

## Question #2.a. “Repentance”

New members are normally asked to stand before the congregation and answer a few questions as an expression of their public commitment to follow Jesus Christ.

1. Do you trust Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord?

2. Do you seek to turn away from evil in the world, and turn toward God’s goodness?

3. Will you continue to grow in your faith-- in worship, Christian education, fellowship with God’s people in the Church, and service to others?

The second question asks if you are ready to turn away from a self-centered life toward a God-centered life. Obviously this is an on-going process, and like the Stock Market, is filled with ups and downs. But the overall direction and goal are clear, to put behind us the “worldly” life of sin and to seek to become more and more like Jesus Christ. The Bible word for this change of direction is “**Repentance**.” God’s messengers, from Old Testament prophets to Jesus to Saint Paul and the other apostles, all preached this message of personal accountability and challenge to give up self-centered living for a God-centered life.

Ezekiel 18:30-32 The Prophet Ezekiel speaks for God saying, "Therefore, O house of Israel, I will judge you, each one according to his ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. [31] Rid yourselves of all the offenses 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!"

Matthew 4:17 From that time on Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

Saint Paul describes his ministry saying, “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.” Acts 20:21. And in Acts 26:20 he says, “First 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.” “Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” 2 Corinthians 7:10.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

Are you “always right?”

When was the last time you freely admitted making a mistake or being wrong?

Do you keep your “sins” secret, or are you willing to share your faults with someone else?

How would you describe the spiritual sin of pride?

Why do you think that this attitude is harmful?