

## **CHAPTER 11 - REPENTANCE AND FAITH**

*In the previous study, we saw that Conversion was different to Regeneration. Conversion is the human response of turning to Christ once God's work of regeneration has occurred.*

*Wayne Grudem says, "Conversion is our willing response to the gospel call, in which we sincerely repent of sins and place our trust in Christ for salvation." By this definition, conversion involves repentance and faith. Grudem goes on to say, "The word conversion itself means "turning" – here it represents a spiritual turn, a turning from sin to Christ. The turning from sin is called repentance, and the turning to Christ is called faith."<sup>1</sup> Neither can occur without the other, and they must occur together when true conversion occurs.*

*Repentance is the English translation of the Greek word "metanoia" (pronounced met-an'-oy-ah). It comes from the Greek words "meta" meaning "after" implying change, and "nous" meaning "mind" as in the seat of moral reflection. Thus it suggests "to perceive afterwards," or to change one's mind or purpose.*

*Repentance is a key Biblical concept. We can see it throughout the Old Testament. For example, see Lev 26:40-42, Deut 30:1-3, Ezra 9:6-7, Psa 106:6, Dan 9:5-11, and of course, David's classic prayer of repentance in Psa 51.*

*The New Testament also is full of this idea. John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus' ministry by calling people to repentance (Matt 3:1-6). Jesus began His ministry by calling people to repentance (Matt 4:17). The disciples preached repentance (Mark 6:12). Jesus ended His ministry on this note (Luke 24:45-47). The apostles began their ministry by calling people to repentance (Acts 2:37-38). They continued their ministry by calling people to repentance (Acts 3:17-20). Paul commenced his ministry by calling people to repentance (Acts 26:20). Repentance is one of the foundational doctrines of the Christian faith (Heb 6:1). In the book of Revelation, Jesus called for repentance from the church in Ephesus (Rev 2:5), the church in Pergamum (Rev 2:19), the church in Thyatira (Rev 2:21), the church in Sardis (Rev 3:3), and the church in Laodicea (Rev 3:19).*

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

*The message of Repentance permeates all of Scripture. This gives us some clues about its importance. Repentance is much more than just a change of mind, though. Anyone can claim to have changed their mind, but the evidence that it may be genuine, Biblical repentance is in changed behaviour. John the Baptist told the Pharisees who came to him looking to be baptised, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt 3:8).*

## 1. Why is repentance necessary?

*First and foremost, repentance is necessary because God commands it. All other reasons must stand underneath this one. If God is truly God, then the simple fact that He commands it should be enough reason to accept it. This applies to everything God commands, and everything God reveals about Himself. If He says it is so, then it is so.*

*Repentance is also necessary because God is holy, and cannot tolerate sin. Therefore, any who would desire to enter His presence must recognise their sinfulness, and turn from it.*

*Repentance is turning from sin, and turning to God. As Peter Jeffery points out, a man can turn from his sin, changing his lifestyle and get rid of his bad habits, without turning to God. Consider, for example, the way alcohol causes many people to become violent. These people may give up drinking because of the damage it is causing to their livers, and thus stop being violent, but never give a thought to God.*

*A person may also cry out to God for mercy, but have no intention of giving up his sin. How often do we hear people say, "I know it's wrong, but I can't help myself." If they truly believed it was wrong, and genuinely wanted to give it up, they would seek help and/or remove themselves from the situation that causes them problems. The simple fact that they don't take these steps indicates that their sense of guilt or shame is not stronger than their love of the sin.*

*Genuine Biblical repentance will contain these elements:*

- a) Change of mind*
- b) Turning from sin*
- c) Turning to God*
- d) Change of actions*

*Repentance is an acknowledgement of the holiness of God, and of His sovereign right to set the standards for living and for salvation. It is also an acknowledgement of our failure to meet those*

*standards, and our dependence on God for all of life and for salvation. Lack of repentance displays an arrogant assumption that we are basically good, and is a denial of our need for God's grace. It places us back in a position where we insist that God must accept us on the basis of our good behaviour, and therefore places us back into works.*

*Scripture reveals to us that repentance has three aspects.*

*(Jer 31:19) After I strayed, I repented<sup>[will]</sup>; after I came to understand<sup>[mind]</sup>, I beat my breast. I was ashamed and humiliated<sup>[heart/emotions]</sup> because I bore the disgrace of my youth.'*

