

# SEEKING THE SAVIOR

# STUDY GUIDE

An Evangelistic Bible Study Series



## STUDY #6: REPENTANCE & BAPTISM

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# STUDY #6 - REPENTANCE & BAPTISM

## Study Goals:

- **To convey what repentance is and that it is a prerequisite to salvation/baptism** (Luke 13:3, Acts 17:30, 31).
- **To clarify that repentance involves being sorry, but it is much more than just being sorry** (2 Corinthians 7:8-11, Acts 26:19, 20)
- **To show that the "wall of sin" is removed (sins are forgiven) by God as we put our faith in Him at baptism** (Acts 2:38-42, Acts 22:16).
- **To lead to the surrendering of life to Christ in baptism. It makes no sense to "bury" someone who is not going to "crucify" self** (Romans 6:1-6).
- **To emphasize that new birth must result in living a "new life"** (Romans 6:6-12).

## REPENTANCE – What is it?

### ? What do think of when you hear the word "repent?"

**NOTE:** After asking this initial question let your student know that this study will be devoted to explain what repentance is. "Repent" has become a "christianese" word that is rarely used in every day conversations. Your role in this study is to explain repentance in a practical, biblical way and to expose common misunderstandings about repentance. Biblical repentance is **a change of mind/heart that leads to a change of behavior**. Begin by reading the following passage together. The NCV is included for the your benefit, to help you in explaining the background and meaning of the passage. *It can be helpful to read the NCV out loud to help clearly define the concept for your student.*

### READ:

**Luke 13:1-5**-----

(NCV) <sup>1</sup> At that time some people were there who told Jesus that Pilate had killed some people from Galilee while they were worshipping. He mixed their blood with the blood of the animals they were sacrificing to God. <sup>2</sup> Jesus

answered, "Do you think this happened to them because they were more sinful than all others from Galilee? <sup>3</sup> No, I tell you. But unless you change your hearts and lives, you will be destroyed as they were! <sup>4</sup> What about those eighteen people who died when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were more sinful than all the others who live in Jerusalem? <sup>5</sup> No, I tell you. But unless you change your hearts and lives, you will all be destroyed too!"

**? Does Jesus seem to view repentance as optional or essential?**

**NOTE:** Explain that Jesus was speaking to "good" people who thought that bad things were happening to others due to their sinfulness. Jesus is trying to make these "good" people realize that a disastrous fate awaits them and anyone who is unwilling to have a change of mind that leads them to a change of action. The choice that God gives each of us is simple: Repent or die.

**? Why do you think Jesus would say the same thing twice?**

- It is very important that you and I understand the significance of repentance.
- The choice is obvious and serious; "repent" or "perish".
- One can't be saved without repentance! No exceptions!

**NOTE:** The following passage is good to read to clarify the essentials of repentance before moving on in the study. The message is simple; Repent of...or risk God's judgment!

**READ:**

**Acts 17:30-31** -----

<sup>30</sup> "In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. <sup>31</sup> For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice..."

**? What fate awaits the person who refuses to repent?**

- They will face God's judgment.
- One can't afford to be "ignorant" about repentance

## REPENTANCE – HOW IT SHOWS UP IN LIFE

**NOTE:** Make sure you explain the background of the next passage. Let your friend know that the Apostle Paul had at one time hated Christ and persecuted Christians. However Paul had a radical change of heart and mind that led to a radical change of his behavior. Explain that in this passage Paul is sharing his new found faith by telling King Agrippa the story of how he became a disciple and what God called him to do.

### READ:

**Acts 26:12-20** -----

<sup>12</sup>“On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. <sup>13</sup>About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. <sup>14</sup>We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

<sup>15</sup>“Then I asked, ‘Who are you, Lord?’

“ ‘I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,’ the Lord replied. <sup>16</sup>‘Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. <sup>17</sup>I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.’

<sup>19</sup>“So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. <sup>20</sup>First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.

### ? What assignment was given to Paul?

“I am sending you to them <sup>18</sup>to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God...”

### ? In verse 20 Paul tells that he accomplished his task through preaching? What was his message to the people?

“I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds.”

### ? What would happen if the people Paul preached to, respond

## correctly to his message?

“...that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”

- Simply stated they would **be saved** .

**NOTE:** This is a good time to mention that repentance is simply an act of faith. If Paul’s audience truly believed his message, repentance would be a natural outcome. Repentance is simply a manifestation of life changing faith.

## ? What does Paul’s message to Agrippa say to you?

- If you are to receive the “forgiveness of sins,” you must commit to changing your life's direction. You must repent.

**NOTE:** The next passage is designed to make it completely clear that repentance requires life change. Being “sorry” is not enough. Once again it is essential that you explain the background of this passage. Explain that the Corinthian church had a member who was committing incest by having sex with his mom/step-mom. Originally the church did nothing, thinking that they were being gracious, accepting and non-judgmental. God, through Paul sent the church a letter telling them to confront the man’s sin. Paul’s God-inspired hard-hitting letter to the church hurt their feelings but saved their souls. He told them that by doing nothing about the man’s sin they were aiding Satan, dooming the sinner, and endangering their own souls (see I Corinthians 5 for specifics). Paul simply and plainly called the people to repent, to be sorry enough to change. The church responded, and in doing so left us with some valuable lessons about repentance.

