

The “First Teachings”

The essential foundations for the maturity of the believer

Introduction and objectives

If you want to build something great in life, you need a solid and adequate foundation to build on. Without this your house WILL fall down when the storms come, and come they will. I believe that in every generation God looks all over the earth for a person and a people who have laid a solid foundation for their faith, and as He finds such foundations He will build something significant on these to proclaim the Good News of Jesus and to glorify His name.

The question is: How solid are your faith foundations right now? Is it time to strengthen your foundations so that you can go to the next level of relationship, ministry, leadership, and fruitfulness?

Hebrews chapter 6:1-3 lists a number of essential foundations required for every believer who wants to “go on to maturity” (maturity = growing/ becoming all you were born to be). If you want to be more than a baby Christian needing to be taught over and over again, then it is vital to get to grips with these truths so that you know them, live them, and can teach and impart them to others.

Hebrews 5:12-14 *In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! ¹³ Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

Maturity here means:

- To understand, live, and be able to teach others the first teachings (Not an infant/ Gk: “Nepios” – cannot speak)
- Being able to handle the “meat” of God's word, not only the “milk.”
- Growing up from being a “baby” into who you are born/born again/called to be.
- Being “skilled in the word/doctrine of righteousness.”
- Being able to distinguish between “good and evil” through the life application of truth

Underline the six first / foundational teachings/ in the passage below:

Hebrews 6:1-2 *Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works / acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, ² instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

Course Assignment:

Purchase a “Purple Book” (Biblical Foundations Workbook) and complete it, preferably with someone else.

Set a goal: Take someone through the “Purple Book” (Biblical Foundations) in the next 9 months.

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THE DOCTRINES of REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS and FAITH TOWARDS GOD

A proper understanding this doctrine is essential to ensure that we root out (“put off”) everything in us which tries to earn our salvation through works, and that we fully embrace the “amazing grace” received by faith in Christ alone.

1. WE ARE SAVED BY GODS GRACE NOT OUR WORKS

Eph 2:8-9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - ⁹not by works, so that no one can boast.*

Read this in the Amplified Bible: *For it is by free grace (God's unmerited favour) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation) through [your] faith. And this [salvation] is not of yourselves [of your own doing, it came not through your own striving], but it is the gift of God;*

⁹ *Not because of works [not the fulfilment of the Law's demands], lest any man should boast. [It is not the result of what anyone can possibly do, so no one can pride himself in it or take glory to himself.]*

1. This doctrine establishes that we cannot be saved by keeping the Law, but only by putting our faith in Christ. We are justified by faith in Christ alone – by His work, not our works.

John 1:17 *For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favour and spiritual blessing) and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

Rom 8:3-4 *For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.*

Rom 5:1-2 *Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ²through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.*

2. When you put your faith in your “good works” instead of in Christ, they become “dead works”
3. Any good work that we “boast in” becomes a dead work.
4. We are called to “work out” our salvation, but we cannot “work for” our salvation.

5. This doctrine also clearly and firmly establishes repentance as essential in salvation. We cannot “turn to God” without repentance. It is by repentance that we turn to God.

Definition of “repentance”: The word repentance is translated from the Greek “Metanoiein” = Literally to change one's mind and heart, resulting in a change of actions. Biblical repentance includes this change resulting in a turning to God in faith and obedience to His ways.

- True repentance accepts the grace, forgiveness and goodness of God in Christ
- True repentance is always linked to faith.
- Repentance without faith is penitence, and this in itself is a dead work.

2. THE MESSAGE OF REPENTANCE

2.1. Repent AND live!

Eze 18:31-32 *Rid yourselves of all the offences you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, O house of Israel? ³² For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!*

2.2. Repent AND believe!

Mark1:14-15 *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. ¹⁵“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”*

2.3. Repent AND receive!

Acts 2:37-39 *When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” ³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

2.4. God’s goodness AND Repentance

Rom 2:4 *Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?*

- Repentance is always, while faith is always

2.5. Heaven rejoices at repentance!

Luke 15:9 *And when she finds it [the lost coin], she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”*

2.6. John the Baptist to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law:

Matt 3:7-9 ⁷*But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptising, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*

2.7. Jesus to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law:

Luke 5:31-32 Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

2.8. Confession and repentance:

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

2.9. True and False repentance:

2 Cor 7:8-11 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter.

List the "fruits of repentance you see mentioned in 2 Cor 7:11:
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True & False repentance:

False repentance will appear in:

- 1. A sense of guilt and remorse over the past
- 2. Regret of the consequences rather than the sin
- 3. Strong fears of hell rather than a conviction of sin
- 4. Penitence when one atones for his sin through suffering/sacrifice

True repentance turns from dead works, such as:

- 1. All religious activity that is done to cover sin Isa 64:6
- 2. All works of the flesh Rom 8:8
- 3. All works of suffering 2 Cor 7:10

Biblical examples of false repentance:

- 1. Esau Heb 12:16-17
- 2. Judas Matt 27:3-5

Biblical example of true repentance:

David 2 Sam 12:13; Ps 51

3. PREACHING REPENTANCE AND FAITH TOWARDS GOD:

3.1. Jesus to the disciples on the road to Emmaus

Luke 24:46 *He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*

3.2. The early church

Acts 3:19 *Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord...*

3.3. Paul to King Agrippa

Acts 26:19-20 *"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. ²⁰First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and to the Gentiles also, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.*

A parable of repentance: the prodigal son

Luke 15:11-32

<p>What principles of repentance can you see in this parable?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

4. THE WARNING OF RETURNING TO WORKS

Galatians 3:1-9 *You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? ³Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? ⁴Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? ⁵Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?*

A prayer of repentance and faith towards God:

<p>Ps 139: 23-24</p> <p><i>"Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; ²⁴And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."</i></p>
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