

Homework Assignment for Repentance

A person who is truly repentant will experience the full-orbed inside to outside change that will begin to effect his/her purposes, intentions, and actions. Unlike mere penance, there will be more than a list of do's and don'ts. That is, it is not merely putting off one behavior and replacing it with another behavior. The Pharisee's were expert in doing this, but what was missing in their life was a true heart change. Repentance is turning from sin to God, but as we examine the components of repentance we will see that it is much more comprehensive. In fact, it can be broken down into four major categories.

- **Confession of sin**
- **Seeking forgiveness**
- **Forsaking the sinful way**
- **Putting on an alternate way of living**

As you can see, humility is a characteristic of repentance. Confession of sin and humbly seeking forgiveness was not something the Pharisee's were willing to do. True humility is manifested from the heart.

However, before we get into these components it will be necessary to get a true biblical picture of what the Bible calls repentance (Greek: metanoia). For each reference given below write out a simple application of the passage to your life.

Matt 3:2

Matt 4:17

Matt 11:20

Matt 11:21

Matt 12:41

Mark 1:15

Mark 6:12

Luke 10:13

Luke 11:32

Luke 13:3

Luke 13:5

Luke 15:7

Luke 15:10

Luke 16:30

Luke 17:3

Luke 17:4

Acts 2:38

Acts 3:19

Acts 8:22

Acts 17:30

Acts 26:20

2 Cor 12:21

Rev 2:5

Rev 2:16

Rev 2:21

Rev 2:22

Rev 3:3

Rev 3:19

Rev 9:20

Rev 9:21

Now that you have a more comprehensive view of what the Bible calls repentance, let's take a look at particular sin issues in your own life. The first step in the repentance process is confession of sin. To confess means to agree. That is, agree with God or to have God's perspective on the matter.

Furthermore, confession happens on two levels. First—all sin must be confessed to God. He is the only One who can forgive sin and restore the relationship with Himself. Furthermore, because sin does divide, it may be necessary to seek forgiveness from others as well. This is the second level.

This next assignment will be data gathering. We will call it a Log List. This idea comes from Matthew 7:3 where Jesus was admonishing His listeners to examine the "log" in their own eye before they examine others. For the next few

moments examine yourself and make a list of sins that you habitually commit. It may be helpful to get assistance from a spouse or other close friend. Keep the list open-ended. That is, meditate on the list and examine your life throughout the coming days. As the Spirit of God convicts you through His Word, write that sin down. Continually add to the list. Remember sins are not only what you do but what you fail to do.

Sample Log List:

1. I did not pray today.
2. I gossiped about someone to a third party.
3. I snapped at my husband/wife. (unwholesome speech)
4. I expressed ingratitude to God and others by speaking negatively about my job.
5. I have not been meditating on God’s Word today/this week.
6. I used money to buy beer instead of using it to support my family.
7. I have a critical spirit.
8. I’m harboring bitterness/anger in my heart toward someone who did me wrong.
9. I stopped by the convenience store today and gambled \$20.00 away.
10. I’ve been looking at lewd pictures on the Internet.
11. I feel inferior to _____.
12. I watch TV as a response to pressure from circumstances.
13. I put off doing something that is necessary (name it) and choose to do something of no value.
14. I don’t give consistent time to my children.
15. I am more concerned about my physical appearance and presentation than what God thinks about me.

Confession

My Log List:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

It may be necessary to continue this list on another sheet of paper. Remember the Log List is open-ended.

Now that you have a list of sins it will be necessary to go to God with each one with an attitude, as well as words, of confession. Prior to doing this read Psalm 51 (David's confession) in order to get a biblical frame of mind on how to confess. For each verse in the Psalm write an appropriate application to your personal situation.