## READ:

### 2 Corinthians 7: 8-11 -----

<sup>8</sup> “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— <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> **Godly sorrow** brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but **worldly sorrow** brings death. <sup>11</sup> 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.”

**? Why was Paul sorry, then happy about making the Corinthians sorry?**

- Hurting them was not Paul’s goal, helping them was. Helping them required hurting them.
- It was better for them to hurt now, for a short time, than to be lost forever in Hell.
- Paul was happy because “they became sorry as God intended.”

**NOTE:** There is a way of being sorry that is not pleasing to God. One must have the right kind of sorrow.

**? Paul mentions two kinds of sorrow - what are they?**

- Godly sorrow and Worldly sorrow

**? What do you think worldly sorrow is?**

- Sorry I got caught.
- Sorry, but not sorry enough to change (like the Devil, sorry enough to tremble but not enough to turn).

**MENTION:**

**James 2:19** – “Do you believe that there is only one God? Good! The demons also believe—and tremble with fear.”

- It’s demonic to claim to believe but not change my behavior!

**? What do you think Godly sorrow is?**

- Sorrow that leads to repentance, to a change of behavior.

**? What is the ultimate result of Godly sorrow?**

- Leads to salvation – You will be saved!

**NOTE:** Paul said that “Godly sorrow” is preceded by attitudes of the heart that result in a change of direction. Discuss these with the

student asking if they possess the positive attitudes that bring about a change of direction. If not, it's a sign they possess "worldly sorrow." If so, further encouragement and study of the love and judgment of God is necessary. Remember, **Godly sorrow precedes repentance and repentance must precede baptism. If the student's not sorry enough to change, the student's not ready to be baptized!**

- **Earnestness:** A serious attitude toward sin.

*Are you really serious about changing?*

- **Eagerness to clear yourself:** Excitement about change.

*Are you eager to change?*

- **Indignation:** Being angry that you blew it.

*Do you blame others or accept personal responsibility?*

- **Alarm:** Being afraid enough of sin that you run from it.

*Are you ready to stay away from sin?*

- **Longing:** Wanting deeply to be different

*Down deep do you really want to change?*

- **Concern:** Bothered by my sin.

*Are you concerned or care-free about your sin?*

- **Readiness to see justice done:** Willingness to do right regardless of the cost.

**? Repentance starts with Godly sorrow on the inside and continues with change that is visible on the outside. What changes in you life would your friends first notice if Godly sorrow leads you to repentance?**

**NOTE:** Sharing your story of repentance can help your student make personal application. Things like:

- "I didn't go to church even on Christmas or Easter but now I wouldn't miss a week."
- "The first thing that my friends noticed was a change in the way I



talked. My language was really foul until I became a Christian.”

- “Before I would never, ever think about talking about Jesus. I believed that religion was one of those personal things you should be quiet about but I repented and started sharing my faith to any one who would listen.”

Think of specific changes that you made that can help your student understand the broad nature of repentance.

**? Do you have *Godly Sorrow*? (Will you commit to changing your heart and life?)**

**NOTE:** If the *answer and evidence* is yes, you are ready to move on to the baptism segment. Remind the student that repentance, a change of direction is not a one-time decision for the disciple. It is a lifestyle!

## **BAPTISM**

**NOTE:** Is it important for you to explain the context of this passage to your student. Peter is speaking to the same people who'd made up the crowd been at Jesus' crucifixion. These were the people who'd shouted "Crucify him" and clamored for the release of the criminal Barabbas and the execution of the innocent Jesus. These people were guilty of murdering Jesus, the Son of God, and Peter's speech preceding this reading had convinced them of that.

**READ:**

**Acts 2:36c-40**-----

<sup>36c</sup> Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.” <sup>37</sup> When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” <sup>38</sup> Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, 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. <sup>39</sup> The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” <sup>40</sup> With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.

**? What part of this verse might indicate that these people had experienced Godly sorrow?**

- “... they were cut to the heart!”

- This “cutting” on the inside led them to ask questions about what they needed to do on the outside.

**? What did Peter tell them to do in response to their question?**

- “repent and be baptized everyone of you...”

**? What benefits did Peter say they would receive if they chose to respond properly?**

- “...for the **forgiveness of sins**... And you will receive the **gift of the holy spirit**...”

**? From these verses does it seem that they would receive the benefits if they refused to repent?**

**? From these verses does it seem that they would receive the benefits if they refused to be baptized?**

**? Which comes first, repentance or baptism?**

**NOTE:** Explain that repentance precedes baptism in this verse and in the process of salvation. Baptism is a useless ritual unless the one being baptized is willing to repent.

