

Repentance comes into our lives because we return home to God. It is a part of the cycle of growth we then start to live in, again, that comes as a result of walking with Jesus. Repentance can have a negative connotation for some people, but it is a beautiful gift that allows us to mature in our walk with Jesus.

- ♦ **Repentance** – Repentance (from a Hebrew perspective) meant to return to God, to come home.

True repentance comes when we understand our debt—the cost incurred by our sin. Repentance is not only for our “bad times” or failures; it is for every moment of our life. When we understand that, we will see our sins more deeply and also have more love and joy. There is a gratitude naturally cultivated when we realize we have been forgiven.

How would you explain repentance to someone unfamiliar with it?

- ♦ **Faith** – Faith means trust. We trust in the work of Jesus.

We must understand God as our source of life; otherwise, we may try to manipulate Him into a vending machine. Paul calls anything that we stake our lives upon, other than Jesus, dung.

What kinds of things—other than Jesus—can we be tempted to trust? How is Jesus better than those things?

- ♦ **Growth** – Growth takes place when we stop listening to all the other voices around us and say, “I will trust Him.”

We grow through repentance and faith when we can start to ask what is truly driving us. Our flesh is still very active even if we have become Christians. Paul warns us that all of us have what he calls the old man and the new man—this is the flesh versus the new self we can have in Christ.

What has brought the most growth in your life? In what ways are you growing right now?

1. Rejoice if/when you spot your problems!

The only way your flesh can completely dominate is if you are not aware of it at all. If an enemy is completely unknown, you will get annihilated. The Holy Spirit brings us awareness and conviction in love.

2. There are two parts to “repenting” of a sin:

- You unmask it and stop rationalizing it. We have the safety/assurance to face sin honestly.
- Take it to the cross. We can trust Jesus has overcome and no sin is too much for Him.

There is a difference between self-pity and repentance. Real repentance is when we say, “I hate what this sin cost God!” Stephen Charnock, about 400 years ago, spoke about the difference between self-pity and true repentance. He wrote, *“I have offended a God that had his hands stretched out to me as a friend. My heart must be made of marble. My heart must be made of iron to throw his blood in his face.”*

3. True repentance always results in joy.

We rejoice in the forgiveness and freedom of Jesus’ sacrifice. Though there may be painful consequences of our sin, we can rejoice in coming home to who God is and remembering who we are in Him.

One person writes that *“Jesus died out of a commitment to your holiness.”* Conviction is loving because God is utterly committed to making us more like Him.

How have you seen repentance lead to joy in your life? Is there an area you’re walking through repentance now?

Our “flesh” will always begin to creep back in; this is why every day is a day of repentance, realizing nothing in our life is worth more than what He is, and what He offers to us.