

# Repentance

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**Repentance** means to have a change of mind; literally “re” (change) “pent” (think). Repentance is an important part of God’s work in the soul leading to salvation. There are both positive and negative aspects to repentance. Positively, there should be “*repentance toward God*” (Acts 20:21). Negatively, there should be “*repentance from dead works*” (Heb. 6:1). Repentance is something that needs to come in every time we sin, and it is a process that continues for our whole life; “*there shall be joy in heaven for one repenting sinner*” (Luke 15:7). Repentance is frequently confused with remorse. We see the difference in two of our Lord’s disciples, Peter and Judas. After Peter’s denials, he “*wept bitterly*” (Luke 22:62). But Peter’s life later manifested that a deep change had taken place. Judas, on the other hand, after he had betrayed Jesus was “*filled with remorse*” (Matt. 27:3), but not with repentance. There was sorrow, but not “*after a godly sort*” (2 Cor. 7:9-10). It is NOT enough to be sorry you got caught, or even to ‘feel badly about something’ that has taken place. We recognize what God thinks about it, pass judgment on the flesh, and take personal responsibility for our sin. Repentance is a moral change, not an intellectual change.

**Conversion, Repentance, Salvation.** Conversion is a change of heart about sin, but repentance is a change of judgment about sin, according to God. Repentance takes place chronologically after conversion; “*Surely after that I was turned, I repented*” (Jer. 31:19). Initially, repentance comes in after we are quickened and converted, but it is not the same thing as believing the gospel of our salvation. It is possible that a person could have “*repentance toward God*” but not yet “*faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*” (Acts 20:21). It is not until a person believes the gospel that they are then saved and “*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise*” (Eph. 1:13).