

**DISCIPLESHIP CHALLENGE
DOCTRINE OF SALVATION
PART 2-TERMINOLOGY
“REPENTANCE”**

I. THE IMPORTANCE OF REPENTANCE.

- A. Repentance Was Important In John The Baptist’s Preaching Ministry! (*Matthew 3:1-2*)**
He began his ministry calling on men to repent!
- B. Repentance Was Important In Jesus’ Preaching Ministry! (*Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:15*)**
He also began His ministry by calling on men to repent.
- C. Repentance Was Important In Jesus’ Disciples Ministry! (*Mark 6:12*)**
He commanded His disciples to preach that men must repent.
- D. Repentance Is Important In The Ministry That Jesus Left His Followers! (*Luke 24:36-53; esp. 46-47*)**
Before Jesus was taken up into heaven, He directed His followers to evangelize the world by preaching repentance.
- E. Repentance Was Important In The Apostles Preaching Ministry! (*Acts 2:38; 20:21*)**
- F. God's Command To All Men Everywhere Is To Repent! (*Acts 17:30b; 2 Peter 3:9b*)**
His mercy is revealed by the fact that He is “*not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.*”
- G. Failure to heed God's call to repentance can mean only one thing, eternal damnation. (*Luke 13:1-5.*)**

Repentance is a vital part of the new birth. But those who are already saved and who grieve the Spirit through sinning (*Ephesians 4:30*) must also repent, resulting in confessing sins committed, and thereby being restored to fellowship with God (*1 John 1:9*).

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II. THE NATURE OF REPENTANCE.

BIBLICAL REPENTANCE starts with a CHANGE OF VIEW in the recognition of the sinfulness of one’s own heart, which is in complete rebellion against God as an unsaved sinner. From there, it involves a CHANGE OF MIND that leads to CHANGED ATTITUDES, DESIRES and PURPOSES.

- A. BIBLICAL REPENTANCE INVOLVES A CHANGE OF VIEW! (i.e. A Recognition Of One’s Sin.)**
- 1. All Have Sinned And Come Short Of God’s Glory! (*Romans 3:23*)**
 - 2. There Is None That Does Good! (*Psalms 53:3*)**
 - 3. There Is None That Is Righteous! (*Romans 3:10*)**
 - 4. The Aspects Of Sin:**
 - a. Sin Is A Transgression! (*1 John 3:4*)**
i.e. An overstepping the law (missing the mark)
 - b. Sin Is An Error! (*Romans 3:23; James 5:20*)**
i.e. A departure from right
 - c. Sin Is A Trespass! (*Ephesians 2:1*)**
i.e. A stepping into the area of Divine authority in self-will.
 - d. Sin Is Lawlessness! (*Romans 5:13*)**
i.e. Spiritual anarchy
 - e. Sin Is Unbelief! (*John 3:18;16:9; 1 John 5:11*)**
i.e. Insulting God, not believing He is trustworthy.

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- f. **Sin Is Unrighteousness!** (*Romans 1:18-20; 3:23; 6:13; 1 John 5:17*)
i.e. A failure to meet God's holy standard—
Jesus Christ.
- g. **Sin Is Iniquity!** (*Matthew 24:12*)
i.e. Injustice, wickedness.

We need to recognize that these words describe our **fallen nature** which separates us from God. This is the human heart's necessary preparation for true repentance.

Without a clear knowledge of sin and its meaning to us as individuals, there cannot be scriptural repentance.

B. BIBLICAL REPENTANCE INVOLVES A CHANGE OF MIND!

e.g. In the parable of the two sons (*Matthew 21:28-32*) where the one son said, “*I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.*” (*Matthew 21:29*)

The Greek word translated “*repented*” there means “*to change one's mind*” about a thing.

1. A Change Of Mind About Self And Sin.

Before someone is saved, he may think he is not so bad, but when he learns what the Bible says about God and sin, he finds that God is a Holy God Who hates sin. (*Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23*)

The word “*all*” in these two passages of Scripture includes every person!

When a person truly comes to the realization that he is a sinner, he changes his mind about himself.

