THE BIBLE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

Intro: As a basis for this study consider what Paul stated; Acts 17:30-31 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” This command from God for men to repent is probably the hardest command for man to obey. Men are often quick to try to justify themselves, but slow to recognize and acknowledge that they are wrong. This was the basic difference between Saul and David. Saul sought to justify himself, whereas David could be brought to repentance. Since God extends the command to repent to that person in the world and to the child of God who has involved himself in sin, let us study the Bible doctrine of repentance.

I. THE NECESSITY OF IT.
   A. Mat. 3:2 “And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
   B. Mat. 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
   C. Mark 6:12 “And they went out, and preached that men should repent.”
   D. Luke 13:3 “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”
   E. Luke 24:46-47 “And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’”
   F. Acts 2:38 “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.”
   G. Acts 3:19 “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.”
   H. Acts 11:18 “When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.”
   I. Acts 17:30-31 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: ‘Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.’”
   J. 2 Pet. 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.”

II. THE MEANING OF REPENTANCE.
   A. Repent is used in both the Old and New Testament.
      1. 45 times in the Old Testament and 60 times in the New Testament
      2. It is used two different ways in the Old Testament (two different words).
      3. It is used two different ways in the New Testament (two different words).
   B. The Hebrew words used in the Old Testament are: nacham and shub.
      1. Nacham is sometimes used about God, and sometimes used about man.
         a. This word does not imply sin, though sin may be involved.
         b. The word means: “to lament,” “to grieve.”
         c. The word emphasizes strong emotions: sympathy, compassion, disappointment, hurt.
         d. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, p. 2558 says: “To adapt language to our understanding, God is represented as repenting when delayed penalties are at last to be inflicted, or when threatened evils have been averted by genuine reformation (Gen. 6:6; Jonah 3:10). This word is translated ‘repent’ about 40 times in the Old Testament, and in nearly all cases it refers to God....God’s heart is grieved at man’s
iniquity, and in love he bestows His grace or in justice He terminates His mercy. It indicates the aroused emotions of God which prompt Him to a different course of dealing with the people.”

c. It is used in:
   (1) Gen. 6:6 “And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.”
   (2) Exo. 32:14 “And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.”
   (3) Jud. 21:15 “And the people repented them for Benjamin, because that the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel.”

2. *Shub* is generally used to express genuine repentance in the sense of “turn back” or “change directions.”
   a. This word is frequently used by the prophets.
   b. It demands a change in attitude toward sin and toward God.
   c. It implies a conscience moral separation.
   d. It shows a personal decision to forsake sin and to enter into fellowship with God.
   e. It is used in:
      (1) 1 Kin. 8:47 “Yet if they shall bethink [bring back to their heart] themselves in the land whither they were carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;”
      (2) Eze. 14:6 “Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God; Repent, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations.”
      (3) Eze. 18:30 “Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord God. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin.”

C. The Greek words used in the New Testament are: *metamelomai* (μεταμέλομαι) and *metanoeo* (μετανοέω), and these, too, are different in meaning.

1. *Metamelomai* (μεταμέλομαι) indicates emotional concern and regret.
   a. I.S.B.E. says, “The feeling indicated by the word may issue in genuine repentance, or it may degenerate into mere remorse” (p. 2558).
   b. Judas
      (1) Mat. 27:3 “Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,”
      (2) He repented in the sense of regret or remorse.
      (3) His regret did not turn him back to God.

2. *Metanoeo* (μετανοέω) expresses the true New Testament idea of the spiritual change implied in a sinners return to God.
   a. It means to change one’s mind with regard to sin, and consequently to change one’s conduct.
   b. This word was used by:
      (1) John the Baptist; Mat. 3:2 “And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
      (2) Christ; Mat. 4:17 “From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”
      (3) Peter; Acts 2:38 “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.”
      (4) Paul; Acts 17:30 “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent;”
c. The reality of the repentance demanded in this word is evidenced in the consequent good fruits appropriate to the new spiritual life.

d. Paul rejoiced that the Corinthian brethren were made sorry unto repentance; 2 Cor. 7:9 “Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.”

e. Vine says of this word: “this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God.”

