

Chapter 2

FOUNDATION 2 **REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

SECTION 1: REPENTANCE

Introduction: The Old Testament prophets proclaimed to Israel that in order to be restored to fellowship with God they must repent, both as individuals and as a people. John the Baptist began his ministry with the message, *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."* (Matthew 3:2), and Jesus began His ministry with the same words (Matthew 4:17). We know that repentance is important in order to be restored to fellowship with God, but we need to understand what repentance actually is and how it is done.

- I. Repentance is a change of mind. It may be brought about by blessing or hardship, conviction or confrontation. It may involve emotion, guilt, remorse, and sorrow. But repentance is a decision that produces action.
 - A. The word used for repentance is *metanoia* (Gr) *Meta* (change or turn) *noia* (mind). Repentance is a change of direction based on a change of mind. (Romans 12:2) *"...be transformed by the renewing of your mind."*
 - B. Repentance has direction (From). In Hebrews 6:1-3 it is called *"repentance from acts that lead to death"* (NIV) or *"repentance from dead works"* (KJV). Repentance is turning away from something.
 - C. Repentance produces action. *"Repent for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand."* Repentance is an action based on a decision.
- II. Repentance is not merely an emotional response.
 - A. Godly sorrow may be brought about by conviction of the Holy Spirit or even by circumstances. But Godly sorrow is intended to lead us to a decision and an action of turning from sin and turning to God through Jesus Christ. *"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation."* (2 Corinthians 7:9-11).
 - B. In the story Jesus told of the Prodigal Son, the young man's circumstances made him feel sorry, but his fellowship with his father wasn't restored and his circumstance did not change until he made the decision to go home, *"I will set out and go back to my father..."* (Luke 15:11-31)
 - 1. His circumstances caused him to experience sorrow and remorse. (Luke 15:14-16)
 - 2. In contemplating his condition he came to his senses. The pain of his condition led to the contemplation that brought things into proper perspective. (Luke 15:17)
 - 3. Repentance brought him to a decision that led to an action; *"I will set out and go*

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 1 – Chapter 1 – Foundation 2

back to my father and say to him, '...I have sinned...'; "So he got up and went back to his father." (Luke 15:18-20).

- III. There is a difference between repentance and remorse.
- A. Remorse is being sorry. Remorse is brought about by an awareness of our separation from God and of the guilt of our sin. It causes us to compare how we are with how we should be. It involves a desire for change.
 - B. Repentance is doing something about it. Repentance is accepting the responsibility for our condition and making the decision to change.
 - 1. When King Saul was confronted by Samuel over his disobedience to God's command he made excuses and eventually expressed remorse. But he blamed his disobedience on others. (1 Samuel 15:10-31)
 - 2. When King David was confronted by Nathan over his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, he accepted the full responsibility, confessed his own sin, and repented. (2 Samuel 12:13)
 - C. Remorse leads to death. Being sorry through awareness of one's sin may only lead to remorse or feeling guilty and sorry. If it stops here, it leads to death. (2 Corinthians 7:10) Judas betrayed Jesus and later experienced remorse. His remorse led to his death by suicide. (Matthew 27:5)
 - D. Repentance leads to life. Being sorry through awareness of one's sin should lead to full acceptance of responsibility and the determination to change by God's grace. Peter denied that he was a follower of Jesus three times, but his godly sorrow led him to re-commit himself to Jesus. (John 21:15-17)
- IV. Repentance from dead works or acts that lead to death. The Bible is very specific when it speaks of what we are to repent or turn away from, and it uses very specific language about how we are to repent from these things.
- A. The Bible says we are to repent from the acts of the sinful nature or the works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-20)
 - B. We are to repent from depending on "useless rituals" to attain right standing with God. The NIV text note on Hebrews 6:1 (*"Repentance from acts that lead to death"*) calls these things "useless rituals." If we are depending on religious activities to do what only the grace of God can do through the blood of Jesus, then even our religious activities become "acts that lead to death."
 - C. The Bible tells us that once we have identified these acts of the sinful nature and useless rituals that we are to face them honestly and deal with them. We are to *"...put them to death, to rid ourselves of them."* We are not to merely be sorry for them, but to deal with them decisively. (Colossians 3:5-9)
- V. There are three levels of repentance for the Christian believer. It is by God's grace that we will

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Foundation for Christian Service – Term 1 – Chapter 1 – Foundation 2

experience all three levels of repentance in our lives. This leads to life and to progressive maturity as a Christian.

