

Repentance

Randolph Barnwell

N.B. (1) This study note is meant to accompany the YouTube video on the subject within the 'Foundation Doctrines' series. The reader is encouraged to watch the video on the Gate Ministries YouTube Channel or FB page.
Link :

(2) In addition to this, an extended teaching series on the matter of repentance is separately available. Link: <https://cutt.ly/o9bzBpF>

(a) REPENTANCE DEFINED

In the New Testament, the Greek word for 'repent' is 'metaneo'.

REPENT = **METANEO**
= "to perceive afterwards"
(meta = after, implying "change," - specifically a change of place or condition ; noeo = "to perceive" - or 'exercise the mind, to think or comprehend'; nous = "the mind, the seat of moral reflection"),
= "**to change one's mind or purpose**," involving a change for the better, an amendment, and used most often of "repentance" from sin.

Literally interpreted, repentance means to 'know after' (meta = after; neo = to know) as contrasted with knowing beforehand (Greek - 'pronoeo'). It signifies a **change of mind**, which results from the knowing after the fact, leading to **regret for a particular path pursued** and resulting in a **wiser view of the past and future**.

When repenting, the change of mind involves both a **turning from sin and a turning to God**.

Ezek. 14:6 Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "**REPENT and TURN AWAY** from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations."

In the Old Testament, two Hebrew words for repentance are ...

- i) **NAHAM** = to repent, implying the following: ...
- a change of heart or disposition
 - a change of mind
 - change of purpose or conduct
- ii) **SHUB** = to turn, to return or to turn back

Considering all of the above, we may define repentance as follows:

To repent is to be regretful or sorrowful of what was wrongly done,
or of acts that lead to spiritual death, accompanied by a true inner change
of heart and mind toward God, which becomes evidenced
by an obvious outward change or turn around in conduct,
behaviour, lifestyle and attitude.

Hebrews 6:2 indicates that we repent **FROM dead works**, and Acts 20:21 indicates that repentance is **TOWARD God**.

Acts 20:21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance TOWARD GOD** and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance involves turning away from wrong, from sin, from unrighteousness, and turning toward God, embracing His righteous principles and values vested and communicated through His Word.

Acts 26:20 but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should **repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance**.

Repentance is not just a change of mind as a momentary action in response to some disobedient act. It is not just an adjustment in time in your decision or thought life. Repentance is far more than that. It includes a re-programming of the mind to comply and align with God's Word or His view on any matter. We must have the mind of Christ as the default setting of the minds of our spirits and soul. Repentance is not just a change of mind, but a change of mindset. The mind is not just changed for the moment, but for the lifetime (more on this later).

(b) LIFE IN CHRIST STARTS WITH REPENTANCE

Life in Christ starts with and is maintained by repentance.

Sinners, not yet reconciled to God, must repent in order to be reconciled with Him, or else they perish. Thus, repentance is essential for the re-establishment of an intimate relationship with God.

Luke 13:3 I tell you, no, but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish**.

(c) LIFE IN CHRIST IS MAINTAINED BY REPENTANCE

Repentance is also for sons of God who already have an active and vital relationship with God. The act of repentance is a continuous one in which those who have already committed their lives to God engage in, whenever they fall into sin. Sons of God, whose sins are forgiven and thus reinstated to relationship with God, are not sinless or perfect. They strive towards maturity in Christ and in this process or progression, will 'sin less' as they co-operate with the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit through obedience to God's Word.

(d) WHAT IS SIN?

Rom. 3:23 For all have **sinned and fall short of the glory of God**

The Greek word for 'sin' is '**harmatia**' which means '**to miss the mark**'. Missing this mark is further described in Rom. 3:23 as '**falling short of the glory of God**'. The mark that is missed is the glory of God. The glory of God refers to His exact representation or nature. This representation of His nature and character is only possible within a son of God.