III. TWO EXAMPLES.

A. Ninevites.

1. Mat. 12:41 “The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.”

2. We note:
   a. God sent Jonah to Nineveh.
   b. Jonah preached; Jonah 3:4 “And Jonah began to enter into the city a day’s journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.”
   c. They believed God; Jonah 3:5 “So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them.”
   d. They “turned from their evil way”; Jonah 3:10 “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.”
   e. Christ said that they “repented.”

B. The Prodigal Son; Luke 15:11-24 “And he said, A certain man had two sons: 12And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. 13And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. 14And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. 15And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. 16And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. 17And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. 19And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. 20And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. 21But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: 22And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: 23For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.”

1. This young man:
   a. Requested his inheritance.
   b. Gathered all his substance.
   c. Went into a far country.
   d. Wasted his substance in riotous living.
   e. Experienced extremely hard circumstances.
   f. Got a job for himself.
   g. Experienced the pangs of hunger.
   h. Learned that not everyone is anxious to help those in need.
   i. Had enough character that “he came to himself.”
   j. Thought about his circumstances and about his father’s house.
   k. Determined to go back home.
l. Recognized his sins.
m. Honestly, humbly, and forthrightly confessed his sins.
n. In humility requested to become a servant.
o. Experienced a welcome from his father, and the joy of forgiveness.

2. His restoration involved:
a. Careful study about his situation.
b. Genuine sorrow for the sins he committed.
c. Determination to make things right.
d. Return to the father’s house.
e. Genuine humility.
f. Confession of sins.
g. A fervent plea for a place in the father’s house.

3. Christ used this to show repentance; Luke 15:10 “Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

IV. WHAT REPENTANCE IS NOT.
A. It is not regret.
B. It is not being filled with sorrow.
C. It is not walking down an isle in a church building while an invitation song is being sung.
D. It is not simply saying, “I’m sorry, and I want to make things right.”
E. It is not simply stopping the doing of wrong.
F. It is not simply starting again to attend the services.

V. WHAT REPENTANCE IS.
A. It is honestly, fervently, and sincerely seeking the favor of God.
B. This is done by, turning to God in God’s appointed way.
C. Having turned from a sinful way of life.
D. That turning from and turning to is based upon:
   1. A sincere desire and determination to do right and to be right.
   2. Godly sorrow. This produced by:
      a. A deep realization of guilt and condemnation.
      b. A knowledge of God’s law.
      c. An abiding faith and love for God and His will.
      d. A deep and sincere sense of personal responsibility.
E. Making restitution, so far as is possible; Luke 19:8 “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.”
F. Getting out of a sinful situation.

VI. IMPLICATIONS OF REPENTANCE.
A. That man is a free moral being:
   1. Man is completely capable of obeying God’s law.
   2. No direct operation of the Holy Spirit is necessary.
B. That the individual standing in need of repenting is personally responsible for his own sins.
C. That repentance involves human emotions, but it is more than an emotional experience. It has to involve knowledge, faith, and deliberate choice.

VII. CONSEQUENCES OF REPENTANCE.
A. Determination to render complete obedience to the law of Christ.
B. Determination to correct any and every sin committed.
C. Unspeakable joy related to the blessed assurance of forgiveness.

VIII. MOTIVES THAT LEAD TO REPENTANCE.
A. Knowledge that there is a life after this life.
   1. A heaven for the righteous.
   2. A hell for the wicked.
B. A burning desire to be right with God.
C. A proper response to the magnificent love shown at Calvary; Rom. 2:4 “Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”
D. Knowledge of the justice of God: sin cannot go unpunished.
E. The wonderful blessings to be had in Christ; Eph 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:”
F. The opportunity to take away the shame and reproach one has placed upon Christ and the church.
G. Knowing that in the judgment there will be no opportunity for one to repent; there will be great regret, but no real repentance.

Conclusion: We have looked at the Bible doctrine of repentance. If you need to repent that you may become a Christian, or to repent that you may be restored; We invite you to come while we sing the invitation song.