

“Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.”

(Hebrews 6:1–2, NKJV)

“...Not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works...”

- Not laying again – *“to lay something down”*

The writer is saying that the elementary principles of the Christian faith should be laid down like a strong, immovable foundation as soon as we come to Christ

- Once this is set in place there should never be a need for it to be laid down again

The *foundation* of repentance from dead works

Foundation – *“a foundation that cannot be easily moved or shaken; or something so solid that it will endure the test of time”*

- No one notices the foundation unless there is a problem with it
- If there is a problem with the foundation it puts the whole building in jeopardy

What you give your attention to determines what you believe

- Your beliefs determine what information you will act upon to build your life
- You must choose how you will build
- Whether on the bedrock of Scripture and sound doctrine or something else
- What sets at the core of your beliefs?
- How prominent of a place does the Word of God occupy in your life?

“The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”

(Mark 4:14–20, NKJV)

It's not the truth you know, but the truth you put into practice that determines your strength, stability, and capacity not only to endure but also advance in life

A majority of regular church-going Christians are not likely able to provide an accurate description of these principles

- These elementary principles are the starting points that every believer should know

These six truths should be so rock-solid in our lives that we are immovable and unshakable when it comes to the basic and essential doctrines of Christ

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” (Matthew 7:24–27, NKJV)

They are the fundamental bedrock of the Christian life

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith toward God
- The doctrine of baptisms
- The laying on of hands
- Resurrection from the dead
- The doctrine of eternal judgment

Repentance from dead works

Remember that these principles are the foundation of the Christian Faith

- Something set in stone
- A foundation that can't be easily shaken or moved
- Something so solid that it will endure the test of time

What does the word repent mean?

The vast majority of people in the Church do not have an understanding of what repentance is or why it is so foundational to the Christian walk

- Many believers equate the act of repentance with remorse
- Kind of like a “*get out of jail free card*”
- Allowing them to ask for forgiveness, and then dive back into the same sin time and time again
- When you live life this way you open up your life to attacks from the enemy

Some of the first times in scripture the word is used

“and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!”

(Matthew 3:2, NKJV)

“John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” **(Mark 1:4, NKJV)**

“And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins,”

(Luke 3:3, NKJV)

The ministry of John the Baptist was launched with one word, “*repent*”

- According to his preaching, the only way into the Kingdom of Heaven was through repentance

Jesus also began His public ministry with the very same word

- He used it in His first sermon

“From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” (Matthew 4:17, NKJV)

Peter launched his preaching ministry in the same way

“Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

(Acts 2:38, NKJV)

Jesus, John the Baptist, and Peter understood the same truth

- The only way to have a relationship with God is through repentance
- Repentance is the “*birth canal*” through which people enter the Kingdom of Heaven

In fact, it is so foundational to beginning one’s relationship with God that if a person has never repented, he has never been saved

Repentance is the only way a person can be truly delivered from the kingdom of darkness and emerge spiritually reborn and filled with the God-kind of life

- This word “repent” means *to turn or change the mind, or a complete conversion*
- It means to reflect *a turn, a change of direction, a new course, a completely altered view of life and behavior, or a decision to believe, think, and act differently*

Repentance is not the mere acceptance of a new philosophy or a new idea

It is a decision to completely change one’s thoughts, behavior, and entirely turn around in the way one is thinking, believing, or living

- The image of a person changing from top to bottom
- A complete, radical, total change

In fact, if there is no transformation, change of behavior, or change of desire in a person who claims to have repented, it is doubtful that true repentance has occurred, regardless of what that person claims

- This is not a person just saying they want to change
- It is someone deciding to be different
- Deciding to turn, deciding to change
- This decision brings forth fruits of repentance
- This is proof that his repentance is genuine

Emotions (remorse) may accompany repentance, but they are not required to repent

- It is not a fleeting sorrow for past actions
- It is a solid intellectual decision to make an about-face turn

It is a mental choice that originates in the heart to leave a life of sin, flesh, and selfishness and turn with all of your heart and mind toward God to follow Jesus

“For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,” (1 Thessalonians 1:9, NKJV)

- They turned their lives around to serve the living God
- They fully left their former life and completely dedicated their lives to serving Jesus
- Paul was saying their change in lifestyle was guaranteed proof that real repentance had occurred

Some in the Church may see this view as extreme or only for a select few, but that couldn't be further from the truth

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,” (Acts 17:30, NKJV)

- All men, everywhere
- It embraces everyone

God is commanding all people everywhere to acknowledge they are in sin, make a decision to turn or change and bring forth the fruit of repentance