Heb. 1:3a And He (*i.e. Jesus the son*) is the **radiance of His glory** (*i.e. the Father's glory*) and the **exact representation of His nature**, (*i.e. the Father's nature*) and upholds all things by the word of His power.
(*Author's insertions*)

Sin in its original state, was not the practice of anything morally unacceptable to God, but was a movement of man away from the pre-eminent reason for his creation, viz. to exactly represent God, his Father, and so reflect His glory. This demands that man maintains a vital relationship with God, his Father, by consistently hearing and obeying the voice of his Father. To represent God accurately and so responsibly be the conduits of His reputation in the visible realm of the earth, we have to live by His Word - His principles - His law. To disregard His principles would be to live lawlessly, i.e. without being governed by the principles in His Word.

1 John 3:2

NASB : Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

ESV : Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness,

Note the emphasis above concerns the person WHO PRACTISES SIN, i.e. continues in it as a lifestyle.

The consequence for sin is spiritual death.

Rom. 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

This death is spiritual separation from God as Father.

Adam and Eve were warned that they would sin if they disobeyed God. They chose to live independent of God, their Father, as their life source. They elected to govern their lives from the fallenness of their souls, rather than from Words from God in their spirits. Adam's sin was that he rejected sonship to God and the responsibility of exactly representing God his Father. His sin was missing the mark of representing God's glory, which could only be reflected in and through sonship.

When we reject God as our Father, our life source, we die spiritually, because we vacate 'sonship' in relationship to Him. This sin leads to eternal death and damnation.

1 John 5:16-18 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death. There is a **sin leading to death**; I do not say that he should make request for this. All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a **sin not leading to death**. We **know that no one who is born of God sins**; but He who was born of God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him.

Adam's first sin was not essentially something immoral, but a refusal to believe and obey God's word on a specific matter. Moral and ethical violations are symptoms or outcomes of a departure of man away from his responsibility to accurately represent God, his Father, as His son.

When we move away from the understanding, attitude and behavioural responsibility to function as the sons of God in creation, we have sinned. No one can pluck us out from God's hand, but we can, of our own stubborn will, elect to leave Him. Adam's sin was a disconnection from reliance and dependance on God, his Father, seeking to direct his own life independent of his Father, using his fallen soul (rational mind) as the main instrument to guide him.

As God's sons we cannot sin, i.e. we never venture out from the state or identity of being God's son. However, we may fail from time to time, but we are never disconnected from God, our Father, as His sons. In this respect, the sin that has outcomes of ethical and moral violations does not lead to spiritual death, i.e. eternal separation from God. This is so because an authentic son, although failing occasionally, should not practice sin habitually in an indulgent, deliberate and unending fashion, since he knows that this will have a negative

impact upon his soul and erode his capacity to exactly represent God, his Father. Ultimately, if undealt with and not repented of, ethical and moral sins can in time lead to a loss of salvation completely.

Prov. 24:16 For a **righteous man falls seven times, and rises again, But the wicked stumble in time of calamity.**

When man disconnects from God, his Father, and in this respect sins, he becomes prone and susceptible to a whole range of expressions of disobedience. Many cite the first sin in the Bible as the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. It was not. The first sin was a disconnection of man from God, his father. This man, Adam, degenerated into functioning as an orphan, uninfluenced and not directed by God. Left to his own devices, he employs the fallen and corrupted soul to attempt to live life successfully without God. Jesus Christ came to reinstate man as sons of God, just as He is. When reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ, we are re-configured as human beings to function as God's sons. Now, as God's sons, being empowered by the grace of God within us, we subscribe to standards set by and depictive of God's nature in our bid to live life successfully.

We refuse to function by the fallen Adamic nature. The life we now live is by faith in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and this manifests itself as a life of practical righteousness and integrity on all levels. Step by step and day by day we submit our spirits, souls and bodies as instruments of righteousness. When presented with temptations to sin, we choose not to succumb to it but rather to live by the standards of righteousness as revealed through God's Word. Should we fail in some respect in this regard, REPENTANCE is the means which God has established, whereby we can deal with our shortcomings and failures when they occur.

(e) EXAMPLES OF BELIEVERS REPENTING

- Sons of God can sin. When they do, they must confess their sins and repent. The Apostle John was writing to Christians, when he said ...

1 John 1:8-10 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

- Sins against each other as brothers must be repented of and forgiven.