- A. Initial repentance - that which leads to the new birth. (Acts 2:37-40)
- B. The believer's repentance from sins committed in the course of life as a Christian. (1John 1:9-10)
- C. As maturing Christians we will begin to walk in the state or attitude of repentance and of yielding quickly to God. This involves a daily yielding, daily crucifying of the flesh and its desires. *"Not my will..."* There is no more war, resistance, rebellion against God's will for our lives. (Romans 6:11-14)

SECTION 2: FAITH

Repentance and faith are both essential parts of a proper foundation in our lives. They are inseparable, like the two sides of a coin. But like the two sides of a coin, they are different and even opposite. Just as repentance must be turning **from** acts that lead to death, faith is turning **towards** God and His grace.

- I. Faith must have direction and focus. Faith is not just a general sense of "believing in a higher power" or somehow achieving goals through will-power or mind over matter. Faith is believing in God as He has revealed Himself in His word, the Bible, and acting on that belief in the way the Bible tells us is right.
 - A. Faith must be **IN** or **TOWARDS** God. Jesus said, *"Have faith in God"* (Mark 11:22) and *"You believe (trust) in God, believe (trust) also in Me."* (John 14:1)
 - B. Faith must have direction. Repentance is *"from acts that lead to death,"* faith is *"towards or in God."*
- II. Some important facts about faith.
 - A. Faith is a gift from God. God gives each person enough faith to look up and see that "there is someone there." We then are responsible to use that faith to actively seek the "God who is there." (Romans 12:3)
 - B. Faith is like a seed. God gives the seed; you plant it, tend it, grow it, reap its fruit. Even small faith, properly placed, can release tremendous power. (Matthew 17:20)
 - C. Faith comes from hearing and believing God's Word. Because faith is "in God," faith grows as we know God better, and one of the ways we know Him is through His word, the Bible. (Romans 10:17)
 - D. Faith comes when the God's Spirit quickens or makes the Word of God alive to us personally. The Rhema (Spirit-quickened, specific Word) is drawn from the Logos (Spirit-inspired written Word). (Romans 10:17)

Foundation for Christian Service – Term 1 – Chapter 1 – Foundation 2

- E. Faith is creative; has creative power. God is a creator. Faith in God releases creative power. (Romans 4:17-21)
- F. Faith is placing all our confidence in the character of God. God's faithfulness is more important than the amount of our faith. (John 14:1)
- G. Faith pleases God. As children we desire to please our Heavenly Father. (Hebrews 11:6; Romans 14:23)
- H. Faith allows us to know and understand what reason and logic cannot certainly know and understand. Truth is revealed by God's Spirit, facts are discovered by man's investigations. (Hebrews 11:3)
- I. Faith is activated or released by the confession of our mouth. When we speak the word of faith (the specific truth God's Spirit has revealed to us by quickening His Word to us), faith is activated and power is released. (Romans 10:9-10; Mark 11:22-24)
- J. Faith overcomes doubt and fear and uncertainty just as light overcomes darkness. (1 John 5:4)
- K. Faith requires obedience and action or it will be dead and worthless. (James 2:17-20)
- L. Faith must become the conscious basis for all of life's decisions. (Romans 14:23)
- M. Faith is the action we take that releases the power of God in our lives and situations. We take the action of faith by speaking or doing. When we enter a dark room and switch on the lights, we don't create the electricity or the light, but we release it to flow through the wires and make the lamp glow. When we tap the keys on a computer keyboard, we don't create the words on the screen, but we activate the program in the computer to do its work. When we press the accelerator of a car, we don't make the car move, but we release fuel to flow to the engine, so power can be supplied to the wheels to drive the car forward.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY AND DISCUSSION

Chapter 2 Foundation 2 - Repentance and Faith

- 1. How would you explain Repentance to a person who feels that it is merely an emotion of being sorry for wrongdoing?
- 2. Do you feel that either quality; Repentance or Faith, can actually work in one's life apart from the other? Give reasons for your answer.