

A Picture of True Repentance



Repentance (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today, I'm going to continue—and complete—the theme that we've been studying this week: the theme of repentance. I do trust that my talks on this theme have been helpful to you.

Now let me review briefly for you the main points that we've covered concerning repentance. First of all, I defined repentance—an inward change of will resulting in an outward change of the way we live. Secondly I explained why we all need to repent. It's summed up in Isaiah 53:6:

> "We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way..."

And the Lord calls that iniquity or rebellion. So we need to turn back from our own way and find God's way. Then I showed you that repentance must be expressed in appropriate action. And that in the New Testament there's one specific primary action which is the ordained expression of repentance—the act of baptism. But that in various lives there are specific acts which must also be associated with repentance. Then we saw that repentance is the essential first step to true faith. The order in the New Testament is always first repent, then believe. And it's in vain trying to believe until you have repented. Faith is a gift from God which he does not give to those who have failed to repent. Finally, yesterday we looked at some sins people often fail to recognize as sin and consequently fail to see their need of repentance. I took three very common examples. The sin of not forgiving others, and then simply sins of omission—things we didn't do which we ought to have done. And thirdly the sin of self-righteousness—living by our own set of little rules which is not God's standard, but by which we judge ourselves righteous and look down on and despise everybody else, the sin of the Pharisee.

In my closing talk today, We're going to be looking at a beautiful picture of true repentance. What is for me one of the most beautiful and moving stories of the entire Bible. It's a parable, but it's a very vivid story. It's found in Luke chapter 15 verses 11 through 24. It's usually called the parable of the

Lost Son or the Prodigal Son. I'm going to point out to you that there are two sons in this parable, and both of them are significant characters. This is the story:

> "Jesus continued: 'There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.'"

That's the most beautiful picture I know of true repentance. The son who turned his back on his father and home, claimed his inheritance, went out and wasted it all, found himself in shame and poverty and dire need, and then made that vital inner decision. "I will arise and go back to my father." That's true repentance—the inward decision to change. How do we know it was true repentance, because the next verse says, "So, he got up and went." He made the inward decision. He translated it into outward action, and that was the turning point in his life. That was where the downward road ended, and the road back to peace and home and prosperity was opened to him.

Let's notice now a few points in that beautiful story that's so vivid to me. In verse 12, we read that the younger son said to his father, "Give me my share." He was like so many people today. He wanted his rights. You know what I've discovered? People who want their rights usually end in the wrong. That attitude—"Give me my share. Give me what's due to me." It's a starting point to the wrong road. There's a phrase in modern Hebrew that's so common, ze magia li. "That's my due. I've got it coming to me." Be careful friend when you're claiming what is your due. It's an attitude that will lead you into trouble. Then it says about the son, "He came to his senses." In the midst of his shame, poverty, he suddenly saw reality. He'd been living in a dream world. He had romantic pictures of what life would offer.

So many, many young people today, they are like that. They've formed a false impression in their own minds of what life has to offer where true happiness is be found. And sometimes it's a long hard road that takes them to repentance before they come to themselves. And then notice the son's decision, "I will set out." I like those words, "I will." It doesn't say he shed a lot of tears, or he ran forward to the alter of a church. But he made an inward decision. "I will set out," and he carried it out in action. He started back to his father. That's repentance. Notice how it goes with true humility. He said he was willing to say to his father, "I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Just make me a hired man. And that's all I'm asking." He got up and he went. He turned around 180 degrees. He had his back to his father and his home. He turned around, turned his back on the pigs, and turned his face toward his father.

And then notice the beautiful response of the father. While he was still a long way off, his father saw him. How could that be? My understanding is the father went down everyday and looked to see if his son was coming back. But he never could go and fetch him. With all his love, he had to wait till the son made the right decision. And then what a welcome he got! That's the way God responds to the repentant sinner. He doesn't hold our sins against us. He doesn't speak about all the money we've wasted. He just gives us the best he has—the new robe, the ring, the shoes on our feet, the fatted calf. I tell dear friends, it pays to repent. You're missing an awful lot. In fact your missing the really vital things in life if you've never repented.