*a) Mind*

- a. Understanding our own sinfulness, God's holiness and His justice*
- b. Understanding that the wages of sin is death – sin will be punished*
- c. Understanding the divine remedy – God's plan of salvation in Christ alone*

*b) Heart/emotions*

- a. Contrite heart (see Psa 51:17)*
- b. Sorrow (see 2 Cor 7:10)*

*c) Will*

- a. Action, not just desire (see Jer 34:15)*
  - i. Never mistake intention or desire for action*

*If repentance only engages the mind, then there will remain a bondage to sinful behaviour. If it only engages the heart, then there will be a bondage to condemnation. If it only engages the will, there will be a bondage to legalism. If it engages all three, there is forgiveness and freedom.*

*Lack of repentance is deadly. At best, it will lead to a life of hypocrisy, playing church and struggling to be good; putting on a Christian front, but secretly frustrated and disillusioned. At worst, it will cause a person to turn their back on Christ as a lie, or even as an enemy.*

2. Is it possible to believe in the God of the Bible, and yet not be saved? Provide Scriptures to support your answer.

*(Job 1:6-12) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them. The Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it."*

*And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil?" Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Does Job fear God for no reason? Have you not put a hedge around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your hand. Only against him do not stretch out your hand." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.*

*(Job 2:1-7) Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them to present himself before the Lord. And the Lord said to Satan, "From where have you come?" Satan answered the Lord and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it." And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you incited me against him to destroy him without reason." Then Satan answered the Lord and said, "Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for his life. But stretch out your hand and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse you to your face." And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in your hand; only spare his life." So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and struck Job with loathsome sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.*

*(Matt 8:28-29) And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"*

*(Jas 2:19) You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe-and shudder!*

*As these instances reveal, the fallen angels know God well, having dwelt in His presence before their fall. They recognised Jesus as the Son of God with the power to judge and punish them for their rebellion.*

*It is entirely reasonable, then, to assume that humans may know the God of the Bible also, and still reject Him. Although humans*

haven't dwelt in God's presence (since Adam and Eve), yet there is still powerful evidence that God exists.

(Rom 1:18-23) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

(Matt 7:21-23) Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

(John 3:1-2) Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him."

(Acts 22:3-4) "I am a Jew, born in Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel according to the strict manner of the law of our fathers, being zealous for God as all of you are this day. I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women,

(Acts 26:26-28) For the king knows about these things, and to him I speak boldly. For I am persuaded that none of these things has escaped his notice, for this has not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you believe." And Agrippa said to Paul, "In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?"

(Rom 10:1-3) Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness.

*This, then, raises a frightening possibility. Scripture reveals that it is possible to "have faith," to believe in God, and even be zealous for Him, and not be saved. Paul, before his conversion, is a graphic example of this. He was outstanding in his religion. If he were in one of our churches today, we would probably consider him the most committed, most spiritual, even the most godly person in the congregation. And yet his own testimony is that he was the most aggressively opposed to true faith.*

*Paul's story is a strong warning of the danger of depending on knowledge, tradition, ritual and human faith as the basis for following God. Our hearts must be changed by the miracle working, regenerative power of the Holy Spirit. That is what changed Paul from an enemy of God, to a friend and outstanding servant of God (see Acts 9:1-22) Unless and until that happens, our faith is only a human faith, not the God-given faith that saves. Human faith inevitably leads us on a deadly path of deception, "having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power" (2Tim 3:5).*

3. Peter Jeffery says that faith "is not merely an intellectual assent to a set of doctrines..." Why not?

*Saving faith is trust in Jesus Christ as a living person for forgiveness of sins and for eternal life with God.<sup>2</sup> Personal trust in Christ is necessary. The word "trust" reveals the Biblical idea of faith. We are familiar with trusting people in everyday life. As we get to know a person, and the more we see a pattern of life that warrants trust, the more we find ourselves able to place trust in that person to do what he or she promises, or to act in ways that we can rely on. So then, saving faith involves actively placing trust in Jesus Christ to save us, not merely believing that He is able save.*

*There must be some response to the teachings we have learnt and received, or the conclusion must be that our faith is not a saving faith (see James 2:19). Saving faith engages the whole person, just as repentance engages the whole person. It involves the mind, the will and the emotions. (Rom 10:9) ... if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*

*It is also possible to agree to various doctrines without actually turning to Christ. Understanding and believing the teachings of the Bible about certain things is vital to salvation, and to ongoing growth as a Christian, but is not the same thing as saving faith.*

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<sup>2</sup> Grudem again

Faith is:

- a) Historical – based on the historical fact of the incarnation of Jesus Christ,
- b) Personal – based on a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ,
- c) Verbal – expressed in words, both to other people and to the Lord Himself,
- d) Practical – something to be done, to be lived out, to shape and influence our lives, not just empty words, and
- e) Continual – saving faith is what we finish our Christian life with, not just what we start it with.

