

Growing a Culture of Prayer

Week 4 – Repentance and Practice

1. REPENTANCE

A. We can reclaim “repentance” as a wonderful gift from God

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?

Romans 2:4

B. Repentance is ‘turning back to God’

The very nature of repentance is that it is us turning each part of our lives back to God, in full humility and desire for restored relationship with Him, (through His grace). It is therefore never to be a religious exercise, but a profoundly relational activity with our loving Heavenly Father.

God hates sin, because He loves us & He knows that sin kills us.

Ultimately repentance is about God, not about the sin.

C. Repentance is a lifestyle.

In repentance, we turn from listening to and agreeing with the lies and ways of the kingdom of darkness and align ourselves with God, in other words believe the truth and ways of the kingdom of light.

It therefore becomes a lifestyle, a daily choice to keep agreeing with God rather than just an emotions driven experience.

If we see repentance as a painful, heavy oppressive experience then we’ll resist it and want to justify and defend ourselves. Recognising that repentance is reconciliation with God in humility frees us to shake off sin, victimisation and rejection ‘mind sets’ which hold us oppressed.

2. RENOUNCING

*Therefore, O King, be pleased to accept my advice: **Renounce** your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue.*

Daniel 4:27

*He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and **renounces** them finds mercy.*

Proverbs 28:13

You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.

Ephesians 4:22

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.

Ephesians 4:31

Renouncing is choosing (act of the will) to no longer believe lies about ourselves, turn from destructive behaviour patterns. It's a conscious choice to turn from these things and break its power in our lives.

Renouncing includes the decision of the heart to turn away from being aligned with sin to being aligned with God.

Renouncing recognizes that we are not trapped or defined by our past choices, actions or emotions, rather we choose to agree with God's truth that he has set us free.

3. RECIEVE

A. Receive the forgiveness of God.

We can find it hard to receive God's forgiveness. Take time to thank God for his forgiveness and truly receive the grace, mercy and favour God pours out into your life. ...*"Lord I receive your forgiveness ..."*

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness
1 John 1:8

B. Beware of "condemnation" turning correction and repentance into a depressing and exhausting experience.

There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.
Romans 8:1-2

C. Repentance is the gateway into true life and freedom!

Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'If you repent, I will restore you that you may serve me'
Jeremiah 15:19a

For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!
Ezekiel 18: 32

Prayer Ministry- Practical Guidelines

Beautiful or nightmare?

'Permit the Creator to deal DIRECTLY with the creature, and the creature directly with the Creator and Lord' – Ignatius of Loyola

- At the core of prayer ministry is enabling the person to '**encounter**' the Lord. Our role is to facilitate that encounter and allow the Holy Spirit to do the work.
- Prayer Ministry is rooted in '**love**' and facilitating and expressing God's love for the person.
- Trust the Holy Spirit. **Be led by the Holy Spirit** – this requires us to listen to the Holy Spirit. In your heart ask the Lord to lead you.
- Our posture; vulnerability, trust, openness, safety, gentleness, kindness. We offer everything we receive in prayer and never 'impose' on someone.
- We are NOT there to fix the problem, or share our earthly wisdom. This is a time of encounter between the individual and God. Operate out of your spirit not your human nature. Pray from your spirit not our own intellect

'Pray as you can, not as you can't' Dom John Chapman

- Eyes open – don't be afraid to open your eyes and this will help you discern what is going on and guide your response in prayer.
- Appropriate touch; always ask permission. Shoulders, hands and heads may be appropriate.
- Generally Prayer Ministry after service do standing up. In this context these are short prayer moments not long ministry sessions.
- Ideally men prayer for men, and women with women, but in a public context such as a service be pragmatic. Consider praying in pairs.
- To pray for someone, doesn't mean you need to know all the story or all the details. God knows. Ideally ask what someone would like prayer for, and explain you don't need to know all the details as God does.
- Encourage the person to prayer for their situation first then you follow in if necessary. This shifts the focus away from you bringing a solution, and they are connecting with God