
VCL International
VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIVING CONFERENCE

REPENTANCE

Lesson Transcript by Ted Sellers

Let's talk about the subject of repentance. Repentance isn't something that you hear about very much today, but it's an important subject in the Bible. In fact, the New Testament uses the word "repentance" over 30 times. Repentance means a change of mind and a change of life. You could sum up repentance in one word and that word would be—"turn" or "to turn." And the way I think of it, it's like a spiritual U-turn. Probably all of you have had your hands on a steering wheel [holds up **steering wheel**] recently, even today as you came to this meeting. What is the purpose of a steering wheel? It is used to turn the car. Every time a person turns toward sin, he/she needs to turn away from sin with a spiritual U-turn. Hence, the use of a steering wheel as a visual aid.

I remember an experience I had when I drove a truck for a living. I delivered the Wall Street Journal. I needed to make a delivery to a location across the street on the left. I saw an intersection and I thought the best thing to do was to make a U-turn. The only problem was a big sign, "NO U-TURN." I knew that sign was not for me. It was posted for people who were tourists and not people who were actually working for a living. I was working, earning money, earning a living and I had something to do. So I stopped, made the U-turn quickly, and pulled into the place of business. Then I looked in my rearview mirror and saw something that made my stomach turn over. It was two little red flashing lights going bing-bing, bing-bing, bing-bing and I knew I was busted. I opened the window and the policeman gave me a ticket. He said, "You're not supposed to make a U-turn there."

Making U-turns when a sign says not to is a bad thing. It's breaking the law. However, when we make a spiritual U-turn that's a good thing. It's good because we're turning back to the Lord. Don't ever ignore sin in your life. Look at the verse on page one, Romans 2:4. Do you see any emotional words as God thinks about us? What does He feel? Listen to this. "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience?" Wow! How does God treat us when we sin? With kindness, forbearance, and patience. Notice the word "kindness" is repeated again, ". . . the kindness of God leads you to repentance."

We become children of God through repentance. As I began to study for this message, I wondered, "Does repentance really have a place in the life of Christians?" I believe it does. Everytime we as Christians turn toward sin, we need to turn back toward God. How do we do it? By repentance. Here are a couple of quotes from people who talk about repentance. David Wilkerson says, "The longer I walk with Jesus the more I am convinced, repentance is not just for sinners but also for believers. It is not simply a one time thing but something God's people are called to do until Jesus returns." Oswald Chambers writes this, "The new life will manifest itself in conscious repentance and unconscious holiness. Never the other way around. The bedrock of Christianity is repentance. If you ever cease to know the virtue of repentance, you are in darkness." These men are both saying that repentance is for the child of God.

It reminds me of a pastor who was repainting the church. He got a bunch of men to help him.

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As the Saturday wore on, different men had to leave and after a while, he was the only one left. He was at the very tip of the steeple. He was almost finished. As he was painting, he noticed his paint was running out. There was no one to help him. So, instead of climbing all the way down to get more paint, he thought, "I know what I'll do, I'll add some paint thinner to the paint and stir it up to stretch it." It worked! The paint went a little farther. Soon he was running out of paint again. He was almost finished with the steeple. He got the paint thinner can again and started pouring the thinner into the paint can. As he did, he heard a voice thunder out of heaven which said, "Repaint, Repaint and thin no more." Now that didn't happen. But it does make a point. Many times in our life we try to pour thinner into things. We are trying to do things our way, we're trying to cut corners and make things go the way we want them to go. When we do that, when we try to thin it out, we need to repaint. Repentance is an important subject.

NATURAL MAN (Diagram 160-A)

Turn to page 2 in your lesson. Look at your first diagram. This is a picture of a person who needs to repent. This is a natural man, an unregenerated man, a person who is not a Christian. Every one of us entered the world a natural man or woman. That is how we were all born. What's the position? In the flesh. What's the function? After the flesh. This natural man is dead spiritually, his mind is darkened, he cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. First Corinthians 2:14 says, "They are foolishness to him." The *New International Version* translates "natural man" this way, "The man without the Spirit." This person is without the Spirit. This person is dead spiritually. His mind is darkened. He thinks the things of God are foolishness. Have you ever talked to someone who's not a Christian about spiritual things? What do you get? Often just a blank stare. The person doesn't get it. The person doesn't understand it. It's foolishness to

the non-Christian. You talk about praying about something and the non-Christian says, "Why do you want to pray about it, just do it." The person doesn't understand the things of the Spirit of God. They're foolishness to a non-Christian.

