



# SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

## A CALL TO REPENTANCE

**KEY PASSAGE:** Luke 24:44-49 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 1:1; 3:1-2; 4:17; 7:21-23 | Mark 1:1-2  
Luke 3:23-38; 5:32 | John 3:16; 20:30-31 | Acts 2:38; 16:31; 17:30 | Romans 2:4; 6:4; 10:13 | Ephesians 4:22-24  
Colossians 3:8-10 | 2 Peter 3:9 | 1 John 1:9 | Revelations 2, 3

### ► SUMMARY

**How many times have you confessed the same sin to the Lord, and each time you feel sorry and tell Him you won't do it again?**

Yet deep inside, you doubt that you'll follow through. We've all been there, haven't we? Perhaps the problem is that despite our confessions, we haven't entered into genuine repentance.

### ► SERMON POINTS

Repentance is vital for salvation and growth in holiness. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He commissioned his disciples saying, "repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations" (Luke 24:47).

#### The Bible has much to say about repentance.

- **Matthew 3:1-2.** John the Baptist came preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- **Matthew 4:17.** A short time later, Jesus came on the scene proclaiming the same message.
- **Luke 5:32.** Jesus stated, "I have not come to call the righteous to repentance, but sinners."
- **Acts 2:38.** Peter said, "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."
- **2 Peter 3:9.** The Lord "is patient toward you, not willing for any to perish, but for all to come to repentance."
- **Revelation 2 and 3.** In letters to the churches of Asia Minor, Jesus admonished the people to repent.

### What is repentance?

Since the message of repentance is prominent throughout the Scriptures, it's important to accurately understand the biblical meaning of this term.

#### The Definition

- In the New Testament, repentance includes recognition of sin, godly sorrow for that sin, and a commitment to change direction. Regret, grief, and remorse accompany repentance but are not evidence of it if there is no change in behavior.
- In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for repentance is "turn." When one repents, he turns from his sinful way of life to head in the direction of obedience to God.

#### The Process

Repentance begins with the Holy Spirit's conviction of wrongdoing. At that point, we become painfully aware of our sin against God and feel the guilt of it. But it doesn't end there. Genuine repentance results in a change of mind, heart, direction, conduct, and attitude. Instead of tolerating that sin, we now hate it and turn to a life of obedience to almighty God.

#### The Role of Repentance in Salvation

Various words are used in the New Testament to refer to salvation. Jesus and Paul called people to repentance, but John emphasized belief. The reason he wrote his gospel account was "so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

The writers of Scripture weren't led by the Holy Spirit to use all possible words referring to salvation each time they spoke of it. The terms faith, believe, and repent all refer to conversion and can be used interchangeably. You could think of faith and repentance as two sides of the coin of salvation, both required; but even though you may only see one mentioned in a particular passage, the other is also implied.

For example, when Paul and Silas explained to the Philippian jailer how to be saved, they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). They didn't say, "Repent and believe" because only one term was necessary; the concepts go hand in hand.

Genuine salvation always results in a changed life. Baptism is a fitting picture of this conversion. We die to sin, are buried with Christ, and are raised with Him to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:4). Death to sin and new life in Christ is the evidence of genuine salvation. If nothing has changed in our lives, then there has been no repentance, and our faith is merely intellectual.

## Misconceptions about Repentance

When we don't understand that faith and repentance are two sides of salvation, both of which are required, we'll try to separate them.

- Some people claim that repentance is unnecessary for salvation. They see it as self-generated works, but salvation is only by grace through faith. They fail to recognize that both faith and repentance characterize genuine salvation. True believers turn by faith to God and from sin through repentance.
- Others put repentance before salvation. They think they must clean up their lives before trusting Christ, but they have no power to do so. Salvation and cleansing are the work of God. His Spirit draws us to repentance by bringing conviction of sin and awareness of our need for a Savior. The gospel explains that Christ paid the penalty for our sins with His death. When we believe and trust Him as Savior, our sins are forgiven, and God cleanses us as He promised in 1 John 1:9. "If we confess our sins,

He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Repentance brings an instant change at salvation, but it's a continual process thereafter. We were radically changed at the moment of salvation, but the cleansing process of God in our lives is usually slow. As He brings an area of sin to mind, we must turn from it by the power of His indwelling Spirit. Since the Lord will never stop cleansing us, we must never stop confessing and repenting.

## Confession and Repentance

Confession isn't merely listing our sins to God, thanking Him for His forgiveness, and going on with life. It means we say the same thing or agree with God about our sin and what we should do about it. It's seeing our wrongdoing from His perspective. Since He is holy and hates sin, so should we. The Lord wants us to lay it down and walk away from it. True biblical confession includes an attitude of repentance. We are not to confess lightheartedly, but in a repentant way that produces victory over sin through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## Conclusion

Repentance is necessary for everyone. For an unbeliever, it's an essential part of salvation, and for believers, it's needed for daily cleansing and continuing fellowship with God. When we refuse to repent, sin gains an increasingly stronger hold on our lives.

## ► RESPONSE

- If you're struggling with overcoming a particular sin even though you've confessed it repeatedly, what changes are you going to make now that you've learned about the importance of repentance?
- Sometimes the problem is that we still enjoy the sin we repeatedly confess. What benefit are you deriving from your particular sin? What does God say about it in His Word? How would freedom from it improve your life and your relationship with the Lord?

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