

# Repentance From Acts That lead to Death

Explore Your Faith Teaching Series - Explo-7 ©

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## OUTLINE

### Introduction

In the previous segment, we examined some basic claims about Christianity and saw how they set it apart from any other faith. We explored those claims with reference to God's unfolding plan of salvation through the ages. This exploration helped us to be affirmed about the veracity of God's word and provided us with a solid basis for believing in things to come.

This study commences the exploration of the 'essential' doctrines referred to in Hebrews 6.

It defines and examines the *nature* of doctrine and the absolute necessity for teaching what Paul calls '**sound doctrine**' in his instructions to Timothy.

The study examines the first of these 'elementary' doctrines, the 'repentance from acts that lead to death'. What are they?

It is a crucial teaching in that it examines 'repentance' and 'dead works'.

A proper understanding of both these terms is fundamental to the understanding of the Christian's *righteousness by faith* and the *working out of his salvation*.

Before we commence this study, it would be helpful to examine the word "doctrine" and its connotations for us who are Christians.

### ***What is doctrine?***

To some, the word "doctrine" is frightening; it typifies technical, difficult, and abstract beliefs, quite often taught dogmatically and in a language that is only for scholars! Dry and boring stuff that is only for theologians, not simple Christians!

The study of doctrine is really quite the opposite. Christian doctrine is simply statements of the most fundamental beliefs that the Christian has; beliefs about God, about his work, about us (whom he created in his image) and about what he has done to bring us into relationship with himself. They are the most fundamental and important types of truths. They are really statements on the fundamental issues of life, dealing with questions like "who am I?" "What is the ultimate meaning of the universe?" "Where am I going?" and so on. In other words, doctrine deals with the general and timeless truths about God and the rest of reality, as we know it, both in history and into the future.

The study of doctrine is known as "Theology".

*Are you a theologian?* Most people acknowledge that theology is the serious thinking about Christian beliefs in an ordered form but that it is distinct from real and practical Christianity which (they think) is simply about walking with the Lord, sharing the gospel and so on. Theology therefore (they think) is something that need not bother ordinary Christians, and in fact may even be an obstruction to their Christian life if they go into it too deeply!

Now, here's something that will astound you: ***Every Christian Is a Theologian!*** Theology literally means 'the science of God' or expressed more adequately 'thought and speech which issue from knowledge of God' (cf. **1 Cor. 1: 5**).

Think about this: have you begun to know God and have a certain degree of understanding about his nature and his actions? Then you are a theologian of sorts, whether or not you have actually sat down and pieced it all together in a systematic form!

So theology is really the business of every Christian and it is the Christian's duty to grow in his understanding of God and his ways (see **2 Tim. 3:16**).

### **Why is the study of doctrine essential?**

*Consider this statement:* Departure from doctrine is a recipe for disaster, particularly in the face of the tremendous challenges and opportunities facing the church in these days.

1. Right doctrine is the key to getting everything right in every area of our life whether it be worship (**Jn. 4:23-24**), witnessing (**Acts 17:11**), discipleship (**Jn. 8:31f**), relationships (**1 Cor. 12:12**), daily work (**Eph. 6:5-9**), and so on. We first need to clarify theological issues before we look for *practical* solutions. However, doctrine by itself is not sufficient! A good example is the content of the epistles directed towards church issues.
2. We cannot separate true acting from true thinking. Doctrine is the expression of loving God with our minds (**Mt. 22:37**) and its intellectual pursuit is God-honouring. In this context, we must remember that we cannot have a loyalty to the person of Christ without being committed to the truths about him as revealed in the Bible.

**Consider this:**

‘Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman....who correctly handles the word of truth’ (**2 Tim. 2:15**).

In the light of this understanding of “doctrine”, how do you feel about it?

Can you see that you have been engaged in the study of ‘theology’ without consciously (perhaps) being aware of it?

**The ‘elementary teachings’ referred to in Hebrews 6:1, 2.**

‘Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again **the foundations** of (1) repentance from acts that lead to death, and (2) of faith in God, (3) instruction about baptisms, (4) the laying on of hands, (5) the resurrection of the dead, and (6) eternal judgment”. [Note: emphasis & numbering mine]

Principles: *First* lay the foundation, *then* go on to build upon it.

-To build a foundation, you must hear and do – the source is Bible, the written word;  
Jesus, the living word

-Stages: Confrontation, revelation, acknowledgement, Confession (God’s part, then our part)

**Repentance from acts that lead to death (i.e., dead works)**

***What are dead works?***

Simply, they are all things not done out of faith, but for the satisfaction of a self righteousness through ‘keeping the commandments’. We must keep in mind that there is place for ‘works’ and that *not all works are necessarily dead works!* Can you see the difference?

***Why do we need to repent from them?***

-Not glorifying to God; motivation is self gratification, not God honouring; source is pride, not humility.

-Have no eternal reward (works are to be tested by fire; what remains will be rewarded). It is for this reason that they are called ‘dead works’.

***What is repentance?***

Greek: to change your mind (a decision); Hebrew: to turn back, to return (an action)

Perfect example: prodigal son (**Luke 15:17-20**)

-He came to himself (faced the truth)

-He made a decision (changed his mind)

-He turned around (acted it out). This is true repentance.

False repentance (remorse):

-Judas Iscariot - was remorseful but there was no change or repentance (**Matt. 27: 3-5**)

-Esau despised his birthright (**Heb. 12: 14-17**)

-You can pass the place of repentance (hardening of heart). *Consider how this might happen.*

Repentance precedes faith:

-Jesus: **Mark 1: 14, 15; Luke 24: 46-47**

-Peter: **Acts 2: 37, 38**

Repentance is commanded:

-Paul: **Acts 17:30** “all men, everywhere”; **Acts 20:20, 21** **That is, each individual!**

Note: universal rebellion requires universal repentance! (See **Isaiah 53:6**)

Repentance originates with God:

-God starts the turning process (**Psalms 80: 3, 7, 19**)

-Only one alternative to repentance – PERISH (**Luke 13:1-5**)

**Conclusion:**

Think about some practical applications of doctrine (both good and bad) in the world we live in.  
A lengthy study on 'sound doctrine' will be done later.