(Heb 11:1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Phil Johnson says about this verse, "True saving faith is not an ambiguous or uncertain hope. It is a sure certainty... When you come to genuine faith in Christ, the search for proof of God's existence is over. That says some significant things about the nature of Christian belief. First of all, it means saving faith is substantially different from other varieties of faith. You've heard people illustrate faith by saying that everyone has a kind of faith. You had faith when you sat down in that chair that it would hold you up... That, according to some people, is all there is to faith, and we live our lives making 'faith choices' of that type. But I disagree. That's not the same kind of faith as the faith I have in Christ. That kind of faith might be nothing more than gullibility. That chair might collapse. In fact, if you sit on a wobbly chair and it collapses, your faith turns out to be nothing more than a big mistake. Faith in Christ is not like that. Why? Well, for one thing, the object of our faith is infinitely more trustworthy; He cannot fail; He will not disappoint... faith in Christ is different, ontologically different from everyday faith, and that's for a very important reason, because of this – true faith, saving faith has its source in God Himself. 'We are saved by grace, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God.' That speaks of the whole package of Salvation: Regeneration, Faith, Freedom from sin. All of it is a gift from God. God is the one who gave you your faith. The proof of that is this: none of us would turn to God in faith at all if He didn't sovereignly intervene. Faith is not a natural human tendency. False religion is [a natural human tendency], true faith isn't. Jesus explicitly affirmed that truth: 'No one can come to me unless it's been granted to him by the Father' (John 6:65)... Faith is not a wishful longing, or a blind confidence, or a naïve gullibility. It is not something you have cooked up within yourself... That verse [Heb 11:1] says that God reveals Himself, and His truth, to our hearts by faith. It's a supernatural transaction that unites us to Christ, and establishes a personal relationship with Him... If faith were merely a human decision, it wouldn't be any kind of assurance at all. In fact,

*it might be a bad decision. If believing were just a function of the human mind, faith wouldn't be any grounds for confidence... Real faith is a divinely implanted assurance that rises above the mere functioning of the human mind."*<sup>3</sup>

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*Repentance and Faith are inextricably linked together. Genuine repentance will be accompanied by faith, and genuine faith will be accompanied by repentance (see Acts 20:21). So the Bible often talks about forgiveness being dependent on repentance (Lk 24:47; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19). But it also talks about forgiveness being dependent on faith (Acts 10:43). Sometimes Scripture ties the two together (Mk 1:15, John 19:4).*

*Turning to Christ must also include turning from sin, and turning from sin must include turning to Christ. If either element is missing, then it is not true Biblical conversion. It is nonsense to talk about being saved without there also being repentance from sin. It is contrary to the New Testament to talk about accepting Christ "as Saviour" but not "as Lord." If He is to save, He must be Lord also.*

*If people only hear a message of faith, without a message of repentance, there is a very real risk that they will be deceived by this "watered-down" gospel. It leads to people "accept Jesus," only to find that it "didn't work" for them. But the fact is that they never really did "accept Jesus" unless they also repented of their sins.*

*Repentance and Faith are both gifts from God. Even though it is commanded by God that we repent (Acts 17:30) and believe (John 6:28), we could exercise neither of these unless God were to grant them to us in the first place.*

*Some may argue that because God tells us that we must have faith in order to be saved, it follows then that we must be able to exercise faith by our own choice, independent of the grace of God, and that when we exercise faith, God's grace completes the process of salvation.*

*This is not so. Sixteen hundred years ago, Augustine wrote, "Give what You command, and command what You will."<sup>4</sup> He understood that Scripture often commands us to do what we are unable to do, in order that we might recognise our inability, and turn to God for grace to obey. We see this situation most clearly, perhaps, with the Law. We are commanded to obey the Law in its entirety to be*

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<sup>3</sup> Phil Johnson, from *Evangelism Toolbox – Answering Atheists*, at [www.thegracelifepulpit.com](http://www.thegracelifepulpit.com)

<sup>4</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *Confessions*

saved, but we also know that it is impossible for us to do. So it is with faith. Thanks be to God that in His grace He gives what He commands, or none of us could be saved!

