


# The Decision to Repent



## The Decision is Yours (Part 4)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again as we continue with our theme for this week, "The Decision is Yours."

In my previous talks, I've made a number of basic statements about human personality and the way that human personality can respond in spiritual things. First of all, I explained the relationship between the spirit and the soul of man. I said this: the spirit is God-conscious; the soul is self-conscious. But it's the soul that makes the decisions. So, the spirit, in its God-consciousness knows that its appropriate to praise the Lord and to worship Him but the total personality does not do that until the spirit communicates this to the soul and the soul, in turn, makes the decision. Then the whole human personality becomes involved in worshiping God and praising Him. The essential fact that I've been bringing out is that it's the soul that is the decision-making faculty in man and that your experience, including your spiritual experience, depends on the exercise of your will on the functioning of your soul. It does not depend on your emotions.

And then we looked at some examples of decisions made by David which are recorded by him in the psalms. The first decision that we looked at was to bless the Lord and we spoke about blessing being in a certain sense adopting a certain attitude toward the Lord and then receiving from the Lord through that attitude.

David's second decision was not to forget. And I turned that into a more positive form: focus your mind. And I said this: remember your mind should not be your master, it should be your servant. Your mind should not decide what to think, you should direct your mind as to what it should think and what it should think about.

And then, the third decision, was to praise the Lord. And David said he would praise the Lord at all times. It did not depend on his circumstances. As a matter of fact, when he made that decision, he was in the worst possible circumstances that could be imagined. We are to praise the Lord because of eternal, unchanging truths and in Psalm 100, the psalmist gives us three such truths as a basis for praising the Lord.

The Lord is good

His mercy is everlasting

His faithfulness endures to all generations

Now all those facts are unchangeably true. And therefore, there is never any reason why we should not praise the Lord. It does not depend on our situation and it does not depend on our emotions.

And then I pointed out the result that's recorded in various passages of the psalms, the result of praising and blessing the Lord is satisfaction. Praisers are satisfied people. Grumblers are dissatisfied people. And really each one of us has to make a decision. Am I going to be a praiser or am I going to be a grumbler? Well, let me tell you, if you want to be a satisfied person, you'd better decide to be a praiser.

In my talk today, I'm going to deal with another vitally important decision: that is, repentance. Repentance is one of the great basic doctrines of the New Testament, in fact of the whole Bible. But it's one that is very little understood by many Christians today and one main reason why it's so little understood is that they think it's some kind of an emotion. Consequently, sometimes they think they're repenting when they're not and sometimes they want to repent but they don't know how to. Repentance, like the other things we've been speaking about this week, is not an emotion. It's a decision of the will. And I want to say two vital things about repentance. First of all, it's an essential preliminary to faith. If you haven't repented, you can't really believe. And second, repentance prepares the way for God to move.

Let me take some examples quickly from the New Testament. First of all, the ministry of John the Baptist, who came to prepare the way for Jesus, the Messiah. How did he prepare the way? This is recorded in Mark 1:3 and 4.

> "The voice of one crying in the wilderness [that's John the Baptist], 'Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' [So he came to prepare the way of the Lord. How did he do that? The next verse tells us.] John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

Repentance was needed to prepare the way for the Messiah to come. And then let's look at the first command of Jesus, the first public message He proclaimed. It's recorded again in Mark's first chapter, verses 14 and 15.

> "After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 'The time has come,' He said. 'The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news [of the gospel]!'"

The first specific requirement of Jesus in His public ministry was to repent. He said, "Repent and [then] believe the good news." And I want to tell you, many people are trying to believe without repenting. It doesn't work. God grants faith to those who meet the first condition which is to repent.

And then, in the book of Acts, repentance is revealed as the first requirement for salvation. After Peter had preached that dramatic message on the day of Pentecost and the crowd were convicted, cut to the heart, this is how they responded in Acts 2:37-38. They said:

> "'Brothers, what shall we do?' [How can we escape from the consequence of our awful sins? And this is what Peter replied:] 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

Notice, the first requirement: repent… then be baptized… then you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. So repentance is an essential preliminary to faith and it prepares the way for God to move.