Luke 17:3 Be on your guard! If your **brother sins**, rebuke him; and if **he repents, forgive him**. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, **'I repent,' forgive him.**"

- In five of the letters to the seven churches, believers are called upon to repent:

Rev. 2:5 Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and **repent and do the deeds you did at first**; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place - **unless you repent**. (Church at **Ephesus**)

Rev. 2:16 Therefore **repent**; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth. (Church at **Pergamum**)

Rev. 2:21-22 I gave her **time to repent**, and she does not want to **repent of her immorality**. Behold, I will throw her on a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they **repent of her deeds**. (Church at **Thyatira**)

Rev. 3:3 So remember what you have received and heard; and keep it, and **repent**. (Church at **Sardis**)

Rev. 3:19 Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore **be zealous and repent**. (Church at **Laodicea**)

- James urges believers to confess their sins, faults and trespasses to one another.

James 5:16a Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. **(NASB)**

James 5:16a Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. **(NKJV)**

James 5:16a Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. **(KJV)**

James 5:16a Confess to one another therefore your faults (your slips, your false steps, your offenses, your sins) and pray [*also*] for one another, that you may be healed and restored [*to a spiritual tone of mind and heart*]. **(AMP)**

- Believers at the Corinthian Church were called upon to repent of sin.

2 Cor. 7:9-10 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the **point of repentance**; for you were made **sorrowful according to the will of God**, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the **sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation**, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Entering the Kingdom of God requires us to first REPENT.

Matt. 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, “Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”

Living successfully in the Kingdom of God requires ongoing repentance from sins, trespasses, faults, weakness, etc.

(f) ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF TRUE REPENTANCE

While we will cover a range of characteristic features of true repentance, we could summarise them as follows:

- *Conviction of Sin*
- *Acknowledgement of Sin*
- *Godly Sorrow*
- *Change of Mind - Decision*
- *Confession of Sin*
- *Hating the Sin*
- *Forsaking the Sin*
- *Restitution*
- *Overcoming the Sin*

1. HUMILITY THAT ACKNOWLEDGES AND CONFESSES SIN

Forgiveness of sin is impossible without there being repentance from sin, and repentance from sin requires that we first acknowledge and come to terms with the fact of our sin.

Acts 3:19 Therefore **repent and return**, so that **your sins may be wiped away**, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

Acts 2:37,38 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” Peter said to them, **Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the **forgiveness of your sins**; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In repenting from sin, there must be a recognition and confession of sin that then leads to the forgiveness of sin.

Psalm 51:2-4 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, And my **sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned** and done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.

Psalm 32:1-6

- 1 How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!
- 2 How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
- 3 When I **kept silent about my sin**, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long.
- 4 For day and night **Your hand was heavy upon me**; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.
- 5 I **acknowledged my sin to You**, And **my iniquity I did not hide**; I said, “**I will confess my transgressions to the Lord**”; And **You forgave the guilt of my sin**. Selah.

Luke 24:45-47 Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and He said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

It is to God alone that we confess sin (Psalm 51). There is a place for restitution (discussed later) and for the forgiveness of sins of others against us that can involve people asking forgiveness of us. But by and large, we seek forgiveness of sin from God Himself.

It requires humility to acknowledge and confess one’s sins. Pride will prevent this. Humility incorporates one’s need for and dependance on God. Pride includes a self-righteous position that refuses to own up to the fact of your sin.

David acknowledged his sin when the prophet confronted him about his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband, Uriah. He repented from his sin, acknowledging and confessing it as recorded in Psalm 51.

2 Sam. 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, “**I have sinned against the Lord.**” And Nathan said to David, “**The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.**”

Unlike David, King Saul refuses to repent and turn away from his pride. He displayed a pattern of disobedience without true repentance and transformation. Firstly, through impatience, he could not wait for Samuel’s arrival, and offered sacrifices to God as king when this was the preserve of priests only.

2. REPENTANCE IS GIVEN BY GOD TO MEN AND THEREFORE MUST BE RECEIVED

The following verses highlight the profound truth that while we need to acknowledge and confess sin to receive forgiveness from God, the fact that we are able to repent in itself is a gift given to us by God. It is HIS kindness that leads us to repentance.

Acts 11:18 When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, “Well then, God has **GRANTED** to the Gentiles also the **REPENTANCE** that leads to life.”

