

Repentance Attitude

Jesus Contrasts the Attitudes of the Repentant and Self-Righteous

Luke 7:36-50

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([Acts 17:29-30](#)) **Repentance**: to change; to turn; to change one's mind; to turn one's life. It is a turning away from sin and turning toward God. It is a change of mind, a forsaking of sin. It is putting sin out of one's thoughts and behavior. It is resolving never to think or do a thing again. ([Matthew 3:2](#); [Luke 13:2-3](#); [Acts 2:38](#); [Acts 3:19](#); [Acts 8:22](#); [Acts 26:20](#).) The change is turning away from lying, stealing, cheating, immorality, cursing, drunkenness, and the other so-called glaring *sins of the flesh*. But the change is also turning away from *the silent sins of the spirit* such as self-centeredness, selfishness, envy, bitterness, pride, covetousness, anger, evil thoughts, hopelessness, laziness, jealousy, lust.

1. Repentance involves two turns. There is a **negative turn** away from sin and a **positive turn** toward God. It is a turning to God away from sin, whether sins of thought or action. (See note, **Repentance**—[Luke 3:3](#). Cp. [1 Thes. 1:9](#); [Acts 14:15](#).)

([Luke 3:3](#)) **Repentance—Forgiveness—Baptism**: John was a man who preached repentance and forgiveness of sins. Note the exact wording: he preached "**the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**." This simply means that if a man wished to be forgiven his sins, he repented. He turned from his sins, and changed his life; then he was baptized. Baptism was the sign to his neighbors and the world that he was changing his life (repenting) because he wanted God to forgive his sins. The order is this:

- ⇒ A man wanted God to forgive his sins.
- ⇒ The man therefore made a decision to repent, to turn from his sinful ways, and to change his life.
- ⇒ The man was immediately baptized.

Now note. It was baptism that proclaimed to everyone that the man wanted forgiveness and was turning from his sins (repenting). Baptism was the act, the sign, that said to the world that the man was thereafter going to live a changed life so that God would forgive his sins.

Two simple facts are being stated.

1. Forgiveness of sins is conditional. A man must repent to be forgiven, and if he truly repents, he is baptized. Baptism is part of the act of repentance!
2. Baptism is the immediate witness and sign that a man is repenting and changing his life. If a man is truly sincere in seeking forgiveness, he is baptized and does change his life, turning away from sin and turning to God.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" ([Acts 2:38](#)).

"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" ([Matthew 3:11](#)).

"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" ([Luke 13:3](#)).

"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" ([Acts 3:19](#)).

"Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die?" ([Ezekiel 18:31](#)).

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" ([Joel 2:12](#)).

2. Repentance is more than sorrow. Sorrow may or may not be involved in repentance. A person may repent simply because he wills and acts to change; or a person may repent because he senses an agonizing sorrow within. But the sense or feeling of sorrow is not repentance. Repentance is both the change of mind and the actual turning of one's life away from sin and toward God. (See [Deeper Study #1—2 Cor. 7:10](#).)

DEEPER STUDY #1

(2 Cor.7:10) Godly Sorrow— Worldly Sorrow— Repentance: sin and irresponsibility cause regret and disappointment, guilt, and remorse. In short, sin causes sorrow. But sorrow has no healing power by itself. Only repentance, a change of mind or a turn of life, can heal the heart of man.

There are two kinds of sorrow.

1. Worldly sorrow. This sorrow can be a sorrow over doing wrong or of coming up short from what one expects. It is a violation of one's values. It can also be a sorrow caused by being found out, or suffering consequences, or being punished. In either case **"the sorrow of the world works death"** ([2 Cor. 7:10](#)). It works death in two ways:

- ⇒ It eats a man up with guilt and remorse, depression and despair, defeat and inactivity (**Judas, [Matthew 27:3-5](#)**).
- ⇒ It embitters a man in rebellion and resentment against the consequences and punishment of sin (**Esau, [Hebrews 12:16-17](#)**).

2. Godly sorrow. This is the sorrow that is wrought in the heart of the believer by the conviction of the Holy Spirit. When the believer does wrong or falls short, the Holy Spirit is grieved ([Ephes. 4:30](#)). His work is quenched ([1 Thes. 5:19](#)). His ministry of making the believer like Jesus is hindered and hampered. So He begins His convicting work. Under the weight of conviction the believer's heart is thereby led to repent. The believer changes his mind and turns his behavior around to what it should be (**Peter, [Matthew 26:75](#)**). Godly sorrow always leads to repentance. A believer who refuses to repent wallows around and eventually dwells in the realm of worldly sorrow. He always bears the mark of indwelling and unconfessed sin and failure.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" ([Matthew 5:4](#)).