This person's emotions are twisted. I believe non-Christians are either callused to their emotions or controlled by them. In being callused they have learned to deny what they feel and do what they want. In being controlled, if they feel something, they just do it. They have no sense of challenging their feelings. Their feelings control them. Our feelings should be our servants or our slaves, but they often become our slave drivers and we have no freedom with twisted emotions.

This person's will is enslaved. The person can't even make godly decisions. If you work with a natural man or woman or you know someone like this in your family, don't even expect the person to be nice. In the flesh, the person may sometimes be nice when that's what it takes to get the result he or she desires, but natural men or women aren't capable of living that way consistently. You think, "Well, they ought to act this way." No. They're spiritually dead. Where is God? God is outside their life. See the triangle? God's outside the life. This is a body-soul existence.

As you look at the three rings, the outside ring is the body. The inner ring is the soul, which includes the mind, the will, and the emotions, and the center ring is the spirit. The spirit is dead and sin is in the center. So this person is living a body-soul existence, as if there were no spirit. It's the principle of animal life. The Spanish Bible, translates 1 Corinthians 2:14 as, "the animal man," not the natural man. That's very accurate. It's a person living like an animal because an animal doesn't have a spirit. Sin is at the heart. These people believe the lie that you can have meaning and purpose in life apart from a relationship with the giver of life.

They're trying to find life and they seek it through things, people, relationships, and experiences. However, right in the middle is sin and there's a vacuum. One man has said, "Within every person there's a god-shaped vacuum and only God can fill a god-shaped vacuum." People are trying to fill that vacuum with other things or people. There's still a vacuum.

Notice the word flesh. This person is in the flesh walking after the flesh. Write the word "flesh" under the notes. Now spell it backwards. What do you get? H-s-e-l-f. Do you see the word "self"? It has the letter "h" in front of it. Now what does the "h" stand for? It's either him or her—himself or herself without God. A person living without God. Himself or herself, that's the flesh. As Oswald Chambers says about the flesh: "It's my right to my claim to myself." I want to do what I want to do when I want to do it and I don't want you to stop me. I'm living selfishly. I'm self-centered. I'm self-serving. People walking after the flesh are very much concerned about "self." If you talk to them very long they'll talk about themselves because that's their life.

What did Jesus say? He said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (Matthew 9:13; Mark 2:17; Luke 5:32 KJV). Notice He said the same thing in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This is the picture of a sinner. This is a picture of a person who is not a Christian. Jesus didn't come to make bad people good; He came to make dead people alive. That's a big difference. He wants to give us life, not just teach us how to be good. The only way we can be good is by having Him living in us. So you may need to consider repenting and turning from sin and actually receiving Christ. Letting Him fill the god-shaped vacuum that's in your life. If you do, that's the initial act of repentance. Something very wonderful will happen.

SPIRITUAL MAN—FUNCTIONING SPIRITUALLY (Diagram 160-A1)

As you turn to your next diagram, you'll see the picture of the spiritual man who is functioning spiritually. How do I get from being a natural man to becoming a spiritual man? John R. W. Stott, a British theologian says: "Our biography is written in two volumes. Volume one is the story of the old man, the old self, of me before my conversion, that's the natural man. Volume two is the story of the new man, the new self, of me after I was made a new creation in Christ. Volume one of my biography ended with the judicial death of the old self. I was a sinner. I deserved to die. I did die. I received my desserts in my substitute with whom I have become one. Volume two of my biography opened with my resurrection. My old life having finished, a new life to God, has begun." I'm living in volume two, not in volume one. In volume two I'm a spiritual man or woman functioning spiritually. What's the position? In the Spirit. What's the function? After the Spirit. This is the way I believe every child of God can live. It's the normal Christian life. The indwelling Spirit is what makes me spiritual, not my behavior. And that's where we get confused. We think it's our performance or our behavior. We're going to try harder or do better. It's the Holy Spirit that makes me spiritual. In the center of this spiritual person is the Holy Spirit. This person has been born again, born anew and the Spirit lives there. The triangle that used to be outside, which was symbolic of God is now on the inside, right in the center of that person. That person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

