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Wholehearted Repentance

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Wholehearted Repentance

The New Testament word for “repent” means to turn around. There are five steps to turn away from sin and toward God. Each step of the process can be summarized in a particular prayer offered to God.

Prayer 1: “God, I am wrong.”

Tell God you understand what you did was wrong. Don’t shift the blame to someone else. Take responsibility for your disobedience.

“If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that His word has no place in our hearts” —1 John 1:10, NLT

Prayer 2: “God, I am sorry.”

Don’t just be sorry for getting caught or for hurting some else. Also be sorry that you have grieved God.

“Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and gloom and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy” —James 4:9, NLT

Prayer 3: “God, forgive me.”

Feeling bad about your wrongdoing is not enough. You must go to God in faith and ask for his forgiveness. God’s forgiveness is an extraordinary thing. Because of his unmatched love, it comes as a free gift to those who are prepared to humble themselves before him.

“If we confess our sins to Him, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong” —1 John 1:9, NLT

Prayer 4: “God, cleanse me.”

We are all sinners and none of us can remove the spiritually staining effects of our sin. We need the supernatural operation of the Holy Spirit to wash us clean, spiritually, when we repent.

Here is the Lord's promise to all who sense themselves blemished by their sinful wrongs and desire to be cleansed: "No matter how deep the stain of your sins, I can remove it. I can make you as clean as freshly fallen snow. Even if you are stained as red as crimson, I can make you as white as wool." —Isaiah 1:18, NLT

Prayer 5: "God, empower me."

When we pray for cleansing, we are asking for the spiritual effects of our past sin to be wiped away. When we pray for empowerment, on the other hand, we are asking for God's help to avoid a repetition of our sin in the future. To say "Empower me" is to admit that we need God's help if we are to remain clean after our repentance. Humility opens us up to every grace.

"The power of the life-giving Spirit has freed you through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death." —Romans 8:2, NLT

[This is a summary of the article *Five Prayers of Repentance*.]