(Zech 12:10) "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and pleas for mercy, so that, when they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn.

(John 6:29) Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

(John 6:35 &37) Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.. All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

(John 6:44) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

(John 17:6-8) "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. For I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them and have come to know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me.

(Acts 3:26) God, having raised up his servant, sent him to you first, to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness."

(Acts 5:31) God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

(Acts 11:17-18) Therefore, if God gave them the same gift that He also gave to us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, how could I possibly hinder God?" When they heard this they became silent. Then they glorified God, saying, "So God has granted repentance resulting in life to even the Gentiles!" Compare this with:

(John 6:65) And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

(Acts 3:16) And his name-by faith in his name-has made this man strong whom you see and know, and the faith that is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.

(Acts 16:14) One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

(Rom 3:23-25) ...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.

(Rom 10:20) And Isaiah boldly says, "I was found by those who did not seek me; I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me."

(Rom 12:3) For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

(1Cor 4:7) For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

(Eph 2:8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

(Phil 1:29) For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him,

(Phil 2:12-13) Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

(2Tim 2:25-26) Perhaps God will grant them repentance to know the truth. Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.

(Heb 12:2) 2 Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

(2Pet 1:1) Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours:

*This issue of conversion, of repentance and faith, has important implications for evangelism. I would encourage you to search out Scripture, and seek the Holy Spirit for insight and revelation from the Word, to answer these questions:*

- a) Is praying the "Sinners's Prayer" the same thing as "confessing with your mouth and believing in your heart" (Rom 10:9)?

- b) *What are we to make of people who have "accepted Jesus into their heart" but show little interest in the Bible, no desire for prayer or fellowship, or no apparent change in behaviour?*
- c) *Should we even expect to see any change in people? Why or why not?*
- d) *Is it possible for Jesus to be your Saviour without also being your Lord?*
- e) *If He is Saviour, what has He saved us from, or saved us for?*
- f) *What does it mean for Jesus to be Lord?*
- g) *What role does preaching of the Word have in conversion?*
- h) *How do modern attempts to reach the lost compare with what we see in the book of Acts?*
- i) *Research indicates that as many as 95% of people who respond to an invitation to be saved at major crusades stop going to church within 18 months. Should we be alarmed by this, or is it normal? Can we explain it Biblically?*
- j) *What should we say or do for someone who says they want to become a Christian?*
- k) *How should we respond to someone who is unsure whether or not they are saved? Is there any way to know?*

*I will leave you to think about and search out what the Bible has to say about these matters. If the statistic quoted above in question (i) is correct, the answers are desperately important for the kingdom.*

## CHAPTER 12 - RECONCILIATION

*Reconciliation is another one of the amazing things that is achieved by the grace of God in salvation. Again, it is initiated and achieved by God, entirely because of His mercy, and without the action of man's will.*

*The concept of Reconciliation may not be quite as difficult for us to understand as some of the other subjects we have been looking at. We encounter situations that need reconciliation often in our daily lives.*

*Reconciliation is simply the act of removing a barrier to friendship. In the case of sinful man before a holy God, we are enemies of Him, estranged from Him, hostile to Him, totally cut off from Him and dead towards Him.*

*God does not need to change; rather, we need to change toward Him. But we are unable to do that because of our fallen nature. So God acted to "break down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph 2:12-16), and reconcile us back to Himself (1Pet 3:18).*

1. Read Rom 5:10, Eph 2:16 and Col 1:22. What is the basis of reconciliation?

*The death of Christ on the Cross laid the foundation for our reconciliation. It did this by providing Atonement for our sins so that God could be just in His judgment on sin and so that we could be forgiven our sin (see Rom 3:25-26), and also Regeneration, so that we were no longer hostile and dead towards Him, but had hearts that were open and alive to Him.*

