

Explore the Bible: June 12

Repentance • 1 Kings 8:46-60

By Emily Beth Crews



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In today's study we will be reminded why repentance should be mark of our faith in our Savior as believers. "Repentance must be rooted in a high value on God, not a high value on oneself. The failure to repent is a form of idolatry. Refusal to repent is to elevate our own souls above God's glory" (Sam Storms, The Gospel Coalition). Repentance is a humble conviction, a

laying bare of our inability to obtain God's glory and standard, a turning away from worldliness and turning towards godliness. Solomon knew the people of Israel would sin; therefore, he asks God to remain faithful to His people when they sin and forgive them when they turned back to Him.

In Exile (1 Kings 8:46-48). A striking word used here by Solomon right away is the word, "when." He prays, "The time will come *when* your people will sin against you" (v. 46a). Romans 3:23 confirms, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (NET). Solomon reveals there are natural consequences to sin. Hebrews 12:6 tells us, "For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts" (NET). The Israelites needed to follow the outline of repentance Solomon gave in verse 47:

1. Repent – have a change of mind.
2. Petition – seek God's forgiveness.
3. Admit – they have sinned.
4. Confess – what they had done wrong and take responsibility.
5. Return – to the Lord with all their heart.

Also notable, Solomon reminds us of the personhood the Israelites would sin against which is not man, but God Himself. "They will repent...admitting, 'We have sinned and gone astray, we have done evil'" (v. 47). David prayed in Psalm 51:4, "Against you – you above all – I have sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight" (NET). Sin is going against the commands, statutes, and ordinances of God and springs forth out of sinful nature (Jeremiah 17:9). