

A Prayer for Repentance

By Dr. Charles Stanley

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

– **1 John 1:9**

Because we desire to be more like Jesus, we make resolutions, ask Him to help us, and try to behave differently. Yet despite our best efforts to do things God's way, we slide back into old habits. Frustrated, we may ask Him, "Why can't I change?" The reason is, overcoming sinful attitudes and behaviors starts with genuine repentance, which has three aspects.

3 Steps of True Repentance

Conviction. The Holy Spirit will reveal the areas in which we've sinned and convict us of wrongdoing. Through Scripture, the Spirit shows us God's standard and what needs to change. Repentance begins with understanding where we have gone astray.

Contrition. The next step--grieving over our iniquity--is followed by confession to the Lord. Genuine sorrow arises from the knowledge that we've sinned against Him. In contrast, human unhappiness often comes from being caught misbehaving. Other times we are miserable because of where our choices led us, or feel shame that people know about our sin. True contrition is followed by humble confession. Commitment to act. Real repentance is complete when we wholeheartedly pledge to turn from our old behavior and move toward righteous ways. God knows we won't live perfectly, but He looks for a surrendered heart that diligently seeks to obey Him.

A Prayer for Repentance

Dear Lord, thank you for your forgiveness. Thank you for not abandoning us to our mistakes, but for reaching out instead to bring us home. Help convict me of sin and help me accept your mercy without shame. Thank you for the love you have poured out for me and all of your children. Help me live out of that love today. In Jesus' Name, Amen.