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He no longer sees himself as good as he had thought, but rather as God sees him—a condemned sinner, deserving damnation in Hell. **i.e. He changes his mind about himself and about sin.**

2. A Change Of Mind About God.

A sinner most always is wrong in his thoughts of God.

a. **Some Unbelievers Don't Believe God Exists.** (*Psalm 53:1; Hebrews 11:6*)

b. **Many Unbelievers Have A Wrong View Of God!** (*Ezekiel 33:11*)

On one end of the spectrum, **some may see God as lenient with regard to sin.**

On the other end of the spectrum, **some may see God as harsh and unloving because of his hatred of sin and judgment of the sinner.**

But through the Scripture the sinner comes to see the reality of God's nature! God is a God of Justice (*Romans 3:26*), Who must punish man's sins!

However, God is also as a God of Love (*John 3:16*), Who sent His only begotten Son into the world to provide the payment of the penalty for man's sin!

That is the reality of God! God is not only a God of wrath to the unrighteous, but a God of love, Who, in His justice, has gone to the limit to save men from Hell.

So, the sinner changes his mind about God and His justice and righteousness.

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3. **A Change Of Mind About Christ. (*Acts 2:14-40*)**
When Peter, on the day of Pentecost, called the Jews to repent **he called upon them to change their minds regarding Christ.**

They had considered Christ to be nothing more than another man, but Peter says His resurrection from the dead and His ascension were positive proofs that He was none other than the Son of God, the Savior of the world, as He had claimed to be.

They should now change their minds about Him and accept Him as the Messiah for whom they had waited so long.

It is often common to think that repentance is only heart anguish and sorrow. There is no reason why sorrow (expressed, perhaps, in tears and crying) could not go along with, or lead to, repentance; but this type of sorrow, itself, is not repentance.

To repent literally means “a change of mind.”

Sorrow alone (i.e. an urge to self-condemnation) is not New Testament repentance.

New Testament repentance is a call to a CHANGED MIND which leads to CHANGED ATTITUDES AND DESIRES and a CHANGED COURSE OF ACTION.

Repentance is essential for salvation and none can be saved apart from it! Repentance is not an isolated act, but is a part of believing. (*Acts 26:20*)

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- C. **BIBLICAL REPENTANCE INVOLVES A CHANGE OF ATTITUDES AND DESIRES! (*2 Corinthians 7:9-10*)**
Understand that the power for deliverance from sin is not present until the Holy Spirit enters your life at salvation.

Men who do not realize how terrible sin is, and that it is an offense against a holy and righteous God, will see little need for any change of heart.

But when men come face to face with their own sin, placed alongside the perfect righteousness and sinlessness of Christ, they realize how far they fall short. This realization (of sin and complete unworthiness) should make men hate the sin, which has brought them so low, and give them a desire to get rid of it.

(e.g. The Pharisee and the publican showed two completely different attitudes for sin in *Luke 18:9-14*. The Pharisee's sin was so hidden behind his own self-righteousness that he did not see it, but the publican's sin was open before God and himself which showed him how awful it was He beat upon his breast, indicating his sorrow of heart in sinning against a Holy God.)

Every person who truly comes face to face with their sin will experience some sorrow of heart for their sin. We need to guard against the idea that our salvation depends on the amount of emotion we feel or display. God does not have to be persuaded to save us by much crying and pleading.

Salvation depends on our faith in believing (although deep emotion may be experienced).

Not all sorrow for sin is Godly sorrow. For example, a man gets caught robbing a shop, and kills the shopkeeper in an attempt to escape. He is soon captured by the police, found guilty of murder, and sentenced to die.

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As he faces death he says he is sorry, but what he really means is that he is sorry he was caught and has to die for the crime.

The lust of the flesh causes some to indulge in a life of sin. When the wages of sin begin to catch up with them and they are dying of a dreadful disease, they say they are sorry and wish they had their lives to live over again. But they are really only sorry that they have to reap what they have sown.

If the man who murdered the shopkeeper could turn back the pages of time and live his life over again, he might think he would do differently, but he would not, because he is a murderer at heart. Those who give their bodies to their own lust would yield their bodies to the same evil desires again if they had their lives to live over, because their hearts are evil.

