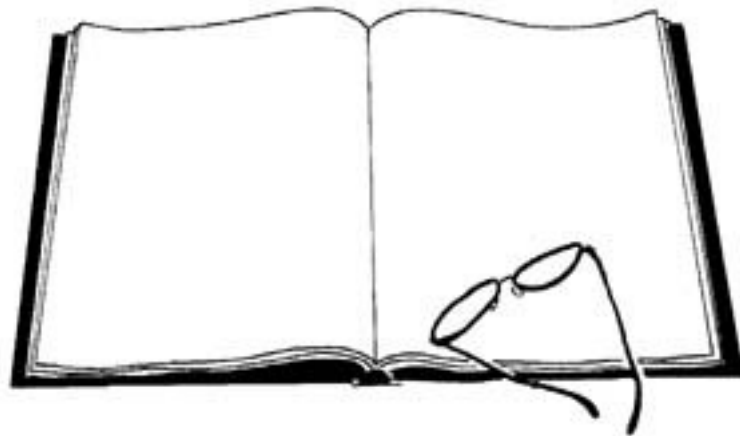


Alamo City Apostolic Church

The “What the Bible Says” Discipleship Series

Unit 3



What the Bible Says About

REPENTANCE

BY PASTOR KELLY NIX

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT REPENTANCE

Lesson objective:

To explain the sinfulness of man and the need for repentance. To demonstrate the wonderful opportunity God has given for man to make a fresh start and be made a new creature.

Key verse:

II Corinthians 7:10

For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.

SECTION 1: THE SINFULNESS OF MAN

Repentance is a difficult subject to approach. This is because it attacks many things we hold dear: our self-image, our pride, our ego. We have been conditioned to develop a high self-esteem and sense of personal worth. While these things have their proper place, they must be kept in a godly perspective. The Bible declares that all have sinned. Yes, **all**. Regardless of your upbringing, your good moral qualities, how upstanding a citizen you may be, or how devout you are in your religious practices, the Bible still says you are a sinner in God’s sight. Wow!

As we studied in our last lesson, we cannot even approach God without faith. However, when we approach God, we must approach Him according to His terms, not ours. Repentance is right at the top of His list, and, if we truly have faith, we will have to deal with it.

Let’s look at the following Biblical proofs of the sinfulness of man:

“The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Psalm 14:1-3).

“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecclesiastes 7:20).

“As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:10-12).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us...If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (I John 1:8, 10).

SECTION 2: THE CALL TO REPENTANCE

Despite the fact that all have sinned and offended Him, God’s love and mercy are so powerful that He does not wish us any harm. His desire is that we recognize the error of our ways and come to Him in repentance. We find this stated in II Peter 3:9:

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.”

However, we must not interpret His mercy and grace as meaning that He really doesn’t care about our sins. He does. He is not joking! In fact, the Scripture tells us that He **commands** all men everywhere to repent.

“And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30).

Repentance is absolutely essential to salvation. Any attempt to progress in your walk with God without a real repentance experience will result in much frustration, and, ultimately, in miserable failure. I Corinthians 15:1-5 explain to us the Gospel, and tell us that it is the death, burial, resurrection, and appearing of the Lord.

“Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve...”

Therefore, we experience the Gospel in our own lives when we repent (die to our sins), are baptized in Jesus’ name (are buried with Him – see Colossians 2:12), receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (are resurrected to walk with Him in newness of life – see Romans 6:4), and live a life of holiness and separation from sin, thus allowing the world to see Jesus in us (Hebrews 12:14). (See Acts 2:38). Notice that burial and resurrection would be pointless if not preceded by death. By the same token, water baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost serve no purpose unless we have first repented of our sins.

“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead” (Colossians 2:12).

“Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life” (Romans 6:4).

“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost...and with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:38, 40).

**“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”
(Luke 13:3).**

SECTION 3: THE MEANING OF “REPENTANCE”

It is vitally important to understand the difference between “repentance” and “reformation”. *Reformation* is basically an attempt to change ourselves. While we may be able to achieve a certain degree of success in repressing our sinful desires and controlling our behavior, the change is only external. Inside, we still wrestle with our old human nature, and struggle to control our negative impulses. Perhaps the most important thing to note about mere reformation is that, while it may make us a better person, it will do nothing to help us be saved. It is entirely a personal enterprise.

Repentance, on the other hand, is a process that depends entirely on divine intervention for success. When you repent of your sins, you realize that you have failed to meet God’s expectations, and turn to Him for help in living the kind of life He desires of you. Repentance involves a miracle from God! Success is not up to you – it is up to Him! Once you understand this, everything else makes sense.

Miriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines “repent” as follows: “*intransitive senses* **1:** to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life **2 a:** to feel regret or contrition **b:** to change one's mind; *transitive senses* **1:** to cause to feel regret or contrition **2:** to feel sorrow, regret, or contrition for.” We can further define “repentance” as 1) to turn around; a total change of direction; a 180° turn, 2) a change of attitude (especially toward God), 3) to abandon sin and turn to God, and 4) to recognize that you have offended God, and to feel sorrow for doing so; to make the decision to never again, by the grace of God, return to your past sins.

You must understand that repentance will never work without faith in the operation of God. It is not the will of God for an alcoholic to take six months to “dry out”, or for a tobacco addict to have to go through withdrawals in order to quit smoking. True repentance looks to God for deliverance, and He immediately and completely sets the person free of his or her negative habits through His miraculous power. It is essential that you believe this! God is able to deliver you – instantly!

Repentance does not suppress a person’s negative desires – it **kills** them. When we repent, we die to our sins. That is why we are no longer under their power. However, we cannot remain in that condition or sin will resurrect and dominate us again. As we will see in the next few lessons, we must proceed to bury the “old man” that we have put to death, by being baptized in water in the name of Jesus Christ. Then, He will raise us up to walk with Him in a new life. This is called receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Once we have experienced this, we will be completely new creations, free from the power of sin that dominated our “old man”.

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

SECTION 4: REPENTANCE IS A TOTAL SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

Repentance is a radical experience, and should not be entered into rashly. When you repent you make promises to God that must be kept, even when the emotion of the moment is past. You must realize that repentance will demand a drastic change in your lifestyle. If you are not willing to commit to this, you have not truly repented.

A truly repented heart will not desire any association with the sinful elements of the world. In fact, the Bible says that if you love the world, the love of God is not in you!

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (I John 2:15-16).

Therefore, once you have repented, you should not desire to resemble the world in your appearance, your clothing and styles, your music, your hairstyles, your speech, your ambitions, or in any other way. Look at what the Bible has to say on the subject:

“And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:2).

“But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered... But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering” (I Corinthians 11:5-6, 15).

“Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” (I Corinthians 11:4, 14).

“Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Timothy 4:12).

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:33).

Many people try to “straddle the fence” and see just how close they can get to the world, and still be saved. The truly repented heart, however, is guided by this question: What can I do to draw closer to God, and to be more acceptable in His sight?

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1).

God looks at our lives to see if we are living in a way that reflects a true repentance experience. He expects us to produce “fruits meet for repentance”. This means there will be a **measurable change** in our lives as a result of repenting of our sins.

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham” (Matthew 3:7-9).

SECTION 5: A REPENTED HEART MAKES RESTITUTION

When someone truly repents, he or she becomes responsible for righting any past wrongs that can be righted. The first responsibility, of course, is to correct wrongs committed against God. This is accomplished by confessing sin, abandoning it, and burying it in water baptism in Jesus’ name. We can then be certain that we have settled our account with God.

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.” (Acts 3:19).

Next, we must make restitution to others. If we have stolen, we must make an effort to repay what we have taken. If we have harmed people in other ways, we must go to them and try to make things right. This is not easy, but the rewards are eternal!

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold” (Luke 19:8).

“If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live” (Ezekiel 33:15-16).

Finally, we must make restitution to ourselves. By living in sin and catering to the desires of our flesh, we placed ourselves on a pathway that would lead us to eternal damnation in the flames of hell. Often, we engaged in practices and habits that were harmful to our bodies. When we repent, we change our course, and set a new destination: heaven. We also make changes in our lifestyle that result in better care of our bodies, because they now become, when we receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, the temple of the Holy Spirit of God.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (I Corinthians 3:16-17).

CONCLUSION

While the consequences of a failure to repent are heavy, in that the Bible says that the soul that sins shall die (Ezekiel 18:20 and Luke 13:3), the promises of God for those who do repent are glorious!

“The soul that sinneth, it shall die...” (Ezekiel 18:20a).

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3)

“If my people, which are called by my name, shall 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” (II Chronicles 7:14).

“Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?...But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby” (Ezekiel 33:11, 19).

If you have not yet repented, why don't you pray right now and let God perform the miracle of deliverance from sin in your life?

Student Exercises – Unit 3
(Please complete, detach, and give to teacher)

Student name: _____

Date: ____/____/____

1. Give three verses of Scripture that declare the sinfulness of all humanity:

2. Explain, in your own words, what it means to repent:

3. What is the difference between "reformation" and "repentance"?

4. To whom must we make restitution when we repent?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

5. Explain, in your own words, how you would answer someone who said, "I don't really feel like I'm ready yet to repent of my sins, because I have some strong habits that I'm afraid I won't be able to break, and I don't want to be a hypocrite."

6. Have you repented of your sins? Yes _____ No _____
If not, would you like someone to pray with you and help you repent?
Yes _____ No _____