

Repentance

An understanding of ‘repentance’ is paramount in any discussion concerning the doctrine of salvation because it is an integral part of salvation (although it may not be implicitly stated). Although there are a number of Greek and Hebrew words translated as ‘repent’ (or its derivatives), *only a few turn up repeatedly in scriptures dealing with salvation.* The words are:

Greek	Transliterated	Pronounced	Verses	Definition
μετανοέω	metanoëo	met-an-o-EH-o	Mat.3:2; 4:17; 11:20-21; 12:41; Mk.1:15; 6:12; Lu.10:13; 11-32; 13:3, 5; 15:7, 10; Lu.16:30-31; 17:3, 4; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 8:22; 17:30; 26:20; 2Cor.12:21; Rev.2:5, 16, 21-22; 3:3, 9:20-21; 16:9, 11	To change one's mind (for the better), i.e. to repent.
μεταμέλομα	metamellomai	met-am-EL-lom-ahee	Mat.21:29,32; 27:3; 2Cor.7:8; Heb.7:21	Having changed one's mind
μετάνοια	metanoia	met-AN-oy-ah	Mat.3:8, 11; 9:13; Mk.1:4; 2:17 Lu.3:3, 8; 5:32; 15:7; 24:47; Acts 5:31; 11:18; 13:24; 19:4; 20:21; 6:20; Ro.2:4; 2Cor.7:9-10; 2Tim.2:25; Heb.6:1; 6:6; 12:17; 2Pet.3:9	A change of mind

I know that this is a rather long study, but you don't really have to look far to see the Biblical definition of *repentance* with respect to salvation. For many of you the following example will suffice. It can be found in a very well known parable—that of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).

<p>^{16:27} Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: ^{16:28} For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. ^{16:29} Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. ^{16:30} And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. ^{16:31} And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.</p>	<p>> “testify” => faith cometh by hearing</p> <p>> Faith cometh by hearing.</p> <p>> Repentance is necessary to avoid Hell...</p> <p>> Repentance is equated with ‘be persuaded’ (i.e., by hearing the Gospel to become personally persuaded from whatever you used to believe to now believing the Gospel)</p>
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Other good examples include:

<p>And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe * the gospel. Mark 1:15</p>	<p>> Change your mind from whatever you used to believe believing the Gospel. That is, to personally <i>become persuaded</i> of the truth of the Gospel.</p>
<p>Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. Acts 8:22</p>	<p>> Repentance involves thoughts—not actions.</p>
<p>He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he re-</p>	<p>He <u>changed</u> his mind, or, <u>repented</u>.</p>

<i>pented, and went.</i>	Mat.21:29	
<i>For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.</i>	Mat.21:32	Clearly, 'repented' is used interchangeably with 'believed.' Let me describe the definition like a math formula: (believed him not) × (repented) = (believed him)
<i>Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.</i>	Acts 19:4	What does the 'baptism of repentance' mean? Paul describes John's ministry as one that sought to convince people to believe on Jesus Christ. Paul adds no additional verbs, no requirement for remorse, etc.

These are all good definitions of the salvation-related term, 'repentance,' but for some of you that won't be sufficient. Okay, let's see how the term is used and described by the following theologians;

Harry A. Ironside, Litt. D., Except Ye Repent. New York: American Tract Society, 1937, pages 12-15 [<http://www.uvm.edu/~sbross/repent/repent01.html>]

"But in order to clarify the subject, it may be well to observe carefully what repentance is not and then to notice briefly what it is."

"First, then, repentance is not to be confounded with penitence... [P]enitence is simply sorrow for sin. No amount of penitence can fit a man for salvation... Nowhere is man exhorted to feel a certain amount of sorrow for his sins in order to come to Christ. "

"Second, penance is not repentance. Penance is the effort in some way to atone for wrong done. This, man can never do..."

"On the contrary, the call was to repent; and between repenting and doing penance there is a vast difference..."

"In the third place, let us remember that reformation is not repentance, however closely allied to, or springing out of it. To turn over a new leaf, to attempt to supplant bad habits with good ones, to try to live well instead of evilly, may not be the outcome of repentance at all and should never be confounded with it. Reformation is merely an outward change..."