(see also 2 Tim. 2:25)

Acts 5:31 He is the one whom God exalted to his right hand as a prince and a Saviour to **GRANT REPENTANCE** to Israel, and forgiveness of sin.

Romans 2:4 Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, Not knowing that the **KINDNESS OF GOD LEADS** you to **REPENTANCE**?

This is a two-fold picture. Here is the picture of man, as a result of grace, acknowledging and confessing sin, repenting and changing his mind and conduct, of his own will, yet this entire process or capacity to do so, is all as a result of God’s willingness to GIVE the capacity to repent. It is not just the forgiveness of sin that God grants, but the actual ability to repent is God-given. Where there is openness in the heart to respond to God’s Word, God’s divine grace is activated to empower the person to respond appropriately to the Lord.

So then, repentance is an attitude and an act that is induced and made possible by God. This empowerment by God to humans, to repent or to respond appropriately to Him, based on their inclination towards Him, can be well demonstrated in scripture.

THE KINDNESS OR GOODNESS OF GOD LEADS TO REPENTANCE

Rom. 2:4 Or do you **think lightly of the riches of His kindness** and tolerance and patience, Not knowing that the **KINDNESS OF GOD LEADS** you to **REPENTANCE?** (NASB)

Rom. 2:4b the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (NKJV)

God’s goodness or kindness leads men to be able to repent. One of the ways in which God demonstrates His kindness and goodness is by His providence and protection. He actually causes rain to fall on all men, both the just and unjust. God is a good God.

Matt 5:44,45 But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

His goodness displayed toward people is one of the ways He anticipates that men will then turn from their life of sin and wickedness – to repent, acknowledge and confess their sin, and ultimately forsake their sin and turn to HIM wholeheartedly, in full surrender and service.

Whenever God's goodness is unveiled to us, it highlights our unworthiness. We should respond with deep contrition and humility. The imperative in Rom. 2:4 is NOT TO TAKE HIS GOODNESS LIGHTLY OR FOR GRANTED. The **New Living Translation of the Bible** frames it aptly

Rom. 2:4 Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin? (NLT)

3. REPENTANCE IS ESSENTIALLY A DECISION, NOT PRIMARILY AN EMOTION

To repent is to come to a firm inward resolve. It is to alter your mind regarding a particular course. In fact, if there is no change of mind, repentance has not taken place. Emotion can accompany true repentance, but it is not the defining characteristic of repentance, nor does it indicate repentance.

Hebrews 12:17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears

In fact, human emotion (e.g. tears or visible grief) could be entirely absent, and yet true repentance could take place.

The **Parable of the Lost Son** is an outstanding **illustration of the principle of repentance** being expressed by a strong change of mind and then acting upon that decision. Read **Luke 15:11-32** and note the following:

(i) He came to a place of **recognition and acknowledgement** of the error of his way.

Luke 15:17 But when **he came to his senses**, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but **I am dying here** with hunger!

(ii) He then changed his mind by making a strong inward decision.

Luke 15:18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight

(iii) He acted on the decision he made internally and this was evidenced by his outward changed behaviour.

Luke 15:20 (a) So he got up and came to his father.

(iv) The engagement of his will to change is fueled by the knowledge that his father would be willing to 'give' repentance and forgiveness of his sin.

Luke 15:20(b) But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

REPENTANCE IS A CHANGE OF MINDSET, NOT JUST A CHANGE OF MIND

Repentance does not just merely refer to a change of mind, but a change of mindset. This is what the Scriptures refer to as being "RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT OF YOUR MIND", referring to the internal disposition or persuasion of the mind.

Eph. 4:22-24 that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, **and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind**, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

The thief who truly repents, does not simply change his mind about stealing. He does this, BUT ALSO, installs the righteous principle within himself of working with his own hands and giving to others in a spirit of generosity (as opposed to taking illegally from others).