Vs.
1 _____

Vs.
2 _____

Vs.
3 _____

Vs.
4 _____

Vs.
5 _____

Vs.
6 _____

Vs.
7 _____

Vs.
8 _____

Vs.
9 _____

Vs.
10 _____

Vs.
11 _____

Vs.
12 _____

Vs.
13 _____

Vs.
14 _____

Vs.
15 _____

Vs.
16 _____

Vs.
17 _____

Vs.
18 _____

Vs.
19 _____

Confession/Forgiveness: Level One

For each sin listed in your Log List write out a simple prayer of confession. A sample prayer could go like this:

“Father, I acknowledge and renounce my sinful thoughts of, desires for, and involvement in _____ and ask you to forgive me of this sin and give me the grace to overcome it in the future. I also ask that you give me the grace to take back that ground given to Satan through my involvement and yield that ground to the control of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ’s name that I pray. AMEN”

You may desire to spend more time in prayer thanking God for the victory that He gives through Jesus Christ. The purpose of writing it out is so you can think through what you are saying rather than just reeling off words without thought.

Confession/Forgiveness: Level Two

The sphere of confession/forgiveness should be no larger than the sphere of offense. It could be that you have offended more than God.

Example One: If you have spent money on something that is sinful rather than on your family it will be necessary for you to go to your spouse and seek his/her forgiveness.

Example Two: If you have criticized someone, it will be necessary to go to the one you criticized as well as the one you talked to and ask their forgiveness.

Revisit your Log List and beside each sin committed write out those you have sinned against. Develop a plan of action to go to them and ask their forgiveness. Remember, forgiveness is not an apology. Forgiveness is surrendering your rights to another. Ask forgiveness. Do not say, “I’m sorry” without asking forgiveness. Also, forgiveness is a three-fold promise:

- **I will not bring this sin up to myself again.**
- **I will not bring this sin up to God again.**
- **I will not bring this sin up to others again.**

Forsaking the sinful way

Now that you have confessed and sought forgiveness; it is time to develop a strategy to forsake this sin once and for all. For each sin listed in your Log List write out a specific plan of action that you can implement immediately that will

help keep you from repeating this sinful action. Your action plan should include some (or all) of the following:

1. I will pray daily regarding this matter asking for God's grace and strength in maintaining my walk with Him.
2. I will enlist a close friend (name him/her) to pray with me. I will ask them to ask me the "hard questions" regarding my walk with God.
3. I will begin studying the relevant passages in Scripture pertaining to my sin. I will learn what the Bible says about it until I gain God's complete perspective on the matter.
4. I will begin to restructure my life so that the temptation will not have as much opportunity as it did in the past. For example:
 - Change the route in which you go to work.
 - Call your spouse prior to leaving work.
 - Let someone have your schedule and ask them to ask you about it.
 - Change your sleeping habits. Go to bed with spouse, get up with spouse.
 - Get up on time.
 - Get to bed on time.
 - Reduce Internet, TV, and other non-value activities.
 - Plan outings with the family.
 - Change friends.
 - Set-up a budget—let someone be involved in your budgeting.
 - Join a fellowship group or Bible study.
 - Begin a "Friday night date night" with your spouse.
 - Pray with your spouse, have devotions with your spouse.

Put-on an Alternate Way of Life

A part of the previous exercise can be included here. However, for this exercise it will be necessary for you to revisit your Log List one more time. This time, for every sin listed write out the opposite righteous behavior that you want to begin modeling in your life. Then begin modeling it. For example:

1. "I have not been praying consistently."

Alternate behavior: I will pray daily, develop a prayer list, and keep a journal of my prayer life.

2. "I have been critical of my job."

Alternate behavior: I will begin to practice thanksgiving regarding my job. Daily in prayer I will thank God for His provision. I will also express this thanksgiving to others.

3. "I watch TV as a way of escape from the pressures of the world."

Alternate behavior: I will begin the practice of reading the Psalms when the pressure is on. I will also ask my spouse to hold me accountable in this area. Better yet, I will read the Psalms with my spouse and then talk through the perceived problem afterwards.

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