

Principles for Genuine Repentance

Genuine repentance is very rare, but it is crucial to the success of restoration. Without it, the rebuilt relationship will almost certainly crumble with even more devastating results. Review the following principles, use the second page to record your response, & be ready to communicate each of these facets with those affected.

Repentant people are willing to confess *all* their sins, not just the sins that got them in trouble. A house isn't clean until you open every closet and sweep every corner. People who truly desire to be clean are completely honest about their lives. No more secrets.

Repentant people face the pain that their sin caused others. They invite the victims of their sin (anyone hurt by their actions) to express the intensity of emotions that they feel - anger, hurt, sorrow, and disappointment. Repentant people do not give excuses or shift blame. They made the choice to hurt others, and they must take full responsibility for their behavior.

Repentant people ask forgiveness from those they hurt. They realize that they can never completely "pay off" the debt they owe their victims. Repentant people don't pressure others to say, "I forgive you." Forgiveness is a journey, and the other person needs time to deal with the hurt before they can forgive. All that penitent people can do is admit their indebtedness and humbly request the undeserved gift of forgiveness.

Repentant people remain accountable to a small group of mature Christians. They gather a group of friends around themselves who hold them accountable to a plan for clean living. They invite the group to question them about their behaviors. And they follow the group's recommendations regarding how to avoid temptation.

Repentant people accept their limitations. They realize that the consequences of their sin (including the distrust) will last a long time, perhaps the rest of their lives. They understand that they may never enjoy the same freedom that other people enjoy. Sex offenders or child molesters, for example, should never be alone with children. Alcoholics must abstain from drinking. Adulterers must put strict limitations on their time with members of the opposite sex. That's the reality of their situation, and they willingly accept their boundaries.

Repentant people are faithful to the daily tasks God has given them. We serve a merciful God who delights in giving second chances. God offers repentant people a restored relationship with Him and a new plan for life. Listen to Hosea's promise to rebellious Israel: *Come, let us return to the Lord. He has torn us to pieces but he will heal us; he has injured us but he will bind up our wounds. After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will restore us, that we may live in his presence* (Hosea 6:1-2). After healing comes living.



Confrontation and confession are difficult situations. Often emotions such as fear, anger, or shame hinder honest communication of repentance.

Respond to the repentance principles, writing statements that communicate your commitment to ongoing and complete repentance. Your responses indicate your personal agreement to pursue these principles of repentance to the best of your ability.

Repentant people are willing to confess *all* their sins

Repentant people face *the pain that their sin caused* others

Repentant people *ask forgiveness* from those they hurt

Repentant people *remain accountable*

Repentant people *accept their limitations*

Repentant people are *faithful to the daily tasks* God has given them

Assignment

Growing in Fondness, Admiration & Appreciation

For each day below there is a positive statement or thought, followed by a task. Think about each statement and say it to yourself many times throughout the day while you and your spouse are apart.

Complete this list one day at a time for the next five weeks.

Week 1

Monday

Thought: *I am genuinely fond of my partner.*

Task: List one characteristic you find endearing or lovable.

Tuesday

Thought: *I can easily speak of the good times in our marriage.*

Task: Pick one good time and write a sentence about it.

Wednesday

Thought: *I can easily remember romantic, special times in our marriage.*

Task: Pick one such time and think about it.

Thursday

Thought: *I am physically attracted to my partner.*

Task: Think of one physical attribute you like.

Friday

Thought: *My partner has specific qualities that make me proud.*

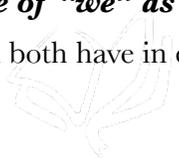
Task: Write down one characteristic that makes you proud.

Week 2

Monday

Thought: *I feel a genuine sense of "we" as opposed to "I" in this marriage.*

Task: Think of one thing that you both have in common.



Tuesday

Thought: ***We have the same general beliefs and values.***

Task: Describe one belief you both share.

Wednesday

Thought: ***We have common goals.***

Task: List one such goal.

Thursday

Thought: ***My spouse is my best friend.***

Task: What secret about you does your spouse know.

Friday

Thought: ***I get lots of support in this marriage.***

Task: Think of a time in your marriage when your spouse was very supportive.

Week 3

Monday

Thought: ***My home is a place to come to get support and reduce stress.***

Task: List a time when your spouse helped you reduce stress.

Tuesday

Thought: ***I can easily recall the first time we met.***

Task: Describe that first meeting on paper.

Wednesday

Thought: ***I remember many details about deciding to get married.***

Task: Write a sentence describing what you remember.

Thursday

Thought: ***I can recall our wedding and honeymoon.***

Task: Describe one thing about them you enjoyed.