Repentance is God's requirement that brings you into the Kingdom of God

- You don't have to get re-saved every time you sin
- However, repentance doesn't stop with salvation

Yes, nothing can indeed separate us from the love of God

– **Romans 8:37-39**

But the very nature of repentance states that we cannot initially come to God, repent of our sin, and then continue to live as we did before we received the Lord

There are subsequent times in our lives when we need to repent and get ourselves re-aligned with His word in some area of our lives

“What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” (**Romans 6:15–16, NKJV**)

“But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.” (**Romans 6:22, NKJV**)

- A life of surrender is a life that wants to serve and please the Lord
- We are not saved by good works but we are saved for good works – **Ephesians 2:10**

Hebrews 6:1, “...*repentance from dead works and faith toward God....*”

Dead works – any works that produce death

- It could be overt our obvious sinful acts
– **Galatians 5:19-23**
- It could be religious activity – **Colossians 2:16-23**
- If you trust anything besides a simple faith in Christ and His redemptive work on the Cross, that is a dead work

Faith toward God – resting one’s faith completely in God, in total trust of God, and not trusting anything else

- The bible says that people who trust in anything other than Christ will go to hell after death

“Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (**John 14:6, NKJV**)

“He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (**John 3:36, NKJV**)

- See also – **John 5:28-29, 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9**
- Never forget that hell is filled with people who did good things and who lived good lives
- Doing good deeds does not open the door to heaven

Faith toward God is not a static faith that just sits still or is reliant on itself

- This is a faith that is projected somewhere else and at its point of arrival
- The One to whom faith is projected causes it to move forward

This Greek phrase means – *a faith that is projecting forward and is fully and wholly focused on God and not anything else*

- A faith projecting on God alone – **Colossians 3:1-3**
- A faith that leans upon God – **Hebrews 12:2**

This is a faith that does not in any form rely on “*dead works*”

If you're trusting in your “*good works*” to save you, you're in trouble

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,”

(Romans 3:23, NKJV)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” **(Romans 5:8, NKJV)**

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace”

(Ephesians 1:7, NKJV)

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”

(2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV)

In the Old Testament, people didn't have access to the Power of God like we do

- Repentance was simply a decision or desire

In the New Testament, repentance always includes outward actions, because believers have the power of God living inside of them in the Person of the Holy Spirit

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16, NKJV)

- True repentance is coming to a place of agreement with God to change
- We must be ready to repent when the Holy Spirit convicts us of areas that we have strayed
- This enables us to stay in the right relationship with God, with ourselves, and with others

“Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,”

(Matthew 3:8, NKJV)

- God is looking for fruit or proof of repentance
- Repentance is not just accepting what needs to happen
- Repentance is when we decide to turn
- A decision so deep it results in a permanent life change

Four Elements of Repentance

“I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah”

(Psalm 32:5, NKJV)

David was under the Old Covenant, but he had a New Testament revelation of repentance and forgiveness

Acknowledgment of sin

- You cannot repent if you don't recognize something is wrong
- So first, David said, *“I acknowledged my sin to You. I was wrong. I messed up. I need to change.”*

Honesty with God

- David said, *“My iniquity I have not hidden.”*
- When you come to God, don't try to dress up your life
- Don't hide the truth. Say, *“Lord, I'm just going to tell You the whole situation.”*
- *God* knows the truth, anyway, but when you tell it to Him, you're coming into agreement with Him.

Confession of sin

- David said, *“I will confess my transgressions to the Lord.”*

Forgiveness of sin

- God always responds to true repentance with His forgiveness *“...And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”*

Have you ever confused the emotion of remorse for the decision of repentance?

In **Revelation chapters 2 and 3**, we read that Christ personally addressed the seven churches of Asia

- He offered commendations to the churches of Smyrna and Philadelphia for perseverance and faithfulness
- He required the remaining five to repent of their ways or face severe consequences

Jesus identified the attitudes and actions that required repentance:

- Ephesus performed good works without love for the Lord
- Pergamum diluted its doctrine, resulting in great compromise
- Thyatira tolerated a cult of immorality
- Sardis was full of dead works, with no power of the Holy Spirit

And lukewarm Laodicea received the sternest rebuke of all for its compromise, conceit, and utter lack of concern to pursue Christ's approval or presence

Do you detect any of these qualities within your own life to a lesser or greater degree?

- If so, tell yourself the truth and acknowledge it before the Lord as sin resulting from compromise and neglect
- Then follow through to do what Christ requires of you: Repent.