I want to read on—the rest of that parable, I want you to see the reaction now of the other son, the elder brother. This is how it goes on (Luke 15:25–30):

> "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was

> going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’”

You see the older brother’s problem: self-righteousness. He thought he’d always been doing the right thing. And yet at this crisis when the younger brother came home, what was laid bare in his character—rebellion. He had an inwardly rebellious attitude toward his father. He showed him little respect. He rebuked his father. How wonderful a way God has of laying bare the things that are really in our hearts and lives which often are covered up with an outward show of righteousness and obedience. And then I want you to note the father’s response to the elder brother too. “My son,” the father said, “You were always with me. And everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again. He was lost and is found.” Oh, what wonderful insight into human nature in that story. Notice how the elder brother described his younger brother. He said to the father, “This son of yours…” But the father said, “This brother of yours…” He said don’t forget, he’s not only my son, he’s your brother. And you’ve got to have a right attitude toward your brother if you want to have a right attitude toward your father. How true that is of us as Christians. How many of us need to repent of a wrong attitude towards our brothers which really lays bare the inward rebellion of our hearts toward God our father.

Well, our time is up for today. I’ll be back with you again next week at this same time—Monday through Friday. Next week I’ll be sharing with you on another rich and exciting theme from the Word of God.

Radio Program

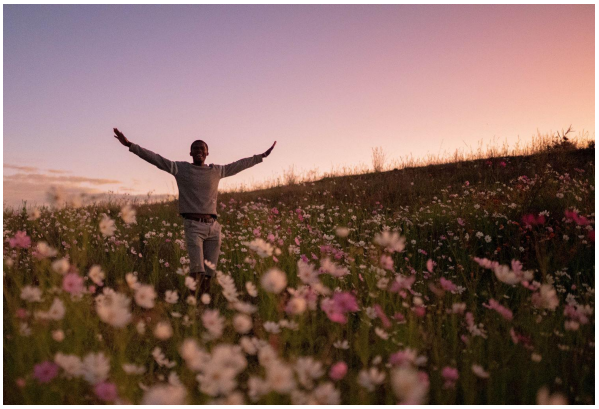
Transcript: TS-R055-105-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

Bible Teaching Resources



Books

Illuminate and expand your understanding of the Bible with the Derek Prince collection of Christian books.



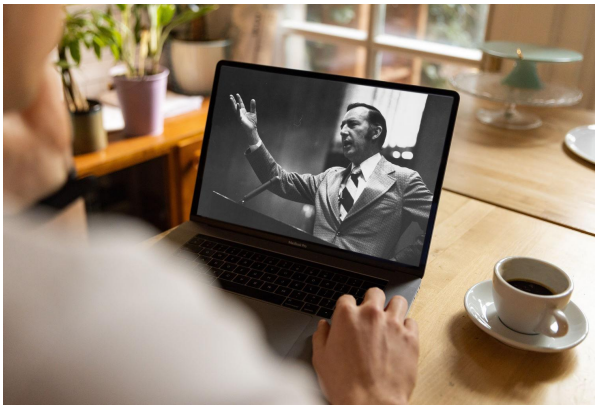
Daily Devotionals

Browse free biblically inspired daily devotionals by Derek Prince for practical teachings to uplift your Christian faith.



Legacy Radio

Listen to inspiring 10-minute messages and connect faith to life with the Derek Prince Legacy Radio podcast.



Sermons

Watch original and digitally remastered sermons by Derek Prince. Includes full message transcripts (free download).



Official App

Available free, download the official Derek Prince Ministries app and equip your faith, anywhere, anytime.



Proclamations

Declare life and experience the transformative power of God's Word with our bible-based Proclamations.

Copyright © Derek Prince Ministries