Take note of the cross on the right side of the diagram. What's on that cross? The natural man. Everything that we just saw on that first diagram was put on the cross. Crucified with Christ. Romans 6:6 says, "Knowing this," this is something that we need to know, "that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." And that's what we said

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was true of the natural man, a slave to sin, but our old self was crucified with Him. That's an amazing thing. I used to remember singing that song, "Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?" As I sang it I thought of us all standing around holding hands, humming. Then I thought one day, I was there. I wasn't just standing around humming, I was there because I was in Christ. I was participating in what happened on the Cross. Praise God. That's what it says, "I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). That's why that whole natural man, natural woman is on the cross. That life is gone. I have a new life now, a spiritual life and it is even better than the Garden of Eden. Think about that, in the Garden of Eden the Lord came and met with Adam and Eve. He walked with them and talked with them—remember that song? Well, the problem is He can leave the garden and there I am all by myself again. I don't even care if He holds my hand. I don't want Him to hold my hand, I want Him to come in and live inside of me, having an indwelling relationship, an intimate relationship, much better than Adam and Eve ever had.

Notice what is happening in the soul. The mind is being renewed. How? By spending time in God's word and seeing what God has to say about things instead of what I think or what I feel. What about my emotions? They're being brought under control. Emotions aren't bad, but they do not need to be the bastion of truth in my life. My will is choosing the truth and my body has become a weapon of righteousness. It's not yielded to sin. How does all this happen? What actually happens inside of a person? It's very much like what happens when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. I brought this [holds up paper butterfly], my little boy made this in Sunday School. You know what that is don't you? Yes, it's a butterfly.

Several years ago I had the privilege of going to Calaway Gardens in Georgia, and I visited the Butterfly House. It was a huge building with

hundreds and hundreds of butterflies. You could just hold out your hands and they would land all over your arms. I just stood amazed. They also had a movie about butterflies. It was made by the Moody Institute of Science from a biblical perspective. Several times it said, "The Creator did it this way; the Creator did it that way." It wasn't based on evolution. What was explained that I'd never known before was how the caterpillar becomes a butterfly. It said: "The little caterpillar goes around and just gorges itself, eats everything in sight. Then it's ready to go into the chrysalis stage and hooks a little hook on a branch and hangs for several days and then comes out as a butterfly." What happens when it's in there in that chrysalis? I thought the caterpillar grew wings and came out. NO, that's not what happens. During that time, the caterpillar inside that little chrysalis liquefies, turns completely to liquid, and something brand new that has never existed before emerges—a butterfly. Something brand new.

When you and I receive Christ and He comes into us, He changes us and makes us brand new—something that has never existed before. It's interesting to note what the job of the butterfly is in this last or fourth stage of the development. It is two things, to disburse and multiply. After we know who we are in Christ, we want to disburse. We want to tell other people about that and then multiply and even have other people come into the kingdom.

However, have you ever seen a butterfly crawling along the ground like a caterpillar? I never have. If you did, what would you know about that butterfly? Something's wrong with that butterfly, right? It's sick; it's got a broken wing; it's confused; it's got an identity crisis. It doesn't know who it is and doesn't know where its house is. It is back with the old gang in the dirt. As a Christian I can make a bad choice like that. I can start living like I used to live when I was a natural person and going and doing the things that I did before I became a child of God. That would be very foolish. That would be

dumb, but you could do it. That's what the next diagram illustrates. This is what happens if you choose to go crawl around in the dirt. You become a spiritual man or woman functioning carnally. You are not functioning spiritually anymore.