2 Corinthians 7:10–“Godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of but the sorrow of the world worketh death”

Godly sorrow will lead to a change of mind and a turning away from sin. Godly sorrow is realizing that when we sin we have broken God’s commandments and have sinned against Him.

King Saul sinned against the LORD (**1 Samuel 15**) and said, *“I have sinned: for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and thy words: because I feared the people...”* (**1 Samuel 15:24**)

But Saul regarded his sin lightly, and wanted it hidden from the people saying, *“I have sinned: yet honor me now...before the elders of my people, and before Israel...”* (**1 Samuel 15:30**), so that he might go on as their king as though nothing had happened.

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Godly David sinned against God (**2 Samuel 11**), but repented in tears with a sorrowful heart. Writing his psalm of repentance (**Psalm 51**), where he said to God, *Psalm 51:4a–“Against thee, thee only have I , and done this evil in thy sight.”*

Godly sorrow causes Believers to confess their sins to God and turn from them. True repentance is being so sorry for our sin that we quit it and turn to God for strength to live for Him.

There can no longer be any of the old hardness to sin. Instead we must come to hate and abhor sin. Repentance does not ask, *“What will my sin bring into my own life?”* Instead it asks: *“What does my sin mean to God? How have I grieved Him?”*

D. BIBLICAL REPENTANCE INVOLVES A CHANGE OF PURPOSE!

This change of purpose includes **confession** of sin to God, **forsaking** of sin, and **turning** to God. These three go hand in hand and cannot be separated. One is not enough, or even two; all three are required.

The Lord Jesus Christ showed us this in his parable of the prodigal son said, *“I will arise . . . And he arose . . .”* (**Luke 15:18, 20**). He not only thought upon his ways and felt sorry because of them, but he turned his steps in the direction of home. Repentance is not only a heart broken for sin, but, also, from sin (i.e. forsaking it).

So, while repentance is an inward act of the will, and takes place within, it shows itself in at least three positive ways: **Confessing our sinfulness and our sins to God, forsaking (i.e. turning away from) our sins, and turning to God.**

1. Biblical Repentance Involves A Change Of PURPOSE In Confessing Our Sins To God!

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Our whole purpose in the past has been to try to hide our sins, both from those around us and from God. Nothing, however, can be hidden from God. His all-seeing eye is constantly upon us. (**Proverbs 15:3**)

The Psalmist said, **Psalm 38:18**– “*I will declare mine iniquity; I will be sorry for my sin.*”

When the publican prayed, he beat upon his breast and said, “*God be merciful to me a sinner.*” (**Luke 18:13**)

The lost son said, “*I have sinned against heaven...*” (**Luke 15:21**)

Proverbs 28:13– “*He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*”

As Believers, we must confess to God the sin we expect Him to forgive and blot out.

We must also confess to men insofar as they have been wronged by our sin.

Matthew 5:23-24– “*Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift*”

James 5:16– “*Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another...*”

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Many Believers are hindered in living the Christian life today by sin that has been confessed to God, but which has not been confessed to those who know the sin is there and have been hurt by it. These sins remain a constant wall to hinder our working together in love.

Extreme caution must be exercised here, however, to be sure that more harm is not done by confessing the sin than is already done.

Sins that are known to one another should be confessed to one another, but sins that are not known to the one against whom the offense is committed should not be confessed to him, when by your confession you would lead him to sin in having a wrong attitude toward you.

When an offended brother does not know about a particular sin, which you have confessed to God, but is conscious that something has come between you to break the fellowship, the offense that broke the fellowship should be confessed to him.

1 John 1:7 – “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”

In restoring fellowship with the brother, your fellowship is restored with the Lord.

Note again that the repentance spoken of here includes sins that we commit after salvation as well as those before. Both kinds of sin ought to be confessed to those hurt by the sin as outlined previously. This is something that accompanies repentance, and is not, strictly speaking, a part of repentance itself.

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Confession is a mark of true repentance in the sinner, and leads to restoration of fellowship with God (as well as with the others involved).

