

Blueprints for Belief

Laying the Theological Foundations for Constructing Your Faith

Westminster Confession of Faith 15.1-6 – October 29, 2025

1. Repentance unto life is an evangelical grace, the doctrine whereof is to be preached by every minister of the gospel, as well as that of faith in Christ.

(Like faith, repentance is a vital part of the Gospel message.)

- “Repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations...” – Luke 24:47
- “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins...” – Acts 2:38

2. By it, a sinner, out of the sight and sense not only of the danger, but also of the filthiness and odiousness of his sins, as contrary to the holy nature, and righteous law of God; and upon the apprehension of his mercy in Christ to such as are penitent, so grieves for, and hates his sins, as to turn from them all unto God, purposing and endeavoring to walk with him in all the ways of his commandments.

(Repentance involves both sorrow for sin and a sincere change of direction toward a godly life.)

- “Godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.” 2 Corinthians 7:9-10
- “They should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.” Acts 26:20

3. Although repentance be not to be rested in, as any satisfaction for sin, or any cause of the pardon thereof, which is the act of God’s free grace in Christ; yet it is of such necessity to all sinners, that none may expect pardon without it.

(Repentance does not earn God’s favor, but it is an ongoing necessity in the Christian life.)

- “Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.” Psalm 51:12
- “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.” Revelation 3:19

4. As there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation; so there is no sin so great, that it can bring damnation upon those who truly repent.

(Repentance is necessary and effective with regards to any sin.)

- “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Isaiah 1:18
- “The blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

5. Men ought not to content themselves with a general repentance, but it is every man’s duty to endeavor to repent of his particular sins, particularly.

(Be specific.)

- “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” Proverbs 28:13
- “Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you.” Acts 8:22

6. As every man is bound to make private confession of his sins to God, praying for the pardon thereof; upon which, and the forsaking of them, he shall find mercy; so, he that scandalizeth his brother, or the church of Christ, ought to be willing, by a private or public confession, and sorrow for his sin, to declare his repentance to those that are offended, who are thereupon to be reconciled to him, and in love to receive him.

(Confess to God and to the person offended. Public sin requires public repentance.)

- “Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.” James 5:16
- “If you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you... first be reconciled to your brother.” Matthew 5:23-24
- “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.” Galatians 6:1

Objections

- 1) “Repentance is necessary to restore justification and should be done by the sacraments of confession and penance.”
 - a. Confession is not a sacrament and even if it was, sacraments do not contribute to our justification. (Nothing we do contributes.)
- 2) “Repentance is not necessary for God’s forgiveness.”
 - a. Some fear that making repentance necessary for forgiveness turns it into a salvific work. But the confession treats faith and repentance as two sides of the same coin. Neither earns salvation. Both are gifts of God.

Discussion Questions

- 1) Why is daily repentance necessary even for believers who are already forgiven in Christ?
- 2) When was the last time you experienced *godly sorrow* that led to genuine change? What made it different from mere guilt or regret?
- 3) WCF 15.6 emphasizes confessing sin when it has harmed others. Why do you think public or relational confession is often so hard, and what might a healthy example of it look like in the church today?