Eph. 4:28 He who steals must **steal no longer**; but rather **he must labor**, performing with his own hands what is good, so that **he will have something to share with one who has need**. **(NASB)**

Eph. 4:28 If you are a thief, **quit stealing**. Instead, **use your hands for good hard work**, and then **give generously** to others in need. **(NLT)**

Man is made of up three parts - spirit, soul and body. The human spirit is native to the realm of the unseen spiritual world, for it came out from God Himself and was given to man. The soul is that part of man which is an interface between his spirit and body, and enables him to

live intelligibly in the physical earth - the realm of the 'seen'. Both man's spirit and soul have a MIND, WILL and EMOTIONS. With the MIND, we think and understand; with the WILL, we make decisions; and with the EMOTIONS, we 'feel'. God's original design for man was that HE, God, would speak to man through His Spirit and Word to man's spirit, so as to condition his spirit as the sphere from which man is to govern his life. Having the principles of God in his spirit, man now is able to lead and direct his soul, which must blindly follow the leading of his spirit, which has already being informed and influenced by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God. Man, then, in his body, is able to walk in obedience to God. When he functions like this, he functions as GOD's SON, who is led by the Spirit. (Refer to my teaching series, 'THE SPIRITUAL MAN' available on my website, where I deal more comprehensively with this process – see endnotesⁱ for direct links).

What sin and disobedience in the fall of humanity has done, is that it placed the fallen, unrenewed soul above the authority of the spirit in man. The mind of the soul rivals and usually rebels against the mind of the spirit. Renewing the mind is crucial for transformation.

Roman 12:1,2 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

REPENTANCE involves not just changing the mind of the spirit and soul, but adjusting it permanently to be compliant with God's Word and Spirit. If repentance is a DECISION, it centres on the MIND. A strong DECISION is made in the mind of the spirit of the man. This spirit then leads the mind of the soul to comply with the demands of the Holy Spirit through His Word. The result would be a transformation in the life and outward behaviour of the person.

Repentance is rooted in a strong desire to get back to functioning as a SON OF GOD - the mind, will and emotions of whose spirit is dependent on God, the Father's, Word and Spirit, to effectively and successfully live in the earth in a culture of total obedience to His Word. The one who sees his need to repent, sees how depraved and deficient his functioning as an 'orphan' is.

Repentance is about getting back to being a SON OF GOD in one's understanding and practical behaviour. Our minds are either spiritual or carnal.

Rom. 8:5-8

- 5 For those who are according to the **flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh**, but those who are **according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit**.

- 6 For the **mind set on the flesh is death**, but the **mind set on the Spirit is life and peace**,
7 because the **mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God**; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so,
8 and those **who are in the flesh cannot please God**.

4. REPENTANCE INVOLVES A GODLY SORROW FOR SIN OR WRONG DOING

Repentance means that you are sorry enough to stop sinning.

2 Corinthians 7:8-10

- 8 For though I **caused you sorrow by my letter**, I do not regret it; though I did regret it - for I see that that **letter caused you sorrow**, though only for a while -
9 I now rejoice, not that **you were made sorrowful**, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made **sorrowful according to the will of God**, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.
10 For the **sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance** without regret, leading to salvation, but the **sorrow of the world produces death**.

Godly sorrow, according to or in keeping with the will of God, leads to or results in repentance.

The Greek word for sorrow here is 'lupe', meaning '**sadness or grief**'. Unlike other Greek words in the New Testament expressing grief, this specific grief or sorrow is **largely inward without necessarily expressing itself outwardly in terms of external grieving or mourning**. It is an **intense feeling of sorrow for doing wrong - a sorrow so strong it results in a drastic change of mind and future behaviour**.

The Scripture highlighted here also indicates that there is a worldly sorrow that does not result in repentance and life but rather leads to death. This highlights the next principle of repentance, discussed below.

5. REPENTANCE IS REMORSE WITH INTERNAL HEART TRANSFORMATION

In the New Testament there are two words translated 'repentance'. The one is '**metanoeo**' which we have discussed. The other is **METAMALLOMAI**.

METAMALLOMAI = remorse; to regret (without an inward mind or heart change)ⁱⁱ

This word expresses the desire that what was wrongly done may be undone, accompanied with regret or even remorse, but with no effective change of heart. Nowhere is forgiveness of sins promised in reference to this kind of repentance – which really is not true biblical repentance.