"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" ([Acts 3:19](#)).

"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" ([2 Cor. 7:10](#)).

"Therefore also now, saith the LORD turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning" ([Joel 2:12](#)).

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" ([2 Chron. 7:14](#)).

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" ([Psalm 34:18](#)).

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" ([Psalm 51:17](#)).

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" ([Isaiah 55:7](#)).

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

([Acts 17:29-30](#)) **Repentance:** God now demands that all men repent. There are two reasons why man is to repent.

1. Man is to repent because of his sin and idolatry. Man is not to worship idols of any sort, whether invisible or visible, of the mind or of materials, of the imagination or of the world. Note how the exhortation is worded: "**We ought not to think,**" to imagine that God is like gold, silver, or stone graven by art and man's device. The word "device" (*enthumēseōs* [PWS: 1009](#)) means internal thoughts, ideas, imaginations. Every man has a **concept**, a thought about God. But we should not. We should seek and find the **only living and true God**. Every person is personally responsible for forsaking the idols of this world and for finding God. Man is now to repent.

2. Man is to repent because the days of ignorance are over. Before now God winked at (*huperidōn* [PWS: 4355](#)) man's ignorance—not in the sense of closing His eyes or of condoning man's idolatry, but He overlooked man's ignorance until He could prepare man for the coming of His Son. Now God's Son has come, and God demands that all men repent.

Jesus Contrasts the Attitudes of the Repentant and Self Righteous

([Luke 7:36-50](#)) Introduction: the present passage contrasts the attitudes of the sinful (repentant) and the self-righteous. It needs to be studied carefully, for self-righteousness is a serious sin. It is both common and damning.

- [1. Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner and Jesus accepted \(v.36\).](#)**
- [2. The attitude of the repentant: a woman prostitute \(v.37-38\).](#)**
- [3. The attitude of the self-righteous \(v.39\).](#)**
- [4. The two attitudes illustrated: the parable of two debtors \(v.40-43\).](#)**
- [5. The need of the self-righteous: to really see Jesus, who the repentant say He is \(v.44-50\).](#)**

1. ([Luke 7:36](#)) Jesus Christ, Seeking Man: Simon, a Pharisee, invited Jesus to dinner. Note several things.

1. Simon invited Jesus to his house, but he did not extend to Jesus the common courtesies ([Luke 7:44-46](#)). He was rude to the Lord. He was not even sure Jesus was a prophet, much less the Messiah ([Luke 7:39](#)). Why then did he invite Jesus to his house? We do not know; nothing is said as to why. The best speculation is that Simon enjoyed the company of celebrities, and he had heard so much about Jesus that he wanted to meet and talk with Him on an informal and friendly basis.
2. Jesus ate with both sinners and religionists (Pharisees) ([Luke 5:29-30](#)). No one was excluded from His attention or love, even when they lacked the common everyday courtesies and respect ([Luke 7:44-46](#)). He sought every man.
3. The house of Simon was a house of the rich. The rich always had an open courtyard, usually in the center of the house; that is, the house was built around an open courtyard. Sometimes the host would allow the public to stand around in the courtyard and listen to the discussions, in particular when a rabbi or some celebrity was the chief guest.

2. ([Luke 7:37-38](#)) Repentance— Salvation— Humility— Jesus Christ, Seeking: the attitude of the repentant. The woman was a sinner, a prostitute. She demonstrated what a sinner has to do in coming to Jesus.

1. She sensed a desperate need. She was either convicted of her sin while hearing Jesus or else she had heard Him before and came under heavy conviction. His plea for men and women to repent and prepare for the Kingdom of God pierced her heart. She knew she was a sinner: unclean, lost, condemned. The guilt and weight of her sin was more than she could bear. She ached for forgiveness and cleansing, for freedom and liberty.
2. She approached the Lord despite all. She knew that the public scorned and gossiped about her, and the so-called decent people wanted nothing to do with her. What would Jesus do—He who said, "**Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest....**" ([Matthew 11:28-30](#))? She knew that if she was recognized, the Pharisee might throw her out of the house. He knew about her ([Luke 7:39](#)). She thought about the situation, and her thinking turned into hope, and her hope into belief.