Now, let me say just something briefly about the meaning of the word "repent." The Greek word that's translated repent has a clear meaning in secular Greek and is almost always translated "to change your mind." Repentance is changing your mind. You've been living one way, you decide to live another way. You change your mind. We understand that in the natural, it's the same in the spiritual. The Hebrew word that's normally translated "repent," means to turn or to return. Put them together and you get the total picture. The Greek word gives you the inner decision, "I'm going to change my mind." The Hebrew word, typically enough, gives you the outward action, "I'm goiing to turn around and walk exactly the opposite way that I've been walking." Put those two together. That is repentance and it's a decision.

We need to distinguish between two things that seem alike but are very different. One is repentance, which is a decision not an emotion; the other is remorse, which is an emotion and not a decision. There's a very clear example in the experience of Judas. After he had betrayed Jesus, he had remorse but he did not have repentance. This is what is says in Matthew 27, verses 3-5:

> "When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and

> returned the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have betrayed innocent blood.' 'What is that to us?' they replied. 'That's your responsibility.' So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself."

You see, committing suicide is not the fruit of repentance, it's the result of remorse. People who commit suicide usually do it because they've failed to repent. Judas had very strong emotion, emotion that drove him to suicide. But the one thing he missed out was repentance. He didn't change his mind.

The clearest example of repentance that I know of in the Bible is in the parable of the prodigal son. I'm sure most of you remember the story. This was the younger son. He claimed his whole inheritance, took the money, left his father and his home, went off into a distant country and wasted all his money in riotous living. And then when he'd spent all his money, there came a great famine in the land and he found himself very hungry. He came so low that he had to hire himself out to one of the citizens of that country and he was given the job of feeding the pigs. The Scripture says he would long to fill his stomach with the husks that the pigs were eating but nobody gave him anything. And here we have now the picture of his repentance. It's so vivid.

> "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called you son; make me as one of your hired men." And he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him, and kissed him."

You see there the perfect picture of repentance. First of all, he came to the end of himself. He had nothing more that he could do for himself. He was finished as far as that was concerned. Then, he made the decision, this is the inner change of mind. "I will get up and go to my father." What's the proof that his decision was genuine? It was in his action. Two verses later it says: "... he got up and came to his father." That's the most clear, simple, practical picture of repentance. First, the inner decision, to change your mind. Then, the fulfillment of the decision in outward action. And you see how in this parable repentance prepared the way for the father to move? The father could do nothing for him until he'd made that decision and carried it out. Then that released the father's compassion, his mercy, and his provision. And so it is in our relationship with God. God longs to bless us and to help us but He will not move, He cannot move because of His justice. Until we make that vital decision to repent, to get up, turn back and go to the Father.

Well, our time is up for today. I'll be back with you again tomorrow at this same time. Tomorrow I'll be explaining the inner mechanics of making such decisions as we've been considering.

## Radio Program

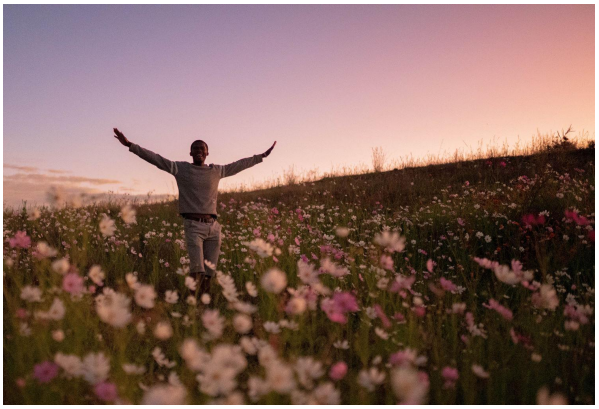
Transcript: TS-R127-104-ENG
Last Updated: 13 Apr 2023
Website: derekprince.com

# Bible Teaching Resources



## Books

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



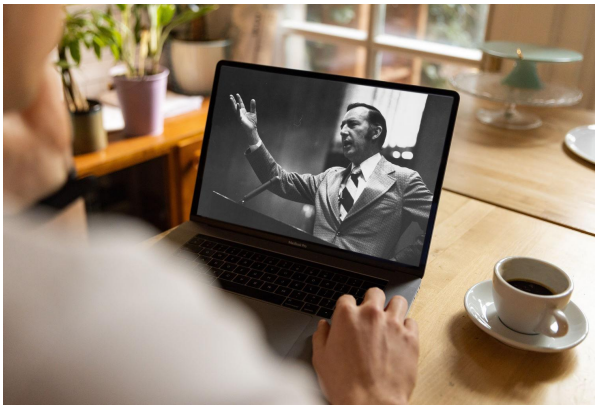
## Daily Devotionals

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