"Recently it was the writer's privilege to broadcast a Gospel message from a large Cleveland station. While he was waiting in the studio for the time appointed an advertiser's voice was heard through the loud speaker announcing: "If you need anything in watch repairing go to" such a firm. One of the employees looked up and exclaimed, "I need no watch repairing; what I need is a watch." It furnished me with an excellent text. What the unsaved man needs is not a repairing of his life. He needs a new life altogether, which comes only through a second birth. Reformation is like watch repairing. Repentance is like the recognition of the lack of a watch."

"Need I add that repentance then is not to be considered synonymous with joining a church or taking up one's religious duties, as people say. It is not doing anything."

"What then is repentance?... But here it seems almost necessary to say that it is the Greek word metanoia, which is translated "repentance" in our English Bibles, and literally means a change of mind..."

“Which comes first, repentance or faith? In Scripture we read, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Yet we find true believers exhorted to "repent, and do the first works." So intimately are the two related that you cannot have one without the other. The man who believes God repents; the repentant soul puts his trust in the Lord when the Gospel is revealed to him. Theologians may wrangle over this, but the fact is, no man repents until the Holy Spirit produces repentance in his soul through the truth. No man believes the Gospel and rests in it for his own salvation until he has judged himself as a needy sinner before God. And this is repentance.”

“The very first evidence [or, “fruit of repentance”—MBY] of awakening grace is dissatisfaction with one's self and self-effort and a longing for deliverance from chains of sin that have bound the soul. To own frankly that I am lost and guilty is the prelude to life and peace. It is not a question of a certain depth of grief and sorrow, but simply the recognition and acknowledgment of need that lead one to turn to Christ for refuge. None can perish who put their trust in Him. His grace superabounds above all our sin, and His expiatory work on the cross is so infinitely precious to God that it fully meets all our uncleanness and guilt.”

Charles Caldwell Ryrie, ThD, PhD Dean, Graduate School, Dallas Theological Seminary, Biblical Theology of the New Testament, pages 116-117

“Often the idea of believing is expressed by the word ‘repent’ (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31; 8:22; 11:18; 17:30; 20:21; 26:20).”

“The word means to change one’s mind, and by its usage in the Book of Acts it means to change one’s mind about Jesus of Nazareth being the Messiah.”

“Thus repentance as preached by the apostles was not a prerequisite to nor a consequence of salvation but was actually the act of faith in Jesus which brought salvation to the one who repented.”

William L. Pettingill, D.D. Bible Questions Answered, pages 215-216

“What place has repentance in salvation? Should we tell people to repent of their sins to be saved? The Gospel of John is the Holy Spirit’s Gospel Tract, written that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God; and that believing they might have life through His name (20:31). And it does not mention the word “repentance.” But that is only because repentance is a necessary part of saving faith. Strictly speaking, the word repentance means a “change of mind.” It is by no means the same thing as sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10). Since it is not possible for an unbeliever to become a believer without changing his mind, it is therefore unnecessary to say anything about it. The only thing for a man to do in order to be saved is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ: and to believe on Him is the same thing as receiving Him (John 1:11-13).”

Lewis Sperry Chafer, D.D., Litt. D., ThD Former President and Founder of Dallas Theological Seminary, Systematic Theology, Vol. III, Soteriology, page 372

“The word ‘metanoia’ [a Greek transliteration; Dr. Chafer uses the actual Greek lettering for all Greek words in his commentary--MBY] is in every instance translated repentance. The word means a change of mind. The common practice of reading into this word the thought of sorrow and heart-anguish is responsible for much confusion in the field of Soteriology. There is no reason why sorrow should not accompany repentance or lead to repentance, but the sorrow, what-

ever it may be, is not repentance. In 2 Corinthians 7:10, it is said that “godly sorrow worketh repentance,” that is, it leads on to repentance; but the sorrow is not to be mistaken for the change of mind which it may serve to produce. The son cited by Christ as reported in Matthew 21:28-29 who first said “I will not go,” and afterward repented and went, is a true example of the precise meaning of the word. The New Testament call to repentance is not an urge to self-condemnation, but is a call to a change of mind, which promotes a change in the course being pursued. This definition of this word as it is used in the New Testament is fundamental. Little or no progress can be made in a right induction of the Word of God on this theme, unless the true and accurate meaning of the word is discovered and defended throughout.”