‘Metamallomai’ means little more than **selfish dread of the consequence of what has been done**, whereas ‘metanoeo’ means **regret and turning away from evil toward good by an inward heart change brought about by the Lord**. Put differently, ‘metamallomai’ relates to **a change of mind because of the consequences of one’s sin**, but ‘metanoeo’ relates to **a change of mind because of the sinfulness of an unrighteous act**. Insincere repentance relates to having sorrow more for the consequences of sin, more for the negative results or reaping of wrong actions, than for the wickedness of the sinful deed itself.

Let’s look at two examples where ‘**metamallomai**’ is evident in this sense, viz. Judas and Esau:

TWO EXAMPLES OF INSINCERE REPENTANCE WITHOUT A REAL INWARD CHANGE OF HEART AND MIND :

Example 1: Judas

Matt. 27:3,4 Then when Judas, who had betrayed Him, saw that He had been condemned, he **felt remorse** and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.” But they said, “What is that to us? See to that yourself!”

Judas did not experience sincere repentance. In verse 5 above, it indicates that he hung himself. His ‘worldly sorrow’ culminated in death, not life. He did not have a godly sorrow for the wrong he did. There was no internal change of mind and heart. Note that he became remorseful only after he ‘saw that he was condemned’. In other words, he was remorseful or sorrowful more for the results of his sin, than for the sin itself. Jesus had warned him many times and given him many opportunities to repent before going through with his sin of betrayal. Now it was too late. He consciously embarked upon a course of sin, for which afterwards, although he felt strong remorse, there was no ‘turning back’ or change for the good. He was in deep anguish, full of regret, but was unwilling to come to a place of firm decision, change his mind and then his conduct. He left it for far too long. It is possible for you, over an extended period of time, despite recurrent warnings, rebukes and correction, to rebelliously continue in sin and come to a position where you erode your capacity to repent. At this place there is no turning back.

Prov. 29:1 He who is often rebuked, and hardens his neck, Will suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy. **(NKJV)**

Just before Judas received his reward of 30 pieces of silver for betraying Jesus, Peter denied Jesus and wept bitterly for it.

Matt. 26:75 And Peter remembered the word which Jesus had said, “Before a rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.” And he went out and **wept bitterly**.

I believe that Peter genuinely repented, as is proven by his restoration. He did not lose his relationship with Christ, nor his apostleship. Judas lost both (See Acts 1:25). So emotion, while not being central to true repentance, can accompany it.

Example 2: Esau

Hebrews 12:15-17 See to it that no one comes **short of the grace of God**; that no **root of bitterness** springing up **causes trouble**, and by it many be defiled; that there be **no immoral or godless person like Esau**, who **sold his own birthright for a single meal**. For you know that **even afterwards**, when **he desired to inherit the blessing**, **he was rejected**, for **he found no place for repentance**, though he **sought for it with tears**.

The word for repentance here is ‘metanoia’ (this means the same as the verb, metaneo). Esau could not find this place or position of repentance.

Genesis 25:43 says that Esau ‘despised his birthright’. In Hebrew culture, the birthright ensured a double portion of the father’s possessions and also of continuing the family’s name and heritage. The firstborn son received the birthright. Birthright is interwoven with the concept of firstborn sonship. We, collectively, are God’s firstbornⁱⁱⁱ sons in Christ (Rom. 8:28,29), tasked with the responsibility of exactly representing God in creation and managing creation on His behalf, ultimately to reconcile all creation, especially humanity, back to God, the Father (2 Cor. 5:16-21). Esau traded all of this for a moment’s satisfaction of his fleshly nature.

To quickly and temporarily appease his hunger (speaks of uncontrollable lusts, desires and ambitions), he sold his birthright to his brother, Jacob, for a bowl of soup. In doing this, he despised his birthright - he lightly esteemed it and held it in contempt. His actions showed utter disdain for all the covenant promises made to Abraham, and more importantly, for God and His global purposes, which would be effected through them for generations to come.

When he realised the consequences of his action, Esau sought to regain the birthright, but found no place for repentance, although he sought it with strong tears - but this was mere remorse and sorrow for the negative results of his sinful action. He was not sincerely sorry for the sin itself. Instead, he was rejected (means ‘disqualified after thorough examination’). He went past the ‘place of repentance’.

