REPENTANCE


**Repentance is a Gift from God** — Repentance is a means of pardon and is therefore one of God’s great gifts to man. It is not to be had for the careless asking; it may not be found upon the highway; nevertheless it is given with boundless liberality unto those who have brought forth works that warrant its bestowal. (See Mt 3:7,8; Acts 11:18; 26:20.) ... Paul also, in writing to the Romans, teaches that repentance comes through the goodness of God. (Rom 2:4.)

**Repentance Not Always Possible** — The gift of repentance is extended to men as they humble themselves before the Lord; it is the testimony of the Spirit in their hearts. If they hearken not unto the monitor it will leave them, for the Spirit of God strives not every with man. (Gen 6:3; D&C 1:33.) Repentance becomes more difficult as sin is more willful; it is by humility and contrition of the heart that sinners may increase their faith in God, and so obtain from Him the gift of repentance. As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker; neglect of opportunity in holy things develops inability....

**Repentance Here and Hereafter** — Alma, a Nephite prophet, described the period of earthly existence as a probationary state, granted unto man for repentance. (Al 12:24; 34:32; 42:4.) yet we learn from the scriptures that repentance may be obtained, under certain conditions, beyond the veil of mortality.... (1 Pet 3:19-20; D&C 76:71-75; 137; 138.)

No soul is justified in postponing his efforts to repent because of this assurance of longsuffering and mercy. We know not fully on what terms repentance will be obtainable in the hereafter; but to suppose that the soul who has willfully rejected the opportunity of repentance in this life and will find it easy to repent there is contrary to reason. To procrastinate the day of repentance is to deliberately place ourselves in the power of the adversary.... (Al 34:32-35.)

*The Traditional 5 Rs of Repentance*

- Recognize
- Remorse
- Resolve
- Restore (repay)
- Relate (confess)

Anyone can implement these steps, even an atheist. God is not listed as a necessary element of the process.

*The Rs of True Repentance*

_In His Footsteps Today_ (LDS Sunday School manual, used 1970-71), 43-44.

1. **Recognition of Christ.** Before fallen man can repent, he must see the goodness and holiness of Christ, and he must recognize that Jesus is the center of the divine plan by which man is given the means to repent and come unto God. Before man can repent, he must
recognize the contrast that exists between himself as a fallen being and Christ.... (See Mosiah 4:5-6.) Mortal man, living in a fallen and carnal state, must recognize his utter dependence upon Christ for life and all that is good about it, and for salvation. Otherwise, man can see no intelligent reason why he should repent and come unto God....

2. Remorse for sins. Recognition of Christ not only reveals the difference that exists between man and the righteousness and goodness of the great Redeemer, but it kindles within man a godly sorrow or remorse for his sins. Such a sorrow or remorse is a necessary prerequisite to repentance.... (See 2 Cor 7:9-10.) Man must offer unto the Lord “a broken heart and a contrite spirit” if he is to be transformed to that state of righteousness that the gospel makes possible....

3. Resolution to come unto Christ. Recognition of Christ and remorse for sin must be accompanied by a firm resolution to come unto Christ. In resolution, man turns from sin to the Christlike life. King Benjamin urged his people to act according to their accepted beliefs when, having enumerated those things in which they were to believe he said: “... and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.” (Mosi 4:10.) Because resolution is an indispensable ingredient in the divine plan of repentance, Moroni wrote of those who were given the blessings of the gospel among the Nephites: “And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.” (Moro 6:3; see also D&C 20:37.)

4. Reliance upon Christ. Having resolved to come unto Christ, man must rely upon his mercy and power. In testifying of Christ, Lehi taught that “all mankind were in a lost and fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer.” (1 Ne 10:6.)

5. Reconciliation to Christ. Those who come unto Christ and rely upon him are led to comply with the requirements of the gospel, and only in this way can man be reconciled to Christ. In making the atonement, Christ reconciled the demands of divine law; and by obeying the will of the Father, he acquired a fullness of the Father's glory. (See D&C 93:12-13, 16-17.) It is man’s responsibility to reconcile himself to Christ by repentance and obedience to the gospel. Only in this way can man partake of the mercy and power of Christ unto salvation. Man must also reconcile himself in righteousness to his fellowman and to the Church. He must restore where it is possible to restore, and make amends where it is possible to make amends. Jesus made the requirement for man to be reconciled to his fellowman prerequisite for man to be reconciled to his fellowman prerequisite to man's reconciliation to God.

6. Renewal of man in Christ. With true reconciliation comes the renewal of man in Christ, by the Spirit and power of the great Redeemer.... In this way their natures were transformed so that they had “no disposition to do evil, but to do good continually.” (Mosi 5:2; Mosi 3:19; 4:3.) Only when man has been thus renewed is he fully able to refrain from sin, making repentance a complete and lasting experience in his life.