“As before stated, repentance, which is a change of mind, is included in believing. No individual can turn to Christ from some other confidence without a change of mind, and that, it should be noted, is all the repentance a spiritually dead individual can ever affect. That change of mind is the work of the Spirit (Eph. 2:8). It will be considered, too, by those who are amenable to the Word of God, that the essential preparation of heart which the Holy Spirit accomplishes in the unsaved to prepare them for an intelligent and voluntary acceptance of Christ as Savior—as defined in John 16:8-11—is not a sorrow for sin. The unsaved who come under this divine influence are illuminated—given a clear understanding—concerning but one sin, namely, that ‘they believe not on me.’”

“On the other hand, turning to Christ from all other confidences is one act, and in that one act repentance, which is a change of mind, is included. The Apostle stresses this distinction in accurate terms when he says to the Thessalonians, “You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (1 Thess. 1:9). This text provides no comfort for those who contend that people must first, in real contrition, turn from idols—which might terminate at that point—and afterwards, as a second and separate act, turn to God. The text recognizes but one act—“You turned to God from idols”—and that is an act of faith alone.”

“Upwards of 115 New Testament passages condition salvation on believing, and fully 35 passages condition salvation on faith, which latter word in this use of it is an exact synonym of the former. These portions of Scripture, totaling about 150 in all, include practically all that the New Testament declares on the matter of the human responsibility in salvation; yet each one of these texts omits any reference to repentance as a separate act. This fact, easily verified, cannot but bear enormous weight with any candid mind.

In like manner, the Gospel by John, which is written to present Christ as the object of faith unto eternal life, does not once employ the word repentance. Similarly, the Epistle to the Romans, which is the complete analysis of all that enters into the whole plan of salvation by grace, does not use the word repentance in connection with the saving of a soul, except in 2:4 where repentance is equivalent to salvation itself.

When the Apostle Paul and his companion, Silas, made reply to the jailer concerning what he should do to be saved, they said, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved’ (Acts 16:31). This reply, it is evident, fails to recognize the necessity of repentance in addition to believing. From this overwhelming mass of irrefutable evidence, it is clear that the New Testament does not impose repentance upon the unsaved as a condition of salvation.

The Gospel of John with its direct words from the lips of Christ, the Epistle to the Romans with its exhaustive treatment of the theme in question, the Apostle Paul, and the whole array of 150 New Testament passages which are the total of the divine instruction, are incomplete and

misleading if repentance must be accorded a place separate from, and independent of, believing. No thoughtful person would attempt to defend such a notion against such odds, and those who have thus undertaken doubtless have done so without weighing the evidence or considering the untenable position which they assume.”

When entering upon this phase of this study, it is first necessary to eliminate all portions of the New Testament which introduce the word repentance in its relation to covenant people. There are, likewise, passages which employ the word repentance as a synonym of believing (cf. Acts 17:30; Rom. 2:4; 2 Tim. 2:25; 2 Pet. 3:9). Also, there are passages which refer to a change of mind (Acts 8:22; 11:18; Heb. 6:1, 6; 12:17; Rev. 9:20, etc.). Yet, again, consideration must be accorded three passages related to Israel which are often misapplied (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31). There are references to John’s baptism, which was unto repentance, that are outside the Synoptics [Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John] (Acts 13:24; 19:4).

“Four passages deserve more extended consideration, namely:

Luke 24:47. ‘And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.’ It will be seen that repentance is not in itself equivalent to believing or faith, though, being included in believing, is used here as a synonym of the word believe. Likewise, it is to be recognized that “remission of sins” is not all that is proffered in salvation, though the phrase may serve that purpose in this instance. Above all, the passage does not require human obligations with respect to salvation. Repentance, which here represents believing, leads to remission of sin.

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.’ Again repentance, which is included in believing, serves as a synonym for the word belief. The Gentiles, as always, attain to spiritual life by faith, the all-important and essential change of mind. It is also true that the passage does not prescribe two things which are necessary to salvation (cf. vs. 17).