Many today do the same as Esau. They deliberately indulge in sensual or carnal pleasure, gratifying human appetite, in direct contravention of God's laws. In doing so, they despise their spiritual inheritance and destiny in God. Later, they become remorseful and regret the consequences of their shortsighted sinful deeds, more than the seriousness of the sinful offence. Be careful that you do not go past the 'place' of repentance.

We must mature to a place where we truly repent, not out of fear for God's judgement or the results of our sin, but more so for the fact that we hate the sin so much and that it displeases God, whom we love and do not seek to displease. This leads us to the next two essential characteristics of true biblical repentance.

Note: Remorse, without true repentance, usually takes place in the emotions of the soul. There may be feelings of regret that are primarily emotively rooted, but not decisively engaged. The person feels 'bad' and can have feelings of deep regret, yet only the emotions of the soul have been affected, without an adjustment of future behaviour, to comply with God's principles.

It is my view that GODLY SORROW is a sorrow that starts in and with the emotions and mind of one's spirit, and this would be transmitted to the emotions and mind of one's soul. Deep sorrow that is worldly starts with the emotions of the soul, and may not be reflective of the fact that the person's spirit is sorrowful for having done wrong, and thus hating the actual sin itself. Worldly sorrow focuses on the consequences of the sin; Godly sorrow focuses on the abhorrent, distasteful and un-Christ like nature of the sin itself.

6. TRUE REPENTANCE ALSO INCORPORATES A HATRED FOR SIN AND WILL RESULT IN A FORSAKING OF SIN

It is said of Jesus that he loved righteousness and hated iniquity or lawlessness.

Hebrews 1:9 "You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness above Your companions."

In repenting sincerely from error and sin, one must depart from that way of error and sin, otherwise true repentance has not taken place. The liar must stop lying; the thief must stop stealing; the fornicator must stop fornicating; the adulterer must terminate the adulterous affair; etc.

Isaiah 55:7 Let the wicked forsake his way And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let Him return to the Lord, And He will have compassion on him, And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.

Jesus forgave an adulterous woman of her sin, but required of her that she does not revert back to this sinful lifestyle.

John 8:10,11 Straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?” She said, “None, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you, either. Go, from now on sin no more.

Note: Jesus’ words, “**GO AND SIN NO MORE**”, is both an expectation and empowerment of this woman. In His command to her, He is also empowering her through grace released in His words, not to sin. What God expects of us, He also empowers us to do. This is the work of HIS GRACE in us. (This issue is dealt more thoroughly in my teaching series on ‘GRACE’ available on my website. Refer to the specific part title ‘PART (G) - THE EFFECTS OF GRACE’^{iv}).

7. OBSERVABLE, OUTWARD TRANSFORMATION, INCLUDING RESTITUTION, EVIDENCES TRUE REPENTANCE

When Jesus forgave the woman caught in the act of adultery, He did not say, “Go and sin some more”, but “Go and sin **NO** more”. True repentance incorporates a deliberate turning away from sinful behaviour. Repentance must bear ‘FRUIT’.

Luke 3:8a Therefore bear **fruits in keeping with repentance**,

Acts 26:19, 20 So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should **repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.**

Luke 19:8 Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, **half of my possessions I will give to the poor**, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will **give back four times as much.**”

Ultimately, a change of attitude and mind that manifests in a change of action and lifestyle is the most compelling evidence that repentance has taken place.

RESTITUTION DEMONSTRATES TRUE REPENTANCE, AND ACTIVATES SIGNIFICANT DIVINE BLESSING IN YOUR LIFE

We concluded the last session with a focus on the fact that true repentance is evidenced by an outward transformation in one’s behaviour for the good (see **Luke 3:8a** and **Acts 26:19,20**). We also concluded that, in the final analysis, a change of attitude and mind that manifests in a change of action and lifestyle is the most compelling evidence that repentance

has taken place. This includes a forsaking of the sin or the wrong done. Further to this, however, biblical repentance also incorporates seeking to rectify any wrong done, within your capacity to do so.