SPIRITUAL MAN—FUNCTIONING CARNALLY (Diagram 160-A2)

I want you to look at Diagrams 160-A1 and 160-A2. Observe the words "Devil" and "world." Now check the lines between them and the word "sin." In Diagram 160-A1, you'll see that the little arrowheads on sin are broken off—the power of sin has been broken. On the "Spiritual Man: Functioning Carnally," 160-A2, they're welded back on and also the lines are darker between the Devil, the world, and the individual. This person has looked at the world, listened to the flesh, and has turned his or her eyes away from the Lord. Watchman Nee, says, "All temptation is designed to get us to take our eyes off the Lord." That's a good definition of temptation, just getting your eyes off the Lord. Look at that thing, that possession, that person, just don't look at the Lord. When I do look to other things I give power or energy to the world and it becomes stronger. Then what happens? My will can respond to sin. My mind becomes carnal and my emotions are indulged. Then I am called carnal. What does carnal mean? It means walking after the flesh. The exciting thing is, my position in the spirit has not changed. My true identity has not changed. I'm making a bad choice, possibly making a stupid choice, but my identity has not changed.

What I've done is I've started to function carnally. It's like chili con carne. What does that mean? I mean chili with flesh or meat. It's the flesh part that is dominating and I'm functioning like an animal. Once again I'm trying to be an animal man. I'm not an animal man—a body-soul existence. No. I have a spirit that's alive, but I'm not functioning according to the Spirit. I'm functioning just the way I did when

I was a natural person. There is no connection with the Spirit. I like what John McArthur said, "Christians can be carnal in their behavior, but they're never carnal by nature." Never carnal by nature. That is a miserable person, a spiritual man or woman functioning carnally. You know why this person is miserable? Because the person is living contrary to his or her real identity.

You know people that are not Christians—natural men or women. Do they have any trouble sinning? Do they have any trouble going out and doing things wrong? No! They enjoy it. They even want to tell you what they did. You may not want to hear it, but they don't care. A carnal Christian who is walking after the flesh does not want to tell you about his or her sinful choices. It's not enjoyable, it's not pleasant. But it's exciting to know carnal Christians don't have to stay that way. First Peter 2:11 says, ". . . Abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul." Because I don't have to live like that, I can abstain from fleshly lust.

Do you have a beeper? I think a person who has a beeper is a very, very important person. Because even here, in the middle of this meeting, there are people who need you, and they want to be able to contact you. It is because you have vital information that they need. I probably never will have a beeper because I'm not that important. Important people have beepers. Being tempted is like having a beeper. Before you became a Christian, your beeper went off and you picked it up and said "Oh, okay I'll do that." Whatever the sin was you did it. When the beeper of temptation went off, you responded by yielding to sin. But after you become a Christian, the little arrowhead of sin, the power of sin is broken. Do you think the beeper will still go off? Do you think you'll still be tempted? Yes! Have you ever seen people look at their beeper when it beeps and ignore it? Sometimes I wonder why they have

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the beeper, when they never call the people, they just ignore it. That's the way you can live as a child of God. When your beeper of temptation goes off you can say: "Oh yeah, I remember. I used to call that number a lot. You know what? I don't think I'll call it. I don't need to. I don't have to. I know who I am."

When Satan tempted Jesus, he said: "Here, aren't you hungry? Come on, forty days and forty nights without food, let's eat something. Think about yourself. Notice these rocks. All you need to do is speak the word and make loaves of bread out of them." Jesus could have easily said: "You know what Satan? You've got a point there. If my real identity were just flesh, I might consider it. After all I am hungry and I don't just want some bread, I want it hot, out of the oven, with butter and strawberry jam on it. That's what I think I want." But He didn't say that because in effect He said: "That's not my identity. I don't need that in order to live. I'm going to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. I'm going to look to my Father for my sustenance, not bread because I know who I am." He didn't call up the number of temptation to meet His bodily needs in that manner.

I don't have to call those numbers either. I can ignore them. The interesting thing is, in a moment, in a flash I can move from functioning spiritually to functioning carnally by responding to sin. I'd like to think about this for a minute. Are we all tempted? Yes, we are, even Jesus was tempted. Is there any sin to being tempted? I've had people in counseling who think they have sinned just because they were tempted. Also, they think they have sinned just because they've thought about something sinful. One man said, "I did think about it, so I might as well do it if thinking about it is a sin." No, no, no, no. The old saying is, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." Temptation is like the birds flying over

your head. What can we do to keep them from building a nest in our hair? Remember the steering wheel? [Holds up **steering wheel**.] Once I sin I need to make a spiritual U-turn and repent.