Surely He who offered such an invitation would receive her. Before anyone could stop her, she rushed to Jesus and stood behind Him at His feet. (Remember, in the East people reclined to eat. They rested on their left arm facing each other around the table with their body and feet extending out away from the table.)

3. She surrendered to the Lord in utter humility. Standing there, she was overcome with conviction and emotion. She fell at Jesus' feet weeping—so broken that tears just flowed from her eyes. She unwound her hair and wiped and kissed Jesus' feet. Seldom has such love and devotion been shown Jesus.

Now note: there was only one thing that could make a prostitute enter a Pharisee's home—desperation. She was gripped with a sense of lostness, of helplessness, of urgency. The loosening of her hair to wipe Jesus' feet was forbidden of women in public. She must have been so desperate she was totally oblivious to the onlookers. The point is this: she was surrendering her heart and life to the Lord, begging Him to forgive her. She was so broken she was unable to speak, but Jesus knew her heart. Words were not necessary ([Luke 7:47-48](#)).

4. She loved much, giving her most precious possession. Perfume was highly valued by women of that day (see [Matthew 26:8-9](#)). Apparently, by describing the perfume as he does, Luke is stressing the expense of the perfume and the great sacrifice she was making. It was probably the most costly possession she had, so she was giving it to her Lord. However, there is something more important here. Note what she did with the perfume. She anointed her Lord; anointed His feet in a supreme act of humility and love and surrender (see [Luke 7:44-50](#)).

Thought 1. The person who comes to Christ must come with a broken and contrite heart.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" ([Matthew 11:28](#)).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" ([Hebrews 4:15-16](#)).

"The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit" ([Psalm 34:18](#)).

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones" ([Isaiah 57:15](#)).

"For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" ([Isaiah 66:2](#)).

3. (Luke 7:39) Self-righteousness: the attitude of the self-righteous. The behavior of the self-righteous man revealed several things.

1. The man was considerate, but self-righteous. Note, he only thought these things; he would not say them publicly lest he embarrass his guests. (How like the self-righteous!)

2. The man considered himself better. He felt he was better than the sinful woman, so he would never allow her to touch him. He would keep his distance, ignore, and have nothing to do with her. But note something else. He considered his judgment and knowledge, opinions and behavior to be better than others. He expected others (Jesus) to judge and act as he did. He thought that if Jesus only knew who the lady was, then He would reject her.

Thought 1. Many do live self-righteously. They feel that they live and act better than others. They feel and act superior because they have a...

- a better house
- a better profession
- a better education
- a better religion
- a better child
- a better heritage
- a better income
- a better discipline
- a better position
- more ability
- more success
- more recognition
- a better job
- better skills
- a better life

3. The man sensed no need for forgiveness and repentance. He thought of himself as *good enough* in two areas.

- a. He was *good enough in religion*. Note he was a Pharisee, a man who had given his life to practice religion. If anyone was ever *good enough*, he should have been.
- b. He was *good enough* in behavior. He was well behaved, decent and moral, just and equitable, respected and highly esteemed. He was not immoral; in fact, he would have nothing to do with immorality. He had not and never would commit a sin that would be publicly condemned. Therefore, he felt as though he had done nothing for which he needed forgiveness.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" ([Matthew 7:21](#)).

"He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" ([Mark 7:6](#)).

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" ([2 Cor. 10:12](#)).

"They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" ([Titus 1:16](#)).

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" ([1 John 3:18](#)).

"Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" ([Proverbs 20:6](#)).

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" ([Proverbs 30:12](#)).

4. ([Luke 7:40-43](#)) Jesus Christ, Deity; Knowledge: the two attitudes illustrated. Jesus told a parable about two debtors. Note several things that say much to the self-righteous.

1. Jesus *announced* that He had something to say, something critically important. Undivided attention was needed. Every self-righteous person needs to listen and listen closely.

2. Jesus was a prophet and more—He was the Son of God; therefore, He not only knew the people who were sitting around Him, He knew their every thought. Note that from this point on, Jesus was answering the *thoughts* of Simon. Simon had never said a word about Jesus not knowing who the woman was nor about his own question about Jesus being a prophet. Simon had only been thinking these thoughts "within himself" ([Luke 7:39](#)).

Thought 1. Jesus is the Son of God; therefore, what a man thinks pales into insignificance when facing the One who knows all thoughts, including what one really thinks and feels *within*. Jesus knows the truth of every thought and feeling within a man. If a person is self-righteous, Jesus knows it. If a person is repentant, truly repentant, Jesus knows it. No one hides anything, no feeling, no thought from Him.