Acts 20:21. ‘Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.’ First, though unrelated to the course of this argument, it is important to note that the Apostle here places Jews on the same level with Gentiles, and both are objects of divine grace. The Jew with his incomparable background or the Gentile with his heathen ignorance, each, must undergo a change of mind respecting God. Until they are aware of God’s gracious purpose, there can be no reception of the idea of saving faith. It is quite possible to recognize God’s purpose, as many do, and not receive Christ as Savior. In other words, repentance toward God could not itself constitute, in this case, the equivalent of “faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ,” though it may prepare for that faith. The introduction of the two Persons of the Godhead is significant, and that Christ is the sole object of faith is also most vital. Those who would insist that there are here two human obligations unto salvation are reminded again of the 150 portions in which such a twofold requirement is omitted.

Acts 26:20. ‘But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.’ Again, both Jews and Gentiles are addressed as on the same footing before God. Two obligations are named here, in order that spiritual results may be secured—those to “repent and turn to God.” The passage would sustain the Arminian view if repentance were, as they assert, a sorrow for sin; but if the word is given its correct meaning, namely, a change of mind, there is no difficulty. The call is for a change of mind which turns to

God. This passage, also, has its equivalent in 1 Thessalonians 1:9, ‘You turned to God from idols.’”

“In the foregoing, an attempt has been made to demonstrate that the Biblical doctrine of repentance offers no objection to the truth that salvation is by grace through faith apart from every suggestion of human works or merit. It is asserted that repentance, which is a change of mind, enters of necessity into the very act of believing on Christ, since one cannot turn to Christ from other objects of confidence without that change of mind. Upwards of 150 texts—including all of the greatest gospel invitations—limit the human responsibility in salvation to believing or to faith. To this simple requirement nothing could be added if the glories of grace are to be preserved.”

J. Dwight Pentecost, *Things Which Become Sound Doctrine*, Fleming H. Revel Company, Westwood, N.J., 1965, pages 61-63

“It is our purpose to discuss the Scriptural doctrine of repentance. It is important because so many minds have been confused by the perversion of the Scriptural teaching of this important doctrine.”

“The doctrine has suffered tremendously from an erroneous concept held by most men, for when the word “repent” is used it brings to the mind of the average individual the thought of sorrow for sin...And this sorrow for sin is usually called “repentance.” But there could be nothing further from the concept of the word of God than the idea that repentance means sorrow for sins. From the Word of God we discover that the word translated “repent” means “a change of mind”

“Now, such a change of mind as the scripture enjoins when it speaks of repentance may produce a sorrow for sin, but it will be the result after one has seen his sin in the light of the holiness of God and has changed his attitude toward it.”

“Now, in laying down the qualifications for the servant of the Lord, the Apostle emphasizes that the Lord’s servant must have the ability to teach. That, of course, which he teaches—according to II Timothy 4:2 - is the Word of God. As the servant of God teaches the Word of God, the truth of the Word of God will be brought home by the Spirit to the mind of the hearer, and the hearer will change his mind because of the truth that has been presented. This change of mind, in respect to a revealed truth from the Word of God, is called in II Timothy 2:25 ‘repentance.’”

Manford Geoge Gutzke, D.D., PhD. *Plain Talk About Christian Words*, Royal Publishers, Inc. Johnson City Tennessee, pages 122-123

“When thinking of the word ‘repent’ or ‘repentance’, there are at least two general ideas that are not repentance.’ Repentance’ does not mean to be sorry for some wrong I have done”

“Some may think repentance is promising to do good. I do not want to seem to be too harsh, but how much good is it going to do for anyone to promise to do good?”

“Repentance is primarily a judgment about myself. The expression is often used, which has an awkward translation into English, is, “repenting of our sins.” Actually, this is not a sound

idea. The reason it is so awkward to say is that man does not “repent his sins” nor does he “repent of his sins;” he repents himself.”

Verses that are frequently misused to support a sorrow-based definition of repentance

- [Acts 3:19] – Compare the two translations below and you will see why this verse has been misinterpreted.