Restitution is paying back or returning something unlawfully taken, or making right any wrong done. God forgives our sin, but we may still have to reap the natural consequences of sin. **God will give us grace to deal with the results of our sinful deeds**, for which we have repented. Sometimes our repentance may require us to make restitution in helping to deal with the results of our sin.

God required restitution under the Old Covenant.

Exodus 22:1 If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep. [See Also Lev. 6:5; Num. 5:6-7]

In the New Testament, an example of restitution is found in **Luke 19:8**, where Zaccheus said, “Half of my goods I will give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I will restore to him fourfold”.

Restitution validates and authenticates the claim to have repented. Restitution is often referred to as “**THE OTHER ‘R’ of REPENTANCE**” and the “**MISSING INGREDIENT IN REPENTANCE**”. Restitution seeks to put the wrong right, **especially in the matter of sins against people**. Apologies and confessions to affected persons should be made. This aids the healing process in someone whom you might have intentionally or unintentionally hurt or offended. If you have sinned against someone in some respect, while you have asked God for forgiveness, you should also ask forgiveness from the person whom you have hurt and who may (or not) be offended or alienated from you relationally.

Sincere repentance will naturally lead to a desire to redress wrongs. This will be prompted and led by the Holy Spirit. Restitution must be Holy Spirit induced and led. No one prompted Zaccheus to make restitution. He did it spontaneously as a result of the work of salvation within his heart. In the desire for restitution, the Holy Spirit is very faithful to lead you as to what to do, when to do it, to whom to direct it, and what it should actually consist of. At times, full restitution might be possible. What is important is that the gesture of restitution is made. You would obviously give attention to the fact that restitution be an adequate response to the wrong done and a true reflection of your heart, all this within the means and resources available to you. Having said this though, also factor in the principle of personal sacrifice in the process of making restitution. It will cost you something, whether it is a letter of apology, phone call, email, text message, or a kind deed or monetary gift.

There are some sins for which there can be adequate restitution made. In these cases, make some form of restitution indicating genuine repentance, without feeling guilty about the inability to make full restitution. Restitution results from our salvation - it is not a requirement for salvation. Whether or not you make restitution, you are still saved - you are still God's son, destined to be with Him in eternity. Restitution simply opens up the pathway to rapidly fuel your progression to maturity in Christ. It also communicates powerfully the sincerity of the work of grace and salvation in your life, and can serve as an avenue of ministry and grace to the person to whom restitution is made. It sets a firm foundation for the experience of tremendous blessings of various kinds within your life .

A Word of Personal Advice:

May I offer a word of personal advice here - this being my subjective opinion which may differ from others. It is not biblically wrong to require restitution to be made to you if you are wronged. Yet, it is my personal view that restitution in certain instances as directed by the Holy Spirit, should not be insisted upon, especially by sons of God who have been wronged. In fact, they should freely forgive the person, as God did, and cancel 'any debt' associated with the sin. But, if the person making the restitution does so willingly, motivated by sincerity, the restitution should be welcomed. (See Matthew 18:21-35 - The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant; Matt 6:12 : "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors")

Repentance From Dead Works

We are commanded to repent from sin generally, but the specific thing from which we must repent, isolated in **Hebrews 6:1**, is '**dead works**' (KJV) or '**acts that lead to death**' (NIV).

Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of **repentance from dead works**

Dead works are discussed in our next session.

*Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance,
God is now declaring to men that
all people everywhere should repent.
(Acts 17:30 - NASB)*

ENDNOTES

-
- i. Link to PDF Doc Link : http://www.randolphbarnwell.com/pdf_topical.html (Scroll to 'THE SPIRITUAL MAN'); Link to Audios : <http://www.randolphbarnwell.com/spiritual-man.html>
 - ii. Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). The Complete Word Study Dictionary : New Testament (electronic ed.), Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, #G3338
 - iii. Refer to my website for a more complete and thorough treatment of the FIRSTBORN SONSHIP principle.
Link to Audios: <http://www.randolphbarnwell.com/firstborn.html>
Link to PDF Notes: http://www.randolphbarnwell.com/pdf_topical.html
 - iv. Link to Audios: http://www.randolphbarnwell.com/grace_partg.html
Link to PDF Docs : (Coming Soon)