3. The meaning of the parable is strikingly clear. A glance at the verses and points in the outline show this. Note how clearly the parable illustrates the grace of God in freely forgiving sin (salvation) ([Ephes. 1:7](#); [Ephes. 2:8-9](#); [1 John 1:9](#); [1 John 2:1-2](#)).

5. ([Luke 7:44-50](#)) Self-Righteousness: the need of the self-righteous—to really see Jesus, who the repentant say He is. Note what Jesus asked Simon, "Seest thou this woman, this repentant?" The repentant had much to teach the self-righteous about Jesus. The repentant *really sees* Jesus, who He really is.

1. Jesus was the One who deserved more than common courtesies. The host usually showed respect by providing water for the guests to wash their dusty, sandaled feet. The kiss was the accepted greeting among friends, and oil was usually given for honored guests to refresh themselves after travelling under the hot sun. It was expensive, so it was usually reserved for honored guests.

a. Jesus deserved *more than common respect* (water); He deserved a worshipful respect. He was seen as Lord and was respected as Lord by the repentant. He

was the One who alone could meet the needs of the human heart; therefore, He was the One who was to be worshipped. The self-righteous needed to learn this.

- b. Jesus deserved ***more than a common greeting***; He deserved a humble, brokenhearted greeting. He was approached with a sense of unworthiness and humility. The repentant saw the worthiness of Jesus and grasped something of His awesome person as the Son of God and as the sovereign Lord of the universe; therefore, He was the One to whom all men owed their allegiance, the One who alone had the power to forgive and accept men. The repentant saw Jesus as the One who alone could help her, the One who alone had the power to help, so the repentant approached Jesus and greeted Him with a deep sense of humility and unworthiness. The self-righteous needed to learn this.
 - c. Jesus deserved ***more than a common gift***; He deserved a sacrificial gift. He was seen as the hope and Savior of one's life, so the repentant gave Jesus her life, all she was and had. The repentant surrendered her life and gave the most precious gift she had to anoint her Lord. The self-righteous needed to learn this.
2. Jesus was the One who had the power to forgive sins. Three simple facts are important here.
- a. The woman's sins were many. Jesus did not overlook her sins, nor the seriousness of them. After all it was her sins and the sins of others that brought about *His humiliation*, His having to come to this sinful world and to die for the sins of men. However, He forgave her sins despite their awfulness. Every sinner should note this carefully.
 - b. Self-righteousness sensed the need for *little* forgiveness; therefore, the self-righteous loved little. The self-righteous had only a formal, distant relationship with God. His relationship was cold, having only a small sense of sin and sensing only a little need for forgiveness. It was enough to have Jesus present at his table (the table was about the only place many acknowledged His presence).

Thought 1. The self-righteous approach to God...

- has only a little sense of sin; therefore senses only a little need for forgiveness.
 - is blinded to man's ***state of sin***, to man's true being, that of being short of God's glory ([Romans 3:23](#)).
 - has little sense of the need for special mercy and grace, is blinded to God's Sovereign Majesty and Person.
 - has only a formal, distant relationship with God, has little personal relationship with God.
 - gives little honor to God, makes little sacrifice for God.
- c. Jesus forgave sin. He had the power to forgive the sins of this repentant.

Thought 1. The fact of forgiveness, the very knowledge that millions have been truly forgiven, is proof that Christ is the Son of God, the One to whom men are to go for forgiveness.

3. Jesus was the One whom people needed to ask about.

Thought 1. The very fact that Jesus claimed the right and power to forgive sins should cause every man to sit up, take notice and ask, "Who is this?"

"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" ([Acts 5:31](#)).

"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins" ([Acts 13:38](#)).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" ([Ephes. 1:7](#)).

"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" ([Psalm 103:3](#)).

"But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared" ([Psalm 130:4](#)).

"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" ([Isaiah 43:25](#)).

"I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee" ([Isaiah 44:22](#)).

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" ([Isaiah 55:7](#)).

"And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me" ([Jeremiah 33:8](#)).

4. Jesus was the One who did save the repentant. The woman believed Christ to be the Savior, the One who could forgive her sins. Therefore, Christ saved her.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" ([John 3:16](#)).

"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" ([John 14:6](#)).

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" ([Romans 10:9-10](#)).

"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" ([1 Tim. 1:15](#)).