<i>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;</i>	<i>Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord,</i>
KJV	NIV

The word translated as ‘converted’ (ἐπιστρέφω) has two meanings when used as a transitive verb. One meaning, as used in the KJV, is ‘to cause to be returned to’ a relationship with God (i.e., saved). The second meaning, as used in the NIV, is ‘to turn to’ (as in, ‘to turn to the worship of God’). There is a significant difference between the meanings of these two definitions. Since the discussion is about one’s sins being blotted out (e.g., salvation) and salvation is void of any works (Rom.4:5), then it is clear that the first meaning (KJV) is correct.

- [Acts 26:20]

<i>But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should <u>repent and turn to God</u>, ...</i>	> “repent (change their mind) AND turn to God” [Two actions.] The 1st refers to salvation, the 2nd to discipleship. > The 1 st ‘and’ is the Greek ‘καί’ – a conjunction indicating distinct items. The second ‘and’ has no conjunction and simply defines what it means to ‘turn to God’ (i.e., works via discipleship).
<i><u>and</u> do works meet for repentance.</i>	
KJV	

- [Rom.2:4]

<i>Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God <u>leadeth thee to repentance</u>?</i>	>Guilt trips don’t lead anyone to true repentance any more than fear of damnation. Rather, it is when the Holy Spirit helps one to honestly consider and compare themselves to the merciful goodness of God’s love that they are presented with the opportunity to repent (change their mind). God will lead the sinner to a point where they must decide what they will believe, but God doesn’t make the decision for them. They ultimately answer for their own decision. [See the study on Predestination.]
KJV	

- [2Cor.7:10] – This verse is sometimes used as justification for a definition of repentance that includes sorrow for sin. However, this is to take the verse out of context.

<p><i>Having therefore these promises, <u>dearly beloved</u>, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">2Cor.7:1 [KJV]</p>	<p>> It is plain that the target audience is those who are already saved. Any discussion of 2Cor. needs to keep this in mind.</p>
<p><i>For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not <u>repent</u>, though I did <u>repent</u>: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">2Cor.7:8 [KJV]</p>	<p>> ‘you’ = already believers > ‘repent’ = μεταμέλομαι (met-am-EL-lom-ahee) = ‘regret.’ In both instances, it is not the word that is the topic of this study.</p>
<p><i>Now I rejoice, <u>not that ye were made sorry</u>, ...</i></p> <p><i>but that ye <u>sorrowed to repentance</u>: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">2Cor.7:9 [KJV]</p>	<p>> If repentance required sorrow, then Paul should have rejoiced that they were made sorry. He didn’t and it doesn’t. > They were led a ‘change of mind’ (repentance) ‘concerning’ [“to” = εἰς = ‘concerning’ or ‘with respect to’ a point/place already reached or entered.] their earlier behavior by a grieving, indwelling Holy Spirit (recall that this is written to those who are already saved). This resulted in a desire to be found innocent of the serious issues of his first letter to the Corinthian church. Verse 11 picks up on this theme.</p>
<p><i>For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">2Cor.7:10 [KJV]</p>	<p>“Because sorrow from God leads to a change of mind concerning [one’s practical/daily] salvation that won’t be regretted: but worldly sorrow leads to [sin or spiritual] death.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Expounded]</p> <p>> This verse speaks of two types of sorrow—godly (kata = from God) and worldly. One (by the Holy Spirit) leads the believing disciple to ‘change their mind’ about their behavior when they compare their behavior to the pure, merciful goodness of God’s love (cp. Rom.2:4b). [Specifically, the Corinthians changed their mind about the behaviors Paul pointed out in their first letter – 1Cor.]</p> <p>It is important to note that worldly sorrow – the only kind you can have prior to salvation since the Holy Spirit has not yet indwelled you – leads to sin because it does not recognize and cling to God’s sovereignty.</p> <p>Thus, human sorrow CAN NOT be a prerequisite to salvation because human/worldly sorrow is a sin.</p> <p>Isaiah put it very clearly with respect to salvation: “Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.” [Isa.45:22; cp. Rom2:4b]</p>

- [Gal5:21] Frequently, well intentioned evangelists will also point to Gal.5:21 as evidence that a willingness to change one's self is important in salvation. That would be incorrect. It *would* be correct to state that a willingness to change one's self was important in discipleship, but it is immaterial in salvation. The incorrect position is based on an ignorance of the distinction between salvation and discipleship and a misinterpretation of scripture. 1Cor.6:9-12 is Paul's explanation of Gal.5:21. It is clear from a study of these scriptures that the unrighteousness spoken of is a positional unrighteousness (saved vs. unsaved) and not a practical one (day-to-day Christian living – discipleship).

