



By President
Thomas S. Monson

THE GIFT OF REPENTANCE

“Our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement,” President Thomas S. Monson has taught. “Our task is to become our best selves. One of God’s greatest gifts to us is the joy of trying again, for no failure ever need be final.”¹

We often associate the advent of a new year with resolutions and goals. We resolve to improve, to change, to try again. Perhaps the most important way we can try again is by embracing what President Monson has called “the gift of repentance.”²

In the following excerpts from his teachings since he became President of the Church, President Monson counsels us to “apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.”³

The Miracle of Forgiveness

“We have all made incorrect choices. If we have not already corrected such choices, I assure you that there is a way to do so. The process is called repentance. I plead with you to correct your mistakes. Our Savior died to provide you and me that blessed gift. Although the path is not easy, the promise is real: ‘Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow’ [Isaiah 1:18]. ‘And I, the Lord, remember them no more’ [D&C 58:42]. Don’t put your eternal life at risk. If you have sinned, the sooner you begin to make your way back, the sooner you will

find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness.”⁴

Return to the Path

“Although it is imperative that we choose wisely, there are times when we will make foolish choices. The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings, that we might return to the path which will lead us to that celestial glory we seek.”⁵

The Way Back

“If any of you has stumbled in his journey, I assure you that there is a way back. The process is called repentance. Although the path is difficult, your eternal salvation depends on it. What could be more worthy of your efforts? I plead with you to determine right here and now to take the steps necessary to fully repent. The sooner you do so, the sooner you will be able to experience the peace and the quietness and the assurance spoken of by Isaiah [see Isaiah 1:18].”⁶

People Can Change

“We need to bear in mind that people can change. They can put behind them bad habits. They can repent from transgressions. They can bear the priesthood worthily. And they can serve the Lord diligently.”⁷



TEACHING FROM THIS MESSAGE

All of us are imperfect—only through the gift of repentance made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ can we be cleansed from sin and improve our lives. Consider discussing with those you teach how we “correct our course settings” through repentance. How have they felt nearer to Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ through positive changes they have made in their lives? You could invite those you teach to write spiritual resolutions for the new year and to be accountable to a friend, spouse, or other family member for their progress.

Become Clean Again

“Should there be anything amiss in your life, there is open to you a way out. Cease any unrighteousness. Talk with your bishop. Whatever the problem, it can be worked out through proper repentance. You can become clean once again.”⁸

The Savior’s Essential Role

“Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost. It is not enough, however, merely to believe in Him and His mission. We need to work and learn, search and pray, repent and improve. We need to know God’s laws and live them. We need to receive His saving ordinances. Only by so doing will we obtain true, eternal happiness.”⁹ ■

NOTES

1. “The Will Within,” *Ensign*, May 1987, 68.
2. “Choices,” *Ensign*, May 2016, 86.
3. Mosiah 4:2.
4. “The Three Rs of Choice,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 69.
5. “Choices,” 86.
6. “Keep the Commandments,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2015, 85.
7. “See Others as They May Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2012, 68.
8. “Priesthood Power,” *Ensign*, May 2011, 67.
9. “The Perfect Path to Happiness,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2016, 80–81.



Resolve to Repent

While goals for the new year can help us grow, the best way to change is through repentance.



See also “Eight Myths about Repentance” at lds.org/go/1186.

President Monson explains that “our responsibility is to rise from mediocrity to competence, from failure to achievement. Our task is to become our best selves.” Many people dedicate January to making goals and resolutions of improvement: to smile more, eat healthier, or learn a new skill. While these goals can help you change for the better, the best way to change is through repentance.

Though repentance can be hard, it is a gift! As we rely on Jesus Christ by repenting of our sins, we are able to grow and progress. President Monson said: “Essential to the plan [of salvation] is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Without His atoning sacrifice, all would be lost.” Through repentance, you can be washed clean of your sins and progress to become more like Him.

Think of something that may be keeping you from becoming like the Savior. Is it your language? how you treat your friends or family? After thinking of what you could improve, pray to Heavenly Father and express your desire to change. Remember that through the power of His Atonement, Jesus Christ can help you overcome your weakness. As President Monson taught, “The gift of repentance, provided by our Savior, enables us to correct our course settings.”

CHILDREN

Repentance Is a Gift

The gift of repentance isn’t a gift that you can see or touch. Instead, it’s a gift that you can feel. This means that when we make a wrong choice, we can repent and feel peace and happiness again.

Heavenly Father and Jesus will always help us repent. Match each picture with a different step of repentance.

We feel sorry.

We pray to Heavenly Father, tell Him what happened, and ask for His help to make a better choice next time.

We apologize and try to make it better.

We feel peace and know that we have been forgiven.