Let's keep with the driving theme. [Holds up green **GO** sign.] When I am tempted I can see it as a **green light**, step on the gas, and say: "I'm going in. It's probably wrong. I'll probably regret it, but I think it's what I want to do." And so we go for it. We may have people encouraging us and saying: "You deserve this. You know, God wants you to be happy. That's what He really wants. He's a loving God, He wants you to be happy and this will make you happy, so, go for it. It's okay." Especially non-Christian people will tell you to make sinful choices. Or you can say: "No, I don't want to do that. I don't want to go for it. I want to **stop**." [Holds up red **STOP** sign.] This is like responding to the **red light** at an intersection. And as I think about this, I think about a person stepping on the brake and pushing hard with all his or her might. By their own strength people try to not sin. Trying to stop sinning is like what happens when I step on the brake with all of my might. Have you ever pushed on the brake and all of a sudden your foot goes to the floor? Why? No brake fluid. The master cylinder is broken. That's a picture of someone trying to overcome temptation by his or her own strength. This is trying not to sin by exerting the power of the flesh. Can you see how senseless that is? Me, by the power of my own flesh, trying not to sin. That doesn't make sense, but that's the way a lot of people live. Often we are encouraged to live like that. Haven't you heard people say: "You need to try harder. You can do it. Do your best and God will do the rest." Think about that one. You do your best. No, my best is trusting in Him. Not me trying hard not to do that. Have you ever tried hard to not think about something? How does that work? Are you tempted with food? OK. I don't want any of you to think about a chocolate sundae

with a little brownie under it, with hot fudge dripping over it, with a little cherry on top, with nuts and whipped cream. Don't think about that, okay. Stop. Stop. Stop thinking about it. You were thinking about it. Now stop it. Are you thinking: "Okay, I'm going for it. [Holds up green **GO** sign.] As soon as this meeting is over, I'm out of here. I'm going to the Dairy Queen."

Now, so what can I do? What can I do? [Holds up **ONE WAY** sign.] Go to the Lord. There's only **one way**. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). There's only **one way** and He's it. I go to Him. I turn to Him. I yield to Him. Because whatever it is, this thing is moving me away from Him. I want to turn toward Him and see that He's the only one that can deliver me. Jesus doesn't give you victory. **He is your victory**. It's not saying, "Give me this, or help me with this." It is saying, "It's you Lord, Yourself in me, live through me by Your power, for Your glory, You're the one that makes the difference." Second Peter 2:9 says, "The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation." That's an excellent, excellent verse. So if I find myself functioning carnally, what do I need to do? What do I do if I see temptation as a **green light** and sin? I need to repent. That's the title of this lesson.

REPENTANCE (Diagram 160-B)

Look at page 5 and note the U-turn diagram. I begin the repentance process with an honest appraisal. I have to consider my way. Isaiah 53:6 says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray / Each of us has turned to his own way . . ." And we think that's a good way, but it's not.

Turn to Luke 15. Consider the story of the prodigal son. This is an interesting story the Lord made up to teach us about repentance. It also demonstrates the Father's love when we have gone astray. You'll see here that there's a change of mind, will, feelings, conduct, confes-

sion, and restitution. Now these may occur in any order, that's why they're all congruent. It's interesting that in this particular story, they do line up in that order. Look at Luke 15:17 and you'll see a change of mind. The prodigal son, "Came to his senses." He came to his senses, he woke up and said, "How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread and I'm dying here with hunger!" He came to his senses. He had a change of mind. In the next verse you see a change of will. "I will get up." There it is. "I will get up and go to my father." That's a change of will. Verse 19 shows a change of feelings. He says, "I'm no longer worthy to be called your son." He feels unworthy. Verse 20 records a change of conduct. "And he got up." He just didn't think about it or pray about it, he did it. He got up and came to his father. Luke 15:21 records his words of confession and restitution. He says to his father, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son." I like what happened at the end of this chapter when the older brother was all upset. The father says, "We had to be merry and rejoice, for this brother of yours was dead and has begun to live, and was lost and has been found." He's begun to live. As a person becomes a child of God he begins to live. If I walk, and continue walking away from the Lord, it's as if I'm a dead person. I don't have life. I know where life is, but I'm not drawing on it. I'm not experiencing God's life. As I repent, I can experience His life again.