<p><i>¹⁷ For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. ¹⁸ But if <u>ye</u> be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. ¹⁹ Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; ²⁰ Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that <u>they</u> which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Gal.5:17-21 [KJV]</p>	<p>> 'ye' = believers > 'if ye be led' => believers in fellowship (under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit) are not under Mosaic Law</p> <p>> 'they' = unbelievers/unsaved.</p>
<p>Compare: <i>Know <u>ye</u> not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... Be not deceived: neither <u>fornicators</u>, nor <u>idolaters</u>, nor <u>adulterers</u>, nor <u>effeminate</u>, nor <u>abusers of themselves with mankind</u>, Nor <u>thieves</u>, nor <u>covetous</u>, nor <u>drunkards</u>, nor <u>revilers</u>, nor <u>extortioners</u>, shall inherit the <u>kingdom of God</u>. ...</i></p> <p><i>And such <u>were</u> some of you: ... but <u>ye are washed</u>, ...</i></p> <p><i>but <u>ye are sanctified</u>, ...</i></p> <p><i>but <u>ye are justified</u> ...</i></p> <p><i><u>in the name of the Lord Jesus</u>, ... <u>and by the Spirit of our God</u>. ...</i></p> <p><i><u>All things are lawful</u> unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">1Cor.6:9-12 [KJV]</p>	<p>> 'ye' = believers/saved</p> <p>> Present tense form of sin list implies unbelievers (continuing the thought from the preceding sentence) that, because they are controlled by their Old Sin Nature, continue in this behavior.</p> <p>> 'kingdom of God' => only the saved see the KoG. KoG isn't the same as the Kingdom of Heaven (KoH).</p> <p>> 'were' = past tense.</p> <p>> 'ye are washed' = in the blood of the lamb = saved</p> <p>> 'ye are sanctified' = set apart (as disciples) for use by God</p> <p>> 'ye are justified' = declared righteous by the blood</p> <p>> 'in the name of' = by the authority of</p> <p>> 'and by the' = sealed by the Holy Spirit as our guarantee</p> <p>> 'all things are lawful' => nothing can remove us from our position in Christ – even sins, but God does not tempt us with evil, or, allow us to be tempted by Satan more than we can withstand. Sin will not change our position as children of God (but it will impact our daily walk if unconfessed).</p>

The unsaved are under the power of the Old Sin Nature (OSN). From their ‘position’ outside of Christ they can produce human good or evil, but in God’s eyes all human effort (that is effort produced by the OSN) is unrighteousness. [Isa.64:6]. The saved are ‘in Christ.’ Their position is fixed, but not their fellowship. For them sin is always a choice between which influence they are going to follow the OSN or the HS. Note that throughout Gal.5:17-21 Paul uses 2nd person pronouns when referring to the saved (KJV-”ye”), but switches to the 3rd person (KJV-”they”) when referring to the unsaved. “They” clearly refers to those who are under the power of the OSN and is an attempt to contrast the ‘fruit’ of those under the power of the HS (‘in fellowship’) with the ‘works’ of those under the power of the OSN (unsaved). This verse (5:21) does not refer to the saved that are ‘out of fellowship.’

It is due, in part, to a misunderstanding of this verse (that it somehow refers to the saved who are out of fellowship) that these same well-meaning evangelists are also drawn to the false conclusion that ‘everlasting life’ is, somehow, not always everlasting.