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2. Biblical Repentance Involves A Change Of PURPOSE In Forsaking Sin! (Isaiah 55:7)

Proverbs 28:13 “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.”

Some people seem to enjoy confessing their sins over and over again in such vivid picturesque terms that they live again the experience of the original sin.

Once the sin is confessed, it must be forever put aside. We must put from our minds that which God has already blotted out of His remembrance.

Confessing the same sin over and over, after it has been forgiven, dishonors God. It implies either:

- (1) That we did not believe God when He promised full forgiveness in Christ, or
- (2) That possibly we have not really repented and turned from our sins.

Forsaking sin means to turn away from it never to return to dwell on the memory.

If we could see sin as the vicious serpent it is, we would not hesitate to let it go once and for all, since it is blotted out by the blood of Jesus Christ that *“cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7)*

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God promises not to remember our iniquities [sins] any more. *(Isaiah 44:22; Hebrews 8:12 and 10:17)*

He warns against thinking we will be heard for our much speaking. *(Matthew 6:7)*

We do not want to copy the idea of the prayer wheel, spinning in the wind, which with each turn *“offers”* a prayer to some pagan god. This *“forsaking”* implies some effort on our part (a definite commitment)!

(Romans 6:12-13)

a. Before Salvation

Webster defines *“forsake”* as *“to give up, renounce.”* From that definition, it would indicate that one could *“renounce”* sin in the sense of opposing; but *“to give up”* implies the power to do so, which is not present before salvation.

Before salvation we do not have the knowledge to recognize sin as sin nor the power to forsake sin.

Too often we fail to realize that God's standard is not the same as our cultural standards, or even, perhaps, our denominational Church standards.

Note that God does not require us to do any works for salvation (Ephesians 2:8-10), but to simply accept the sacrifice of Christ as a gift.

Before salvation we are “dead in trespasses and sins!” (Ephesians 2:1 “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”)

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Repentance includes a willingness to turn from sin to the Lord. His Holy Spirit will show us, through His Word, our sinful state and what His standard is (absolute holiness).

b. Forsaking Sin After Salvation.

This now becomes a two-fold matter:

- (1) Obedience and**
- (2) Ability (power).**

Jesus said, *John 15:14* – “*Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.*”

Paul further tells the believer to "*mortify* [put to death] *the deeds of the body*" (*Romans 8:13*)

But the power to do this comes from God, through His Holy Spirit, Who lives in you because you are His child!

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

1 Corinthians 2:5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

The Scripture declares in *1 Johns 1:9*, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*"

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There is no doubt that after we are saved, as we begin to read the Word of God and discover things that we have done in our past that are sin, we might begin to experience more feelings of guilt.

There might even be feelings of doubts (because of an awareness of sin in our life) which in turn produce feelings of guilt, and which may even cause some to question whether they are really saved.

This can be a device of Satan, to make us ineffective in our Christian life.

This forsaking implies some responsibility on our part: a definite commitment. *Romans 6:12-13* says, "*Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*"

c. Making Restitution.

The Word of God is plain that if someone sins by doing wrong against another, such as stealing or destroying his property, it must be made right to restore a right relationship with him and with God.

The Old Testament had definite requirements for paying back for stolen property (*Exodus 22*).

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Jesus expressed the same thought in the Sermon on the Mount (*Matthew 5:23, 24*), that before an offering is made to God we need to be reconciled with our brother.

Zacchaeus illustrated this principle when he offered to restore anything wrongfully acquired four-fold. (*Luke 19:8*)

So if we expect to receive God's blessing, we must make right the things which we can, always allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us in what we should do.

*Biblical Repentance Involves A Change Of PURPOSE In Confessing Our Sins To God!
Biblical Repentance Involves A Change Of PURPOSE In Forsaking Sin!*

3. Biblical Repentance Involves A Change Of PURPOSE In Turning To God!

Every step unregenerate (unbelieving) man takes is away from God. Turning from sin does not profit anything unless we turn to God.