This past year our church sent a team of ten people to India. They went to Calcutta, probably one of the most destitute places on the planet. They had an excellent time representing our church in India. Before they left the church had all kinds of events regarding the India Team. As these events took place, I started remembering that last year my wife and I went to Russia. Now, we were not sent out from our church, we went with another organization. The church did do some things for us, they helped

provide finances and gave us time to speak to the church, but the India Team was everywhere. They had a 24-hour prayer vigil, they had bulletins printed telling where they were every day of their trip. My son learned about India in Sunday School. I remember opening the itinerary bulletin and praying for the India Team. On the second day I thought, "I don't want to pray for these people." I couldn't figure out why. Why don't I want to pray for the India Team? These people are sacrificing, they're going in some pretty distressed areas of the world, and I'm not going to pray for them. Why? It hit me. I was jealous. I was jealous because so much attention was paid to this team, and we did not get so much attention when we went to Russia. I had to repent. I got down on my knees and I said, "Lord, I see what I'm doing," That was an honest appraisal. Then came a change of mind. "I'm jealous because so much attention was paid to these people, and that's wrong. I'm sinning and I would appreciate it if you would cleanse me. I thank you Jesus, that You already died for that. I apply what you've done for me. I thank you." Then I could pray for the India team and I haven't had any twinges of jealousy since. That was honest appraisal. Sometimes the honest appraisal has to happen by getting away from other people or the situation that's going on.

My wife said I could share this incident that happened last Valentine's Day. She had several things planned that we were going to do for Valentine's Day. We were going to spend it together as a family and have a wonderful time. We were going out to dinner and going to a movie. When I got home from work, I had to do some things. Then I thought I better check our coupon for the restaurant where we were going and found out it had expired. Oh no! I called the restaurant, because a lot of places don't care if the coupon has expired. I said, "I have a coupon that's expired, what do you think?" They said: "Nope, won't honor it. It's expired." That changed things. We had to

consider a different restaurant. All along I can see time is ticking away. I checked the time of the movie and found out to my dismay that the movie had already started. Susan got upset. She said, "I don't know why I get my hopes up. Why do I get excited about a night like this, and it just goes to pot?" My little boy and I were listening. Finally I said, "Honey, why don't you just take a few minutes and go in the bedroom and just talk to the Lord?" My son said, "Busted! Busted! Mom got busted." Because she was caught with a bad attitude. Sometimes Elliott is, but this time it was Mom. She went in the bedroom, and came out in about 10 minutes. She said, "Hey family, I'm sorry. I didn't need to get all upset like that and lose my cool, let's go out and have a nice time together." That was taking time away to get with the Lord, have an honest appraisal and then repent. The sin only involved two people and she admitted what she had done. Confession only needs to be made as wide as the area of sin.

Two weeks ago in my home fellowship group, we were studying a book and as we met for the evening, I said: "Okay we're going to discuss Chapter 11. How many of you have actually read Chapter 11?" There were 16 people in the group. Only two people had even read the chapter. I got disgusted and said: "This is really sad. I spent time preparing and evidently you really don't want to study this chapter because you didn't even read it. If you don't want to discuss it, then we'll do something else." And they said, "No, no we want to discuss it." So we did. At the end of our meeting I closed in prayer. As I was praying the Lord seemed to say: "You need to seek this whole group's forgiveness. You need to repent." As I finished praying I said: "The Lord spoke to me and I need to please ask you to forgive me, I was kind of harsh and rough at the beginning of the meeting because a lot of you hadn't read the assignment. So would you please forgive me?" One of the men, my son-in-law, said, "Sure Dad. I was a little surprised because you know

we're studying the book *Grace Walk* and you were a little rough on us, kind of like Law walk or legalism." So they all forgave me. What did I do? I had to take a hold of the spiritual U-turn wheel and turn around from the way I had acted at the beginning of the meeting. Because my action had been to the whole group, I needed to ask forgiveness from the whole group.

