

# What Is Biblical Repentance?

Tim Conway | [illbehonest.com](http://illbehonest.com)

What is true biblical repentance? And the thing that we find when we come to the scriptures, one of my favorite texts on this comes from Acts 26. "Therefore, oh King Agrippa," this is Paul speaking, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance." There's a turning. We read this in the Scriptures. In the book of Acts as well. There's this repentance toward God.

Basically repentance is a turning away from our sins, it's a turning towards God. The thing about it is, it's absolutely essential. You have this concept that Paul hits. Repentance toward God. So you find that repentance is a directional thing. It has to do with us steering towards God. And faith in Jesus Christ. And one of the things that I think is absolutely essential that we keep in mind concerning repentance.

So often you get people that struggle, and their struggle really comes down to the fact that they're looking at their repentance. People begin to think so much about what's their repentance. They're looking at themselves. "Am I repenting enough?" "Am I believing enough?" "Am I pointed towards God enough?" "Am I forsaking my sin enough?" "Am I feeling enough sorrow?" And you see what that is? That's repentance that needs to be repented of. It's no good. Because, what's happening is the sinner has his eyes on himself.

And it comes back to the one basic essential problem with man. It's his self righteousness. Like the Pharisee. Thinking that he's accomplishing the law and going to be approved by God that way. You constantly have man going around to establish his own righteousness. And when people get all hung up on their repentance, when they get all hung up on their faith. It's the same deal. They're looking at themselves. They're trying to produce a repentance. They're trying to produce a faith that will make them acceptable to God. And in the end of it what they're doing is they're trying to make themselves somehow presentable.

Repentance isn't that. If somebody's looking at their repentance then it's not the true thing. What true repentance does is it's a Godward thing. Repentance toward God. What happens in true repentance is there is a sorrow for sin, but it isn't such a sorrow that I become all hung up on, "am I sorrowing enough?" It's a sorrow of sin that leads me to look to Christ and what He accomplished on the Cross. In that and in that alone is salvation.

True repentance is letting go of how well I repent. I mean, basically, what happens to the sinner when there's true repentance is they give up. They give up all their own efforts. They give up all their own tryings. Repentance is not this pre-salvation thing, where I try to reform my life. Repentance is when there's just an abandonment of all my own efforts and all my own doings and all my own strivings, and, instead of getting all hung up on, I'm actually looking to God. I mean the sinner, the destitute desperate sinner, is just the person that throws up his arms and says, "God help me" That's the 'looking to God'.

So often men get just, they just get preoccupied with "Am I sorrowing?" "Am I longing?" "Am I turning?" "Am I repenting?" "Am I believing?" And it's all inward. It's all introspective. It's all mirror gazing. It's not truly setting the eyes, setting the grasp on Christ.

Charles Leiter told me a story of a woman that he knows, that just struggled with this very thing. With looking at herself all the time. Was she repenting? Was she believing? And just feeling that it was impossible. And she got to the place where just out of sheer frustration; and she came to the end of herself and she just... she just fell, and she said she fell right into the arms of Christ. And that's really the true repentance. When we just give up and we fall into His arms. That's the direction towards Him. Not so much that we have all the might and the power and the ability to run ourselves. We just give up and drop. And He catches us.