Friday

Thought: ***We divide up household chores in a fair way.***

Task: Describe one way you do this on a regular basis

Week 4

Monday

Thought: *I am honored to be in this marriage.*

Task: List two things about this marriage that pleases you.

Tuesday

Thought: *I don't like things about my partner, but I can live with them.*

Task: What is one of these minor faults you have adapted to?

Wednesday

Thought: *I was really blessed to meet my spouse.*

Task: List one benefit that being married to your spouse offers.

Thursday

Thought: *Marriage is sometimes a struggle, but it's worth it.*

Task: Think of one difficult time you successfully weathered together.

Friday

Thought: *There is a lot of affection between us.*

Task: Plan a surprise gift for your mate for tonight.

Week 5

Monday

Thought: *There is a lot of love in our marriage.*

Task: Think of a special trip you took together or a special time together.

Tuesday

Thought: *We enjoy each other's humor..*

Task: Rent a comedy video to watch together.

Wednesday

Thought: *I remember many details about deciding to get married.*

Task: Write a sentence describing what you remember.

Thursday

Thought: *Sex is usually (or can be) quite satisfying in this marriage.*

Task: Plan a mutually pleasing evening for the two of you.

Friday

Thought: *We have come a long way together.*

Task: Think of all you have accomplished as a team.

“Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

Romans 12:10

Simple exercises can fan the flames of love that has been neglected or taken for granted. Remembering and celebrating the positive attributes of your spouse can remind you of the reasons God brought them into your life. This perspective of appreciation toward your spouse and gratitude of God’s grace will inevitably lead to a greater sense of service and optimism.

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable-if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-think about such things.”

Philippians 4:8

Communicating Love in the Small Moments

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

Ephesians 4:25

1. Telling her you love her frequently
2. Leading family devotions regularly
3. Physically affirming her by rubbing her back, sitting close to her, etc.
4. Seeking to set a good example before the children
5. Handling your affairs decently and in order; structuring your time and using it wisely
6. Asking forgiveness often and saying, "I was wrong and will try to change"
7. Sharing your insights, reading, and good experiences with her
8. Being reasonably happy to go shopping with her
9. Taking her out to breakfast
10. Remembering anniversaries and events that are special to her
11. Being cooperative and appreciative when she holds you, caresses or kisses you
12. Being willing to see things from her point of view
13. Asking her to pray with you about something
14. Refusing to compare her unfavorably with other people
15. Developing mutual friends
16. Being on time
17. Frequently yielding to her desires unless to do so would be sinful
18. Refusing to disagree with her in the presence of others
19. Being cooperative and helpful as a cohost when you have people in for dinner or fellowship
20. Refusing to work late on a regular basis
21. Holding her close while expressing tangible and vocal love when she is hurt or discouraged
22. Getting up in the middle of the night to take care of the children so she can rest
23. Thanking her when she supports your decision and cooperates enthusiastically
24. Planning a mini-honeymoon, where the two of you can do whatever you both enjoy
25. Being sober, but not somber, about life



Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22

1. Beginning each day with cheerfulness and tangible expressions of affection
2. Lovingly giving him your input when you think he's in error
3. Relating what happened to you during your day
4. Giving him your undivided attention when he wants to talk
5. Running errands gladly
6. Teasing and flirting with him
7. Working in the yard or painting a room or washing the car together
8. Planning vacations or trips together
9. Sharing your fears, concerns, joys, failures, etc.
10. Asking him to have sexual relations more than he would expect you to
11. Being willing to face problems even if it requires discomfort, change, and much effort
12. Expressing your love in words or notes
13. Being willing to talk to him about his concerns and not belittling him
14. Seeking to support your ideas with biblical insights and good reasons
15. Telling him "Good job!" before he asks you if he has done a good job
16. Being satisfied with your present standard of living, furniture or equipment when he can provide no more
17. Doing a Bible study or Bible research together
18. Standing in union with him and supporting him in his attempts to train your children
19. Asking forgiveness often and saying "I was wrong and will try to change."
20. Letting him know how much you appreciate him and what you appreciate about him
21. Being silly or unconventional in your lovemaking times
22. Refusing to disagree with him in the presence of others
23. Expressing how much you love the children and being the children's cheerleader
24. Keeping yourself attractive and clean
25. Watching football or other sporting events with him and trying to really manifest interest

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much."

Luke 16:10

True romance, passionate intimacy and lasting friendship is built upon small gestures that allow the other to feel safe, secure, and accepted.

Adapted from W. Mack, *101 Ways to Love*

