

Repentance towards God

Acts 20:17-21

Theme: Repentance is an aspect of conversion and it affects the mind, emotions and will.

Factors Constituting Saul's Conversion

Saul's conversion contains essential elements **constituting** all conversions.

He highlights them in his **functional definition** of conversion in Acts 20:21.

We see **two elements**: repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Repentance towards God: the First Essential Element in Conversion

There are three characteristics of
conversion repentance:

1. Repentance involves a thinking-again regarding your relationship with God which leads to a change of mind.

This is the intellectual (mind) aspect to genuine repentance.

Saul was forced to *think again* and change his mind regarding:

- Jesus
- God's way of salvation
- his standing before God

Is the Spirit causing you to think again and change your mind about these things?

2. Repentance involves conviction and grief over personal sins.

This is the emotional aspect to genuine repentance.

This is not explicit in any of Saul's conversion accounts but it is in Paul's autobiographical sketches (1 Timothy 1:15-16), and in his teaching (Acts 20:21; 26:20; 2 Corinthians 7:10).

The church seems to have decided that the most significant way to minister to people is to help them increase their self-esteem. We are not to make them feel unworthy.

(R C Sproul)

Has the Spirit enabled you to see your sinfulness?

Are you grieving because of your sins?

3. Repentance includes a determination to change your ways.

This is the volitional (will) aspect to genuine repentance.

Saul decided to obey the Lord. (Acts 26:19-20)

Are you being brought to that point?

Repentance leading to life is a saving grace, by which a sinner, having truly realised his sin and grasped the mercy of God in Christ, turns from his sin with grief and hatred and turns to God, with full resolve and effort after new obedience.

(Westminster Confession of Faith, Shorter Catechism, question 82)

Conclusion – Mind, Emotions, Will

How do we know Saul genuinely repented?

Compare Acts 9:1-2 with Acts 9:20b-22!

*Has there been such a change in your
life?*

Has God been dealing with you?

*Has He been working in your mind,
emotions, will?*

*Are you ready to repent and trust
Christ?*