CONSIDERING/TURNING

(Diagram 160-C)

Let's look at page 6A. This "Considering and Turning" shows you how to go through repentance. First step: Honest appraisal. What are the facts? What's the truth? Check out your own purposes and motives. Sometimes we don't do that. We need to overcome procrastination. I like what Psalms 119:59 says in *The Living Bible*. It says, "I thought about the wrong direction I was heading and I turned around and came running back to you." That's someone who's not involved with procrastination. Then pray specifically for God to reveal your own way or your self-life. Wait upon the Lord. Write down if the Lord shows you anything. Don't permit any excuses or alibis. Also deal with it right away. Now consider turning. Remember anytime you turn toward sin you need to turn back toward the Lord by repentance. This is the cure for godship. Consider how godship can help in this process. Every time you feel upset, see what area of godship you might be exercising. Were you walking after the flesh? Were you becoming self-centered, self-focused, selfish? What do you do? Choose to appropriate the life of Christ to empower right decisions. Admit your sin. Thank Him for forgiveness. Admit you're wrong if there were other people involved. Make restitution and then walk in the freedom of who you are in Christ. There are two lessons in the Victorious Christian Living Conference that show how to extend and seek forgiveness.

What happens after you repent? You need to start making right choices. I like what Charles Hodge says in his book on 1 and 2 Corinthians

about repentance. He says: "Sorrow in itself is not repentance, neither is remorse, nor self-condemnation, nor self-loathing, nor external reformation. These are its attendants or consequences, but repentance itself is a turning from sin to holiness. It's a real change of heart. It is a change of views, feelings, and purposes resulting in a change of life." Isn't that similar to what we've been sharing? He said: "Further consider Peter and Judas. Both of these men had denied the Lord. One repented, Peter, and was restored to faith. One was bitter and did not repent and committed suicide."

MY OPINION ABOUT SIN/ MY FEELINGS ABOUT SIN

(Diagrams 160-D & D1)

These two charts "My Opinions About Sin" and "My Feelings About Sin," will clarify whether you are truly repentant. If you have any questions about whether or not there is something that you need to repent for, read through these lists, see if they apply to what you're going through.

REVIEW

Turn to your repentance review sheet. It says: "Repentance is God's way of bringing us into His family" and "As God's child I can choose to walk after the flesh and sin," but "Every time I turn to sin, I need to turn back to God's way by repentance. God uses people and circumstances to get my attention, so I will repent and stop doing things my way. After repentance, then I can start making right choices." It's never too soon to repent. When I am aware that I am walking away from the Lord, even one or two steps—I don't have to get all the way into the far country like the prodigal son, just down the road a piece—it's time that I come back. Or, if you already are in that far distant land and you think, "What good is it?" It's always the right time to repent and come back to the Father because He's waiting. He's looking, He's anticipating your return and He wants to welcome you with arms of love.

REPENT

VCL

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However, do you see yourself as a natural man or woman? Then your repentance is unto salvation. You could pray and open the door to your life and ask Jesus to come into your life as your Savior and Lord. He wants to take up residency in you.

Has the Holy Spirit been convicting you of any sin in your life? Maybe from some of the other lessons you've heard in this VCL Conference. Now is the time to repent. Also, is there a dullness or a dryness, a coldness or a weakness in your Christian life? It could be, you need to repent. You need to come back to where you were and discard the clog in your life so that God's life and God's love can flow freely again.

Could be that you were setting standards, trying to control, involved with greed, or self-centered. It's time to come back through repentance.

Remember the pastor we talked about at the beginning of the message. Is it time to repaint and stop thinning? Is it time to repent and stop doing things your way, being self-focused, self-centered, selfish? Praise God that we can repent and come back to Him and He will receive us.

Let's pray. "Lord, we do praise Your name. That You've opened up this opportunity, that we can repent. We thank You that You've provided the way through Your cleansing, by the blood of Jesus. We pray in Jesus name, Amen."