**ILLUSTRATE:** In the [back of this study](#) is a baptism illustration. It is a model for you to recreate during this segment. At this time draw out the wall of sin part, reminding the student of the results of sin. Use Acts 2:38 passage to show that the wall of sin is removed when a person in faith turns to God and is baptized. Forgiveness, removal of the wall was promised at baptism.

The next passage tells the story of Saul’s conversion. It ends with Saul being told to be baptized, to “wash away” his sins.

**READ:**

**Acts 22:3-16**-----

“Then Paul said: 3 “I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4 I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5 as also the high priest and all the Council can

testify. I even obtained letters from them to their brothers in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

6 "About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7 I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?' 8 "Who are you, Lord?' I asked. "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied.

9 My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me. 10 "What shall I do, Lord?' I asked. "Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.'

11 My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me. 12 "A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13 He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him. 14 "Then he said: 'The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15 You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. 16 And now what are you waiting for? **Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away**, calling on his name.'

**NOTE:** Only mention if your student reads this passage in the New Living Translation (NLT). The NLT renders Acts 22:16, "*Get up and be baptized. Have your sins washed away **by** calling on his name.*" The word "by" is an addition to the Bible in the NLT – it is **not** in the Greek text English versions of the scriptures are translated from. The Bible links having sins washed away to baptism – not the act of crying out to God or praying for Jesus to come into one's heart. There is no need to bring this up unless your student is reading from the NLT.

### ? Why did Paul need to be baptized?

- To wash his sins away (To remove the wall!)

**NOTE:** The next passage tells us what our part is in Baptism. God washes away our sins and causes us to be born again. Romans 6 is about God's call for the student to "crucify" self. In Paul's words baptism is a death and burial of the old self and its way of life. If there is no commitment to "die to self," there is no reason for baptism. We only bury dead people! **In this segment you will once again do most of the talking. You are preaching Christ and Him crucified.**

**ILLUSTRATE:** You will draw out the rest of the baptism illustration to help communicate the truth of Romans 6.

**READ:**

**Romans 6:1-4**-----

<sup>1</sup> What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? <sup>2</sup> By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? <sup>3</sup> Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

- Baptism is a reenactment of Christ's *death, burial, and resurrection*.

**READ:**

**Colossians 2:12**-----

"...having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

**READ:**

**1 Peter 3:20b-21**-----

<sup>21b</sup> "... God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, <sup>21</sup> and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ ..."

**NOTE:** In this passage the author Peter uses the ancient floodwaters of Noah as an illustration for Christian baptism. Just like the ancient flood cleansed the earth of sin, baptism cleanses individuals of sin. Peter lets us know that it isn't the water isn't magic – removing sin isn't like removing dirt in a bath. Rather, we are saved because God honors our commitment to Christ. When we decide to be baptized, we're making a "pledge" to follow Jesus for the rest of our lives. That word "pledge" is the same word used to describe the oath a Roman soldier would take to his commanding officer. That soldier was expected to do everything that commander told him to do – even if it meant running into a hopeless battle to die. Baptism is a public declaration that we are that committed to following the will of Jesus in our lives. It is a total giving over of ourselves to Jesus not only as

Savior, but as our Lord for the rest of our existence. In baptism my only role is submission to Jesus.

### **BIG IDEAS FROM ROMANS 6:1-4**

- Like Christ died on the cross, our old self dies at baptism.
- Like Christ resurrection will occur after death.
- Like Christ I will rise to live a new life.
- Nicodemus' conversation starting in **John 3:15** about being "born again" can be used here too if needed. Being born again and having a new life are the same thing. Both connected with Spirit and water.

### **READ:**

**Romans 6:5-14** -----

**V. 5** "If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection."

- "If" is a conditional word: *If we die... we will resurrect.*

### **? What happens if we you do not die to self at baptism?**

- Make it a negative statement... "If I have not been united in death, I certainly will not be united in resurrection."

**V. 6-7** "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin— 7 because anyone who has died has been freed from sin."

### **? What is essential, according to this verse, to me being freed from the slavery of sin?**

- Dying to self - "*old self being crucified.*"

**V. 8** "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him"

- Also true: "If we did **not** die with Christ, we believe we will **not** live with him."

### **? From what we've looked at so far, does it make any sense for you to be baptized if you are not ready to surrender your life?**

**V. 9-14** "For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery 10 The death he died, he died to sin

once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. 13 Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. 14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.”

- Your baptism is not only the time when your sins are forgiven; it is the time where you switch masters.

## **DECISION TIME -----**

**? Are you ready to give God control of your life, committing to die to self and live for your new master, Jesus?**

### **OTHER PASSAGES TO USE IF NEEDED**

- John 3:17
- Matthew 28:18-20
- Mark 16:15-16
- Galatians 3:26-27

### **OTHER CONVERSIONS IN THE BOOK OF ACTS**

1. Acts 2:26-47 In Jerusalem
2. Acts 8:26-38 The Ethiopian
3. Acts 16:23-24 The Jailer
4. Acts 18:24-26 Apollos
5. Acts 19:1-4 The Ephesians



# Baptism

*A participation in the Death, Burial and Resurrection of Jesus (Romans 6:1-6)*