Paul reminded the Thessalonian Church in *1 Thess. 1:9* how they had turned "**to God from idols to serve the living and true God**"

When Paul was giving his testimony before King Agrippa, as recorded in *Acts 26:18*, he told how Jesus had spoken to him in a vision on the road to Damascus, telling him that he was to turn men "*from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins .*

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1 Peter 1:16 Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

Romans 12:1– “... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God. . .”

The purpose of life changes as the new Christian grows in this experience of salvation. His desire will be to become holy because of the new nature he has living within!

2 Corinthians 5:17 “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” [Cf. 2 Peter 1:3-11]

The importance of repentance is not always recognized as it should be. Some even call upon the unsaved to accept Christ and to believe (to enjoy the benefits of the Christian life) without ever showing the sinner that he is lost and needs a Savior.

Some go to the other extreme and teach that the aspect of repentance which involves turning from sin is a form of works for salvation, thereby trying to eliminate the entire need of repentance for salvation.

We have seen that these ways are not the Bible way. To embrace Christianity without Bible repentance may be a reaction to the insistence of some that repentance is a work to be performed, such as punishing the body by fasting and penance or insisting on some additional experience in order to merit favor with God.

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We have already learned that no one can do anything good enough to earn His favor. We need to guard ourselves against these false teachings.

III. ASPECTS OF REPENTANCE.

A. The Divine Aspect.

Repentance is a gift of God. This gift, as originating with God, is mentioned in:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 5:30-31– 30 The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. 31 Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

Acts 11:18b–“Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life”

2 Timothy 2:25 – In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;

Repentance cannot be worked up from within. It is given from God. You may rightly say then, *“How am I responsible for not having it?”* Because God has commanded us to repent!

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

B. The Human Aspect.

Just as there is a Divine aspect to repentance, there is also a human aspect to repentance. (*Acts 2:37-38, 41*)

The very Gospel which demands repentance produces it. God gives the ability to fulfill His commands.

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When the people of Nineveh heard the preaching of the Word of God, they believed the message and turned to God. (*Jonah 3:5-10*)

It is not every message that produces repentance, but the message of the Gospel that God uses as the instrument to bring about repentance.

This message must also be preached in the power of the Holy Spirit! (*1 Thessalonians 1:5-10*)

1 John 5:6– “And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.”

1 Peter 1:12 “Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.”

2 Peter 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.”

Prosperity often leads men away from God, but God intends that it should lead men to Him.

Romans 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?”

Great revivals usually come in times of great difficulty. *Revelation 3:19–“As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent”* (*Cf. Hebrews 12:6, 10-11*)

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These Scriptures teach us that the chastisements of the Lord are sometimes for the purpose of bringing His wandering children to repentance. God oftentimes uses the loving, Christian reproof of a brother to be the means of bringing us back to God.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 – “And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, 25 In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;”

This principle applies both to the unsaved sinner and the sinning Christian even though, as we have seen, there is a difference in the repentance of the two.

IV. RESULTS OF REPENTANCE.

A. Repentance Causes Rejoicing In Heaven.

Luke 15:10–“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth”

Luke 15:7–“Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

B. Repentance Brings Pardon And Forgiveness Of Sin.

Isaiah 55:7–“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”

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;

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- C. The Holy Spirit Indwells Those Who Repent And Believe.**
Paul taught, *“repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21).*

The person who stubbornly refuses to repent restrains the Holy Spirit from doing a saving work of grace in his heart.

Romans 8:9 “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

Conclusion

The importance of repentance is shown by the prominence it is given in the Word of God. It cannot be emphasized too much. It is not something we give to God, but an attitude of heart necessary to believe unto salvation.

We’ve Seen That It Is Four-Fold:

1. Recognition Of Sin.

It involves a change of view—recognizing sin as personal guilt and defilement.

2. Change Of Mind.

It involves a change of mind—a realization that by God's standards the unsaved individual is a condemned sinner deserving of Hell (a realization that God is not a God of hate and anger but a God of Justice and Love).

3. Change Of Attitudes And Desires.

There is a change of attitude and desire which shows itself in sorrow for sin committed against a Holy and Just God.

4. Change Of Purpose.

There is also a change of purpose—a turning from sin with the purpose of seeking pardon, cleansing and a Godly walk.