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HOW TO REALLY REPENT

Repentance is an expansive subject, but I would like to mention just five aspects of this fundamental gospel principle that I hope will be helpful.

First, the **invitation to repent is an expression of love**. When the Savior “began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17), it was a message of love, inviting all who would to qualify to join Him “and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world, and eternal life [itself] in the world to come” (Moses 6:59). If we do not invite others to change or if we do not demand repentance of ourselves, we fail in a fundamental duty we owe to one another and to ourselves.

Second, repentance means **striving to change**. It would mock the Savior’s suffering in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross for us to expect that He should transform us into angelic beings with no real effort on our part. Rather, we seek His grace to complement and reward our most diligent efforts (see 2 Nephi 25:23).

Real repentance, **real change may require repeated attempts**, but there is something refining and holy in such striving.

Third, repentance means not only **abandoning sin** but also **committing to obedience**. The Bible Dictionary states, “Repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, [as well as] a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined” (“Repentance”). For our turning to the Lord to be complete, it must include nothing less than a covenant of obedience to Him.

Fourth, **repentance requires a seriousness of purpose and a willingness to persevere**, even through pain. Attempts to create a list of specific steps of repentance may be helpful to some, but it may also lead to a mechanical, check-off-the-boxes approach with no real feeling or change. True repentance is not superficial. The Lord gives two overarching requirements: “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them



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and forsake them” (D&C 58:43).

Fifth, whatever the **cost** of repentance, it **is swallowed up in the joy of forgiveness**.

I gratefully acknowledge and testify that the incomprehensible suffering, death, and Resurrection of our Lord “bringeth to pass the condition of repentance” (Helaman 14:18). The divine gift of **repentance is the key to happiness** here and hereafter. In the Savior’s words and in deep humility and love, I invite all to “repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). I know that in accepting this invitation, **you will find joy** both now and forever. **NE**

From an October 2011 general conference address.