2. How should reconciliation change our approach toward God?

- *We are now friends of God (John 15:15).*
- *We now have peace with God (Rom 5:1, Eph 2:16-17).*
- *We have access to Him (Rom 5:2, Eph 2:18)*
- *We can approach God as our Father (Rom 8:15-17).*
- *We can endure any opposition and persecution for His sake (2Cor 12:10).*
- *We can ask anything of Him (Php 4:6-7).*
- *We no longer have to strive to please God (Heb 4:9-10).*
- *We can approach God with confidence (Heb 4:16; 10:19, Eph 3:12).*
- *We can draw near to Him (Heb 7:19).*

- *We have assurance and a clean conscience before God (Heb 10:22).*
- *We can stand up for Christ boldly before man (Heb 13:6).*
- *We can turn to Him with assurance when we sin (1John 2:1-2).*
- *We no longer have to fear God (1John 4:18).*

3. In your own words, describe the message of reconciliation.

*God Himself has removed the barrier that separated us from Him. It was not because of anything we have done. The curtain was torn in two (see Matt 27:51) so that we could have access to Him.*

*God no longer counts our sin against us. Now He counts our sin against Christ. Christ bore the punishment that was due to us for our sin, and as a result, God now credits the righteousness of Christ to us. This is the Great Exchange: our sin for His righteousness, and His righteousness for our sin.*

*When Christ died on the cross, He bore the righteous wrath and judgment of God on behalf of sinners. By doing this, He paid the full penalty that was due for sin, and propitiated God, turning His wrath into favour towards those who would believe.*

*In the process, He changed our dead hearts into hearts that are soft towards Him, and made us new creations (2Cor 5:17). He forgave us our sins.*

*We now have peace with God, rather than hostility (Eph 2:3, 14-17). This is now a message we should be eager to share with others (2Cor 5:20).*

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*The Bridgeway Bible Dictionary says:*

*"The only way that reconciliation can occur is through the removal of the cause of hostility. Christ did this when he died on the cross; he bore sin on behalf of sinners. God's holy wrath against sin was satisfied, but only at great cost to himself. God was in Christ, reconciling sinners to himself. Because of all he has done through Christ's death, God can in his love accept repentant sinners back to himself (Rom 5:6-9; 2 Cor 5:18-19,21).*

*Once God has dealt with sin according to his standards of justice and holiness, he can reconcile guilty sinners. Reconciliation is God's work; it is not something sinners themselves can accomplish. The*

*fault is on their side, but the removal of hostility is entirely the work of God (2 Cor 5:18-19). People are brought into a right relationship with God only through the outworking of God's grace in the death of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:10-11; Eph 2:12-16; Col 1:20,22). They receive the benefits of this reconciliation when they respond to God in faith and repentance (Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 5:20).*

*Peace now replaces hostility (Eph 2:3,14-17). This peace is more than the absence of hostility; it is a state of spiritual well-being brought about through a right relationship with God. It is a peace that comes from God through Christ's conquest of sin, and it enables believers to be confident and calm in a world still hostile to God (John 14:27; Rom 5:1; 8:6; 16:20; Phil 4:7,9).<sup>5</sup>*

*This reconciliation occurred while we were still sinners, and changed our relationship to God in an instant from being His enemies to being His friends.*

*(Rom 5:8-10) ...but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.*

*The fact that this reconciliation is the work of God, not of man, gives us great confidence, assurance and joy. Think about the following passage in relation to what God has done in reconciling us to Himself:*

*(Rom 8:31-39) What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

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<sup>5</sup> *Bridgeway Bible Dictionary*, as found in The Word Bible software

*God is for us, if indeed we have experienced that reconciliation. So, not only do we have confidence in the face of opposition, persecution, and even death, we also have assurance of eternal security with Him. God did not spare His own Son to achieve His purposes in salvation and reconciliation. If He went to that extent, then nothing can shake us loose, or tear us away from His care.*

*As if that were not enough to establish our confidence and security in God, we have an Advocate with the Father, who constantly presents His propitiation on our behalf before God.*

*(1John 2:1-2) My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.*

*What more do we need to rejoice in our salvation? But God has not only done these things for us, He has done much more. We will see more of what He has in the next session as we look at Redemption and Justification, then more again in the one after that when we consider Adoption and Union with Christ, then even more again after that with Sanctification and Election, by which time we should be abounding and overflowing with praise to Him as we look at Eternal Security and His Second Coming.*

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Eph 1:3)*

*(2Cor 5:18-21) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*