- [2 Tim. 2:25]

<p><i>In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">[KJV]</p>	<p>> God ‘gives’ repentance by ‘circumstances’ that lead a person to compare themselves to the perfect, loving goodness of God. In this way He opens the eyes of the unbeliever (“Faith cometh by hearing...” He doesn’t actually determine who will believe (although He clearly knows ahead of time who will believe). [See the study on Predestination.]</p>
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It should also be said that if God had wanted to imply that repentance included a change in behavior as a prerequisite to salvation, then rather than using the words *metanoeo*, *metamellomai*, or *metanoia*, He would have likely used one of the following words:

- ‘Metastrepho’ / μεταστρέφω (to turn around)
- ‘Metaschematizo’ / μετασχηματίζω (to transform)
- ‘Metatithemi’ / μετατίθημι (to transpose one thing for another)

The bottom line

Because we are never *required* to feel sorrow for sin in order that we might be saved, then it stands to reason that we are also not *required* to want to change our lifestyle in order to become saved.

Some Christians are taught that a Gospel presentation must include a challenge to the individual that they must either “turn from their sins” or “be willing to turn from their sins” as a prerequisite to salvation. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Any actual attempt to change *before* salvation is ‘self-reformation’—at best only human good—and is specifically denied as a part of the Gospel [Jn.1:12-12; Rom.9:16]. This is like telling an alcoholic that they must stop drinking before they can be saved (or, ‘want’ to stop drinking before they can be saved). Any attempt to change before the Holy Spirit enters one’s life will rely on the Old Sin Nature’s production of human good and is doomed to failure from the start. An attempt

after one is saved is an attempt made with an indwelling Holy Spirit (HS). Unfortunately, what many Christians fail to recognize is that any attempt to reform must be with the help of the Holy Spirit (HS) and occurs *after* salvation (after the HS indwells at the point of salvation). This means that attempts to reform are a product of discipleship (through the production of divine good) and not a part of salvation. First comes salvation and then comes discipleship.

Some may point out that their Gospel presentation doesn't actually 'require' reformation as a prerequisite, only that the person be 'willing' to change. As Dr. Gutzke points out, however, how much good does it do for a person to 'want' (or even promise) to do good? Does a desire to be better pay for your sin debt? NO! A willingness to try not to sin means everything in discipleship, but means nothing in salvation. That position still attempts to add/mix human good with the blood of the cross to effect salvation. [Again, Jn.1:12-13.]

Any attempt to reform as a *prerequisite* to salvation is a product of one's human spirit and is—at best—a "filthy rag" according to Isaiah 64:6¹. How can a filthy rag add to the blood of the cross? Can our filthy rags be considered 'icing on the cake' of salvation accomplished by Christ's death on the cross? Was Christ wrong when He said, "It is finished." Did He actually mean to say that it is finished, except for the addition of your own human good?

Frequently, well intentioned evangelists will point to Gal.5:21 as evidence that a willingness to change *is* important in salvation. That would be incorrect. It *would* be correct to state that a willingness to change was important in discipleship, but it is immaterial in salvation. Again, the incorrect position is based on an ignorance of the distinction between salvation and discipleship and a misinterpretation of scripture.

1Cor.6:9-12 is Paul's explanation of Gal.5:21. It is clear from a study of these scriptures that the unrighteousness spoken of is a *positional* unrighteousness and not a practical one.

The unsaved are under the power of the Old Sin Nature (OSN). From their 'position' outside of Christ they can produce human good or evil, but in God's eyes *all human* effort (that is effort produced by the OSN) is unrighteousness. [Isa.64:6].

The saved are 'in Christ.' Their position is fixed, but not their fellowship. For them sin is always a choice between which influence they are going to follow—the OSN or the HS. Note that throughout Gal.5:17-21 Paul uses 2nd person pronouns when referring to the saved (KJV—"ye"), but switches to the 3rd person (KJV—"they") when referring to the unsaved. "They" clearly refers to those who are under the power of the OSN and is an attempt to contrast the 'fruit' of those under the power of the HS ('in fellowship') with the 'works' of those under the power of the OSN (unsaved). This verse (5:21) does not refer to the saved that are 'out of fellowship.'

I hope this study has been helpful. If you have any questions or would like to see additional verses addressed, please do not hesitate to contact Workman Ministries.

¹ Some would say that I am taking Isaiah out-of-context. I don't think so. Clearly, Paul teaches the same concept in 1Cor.12:3.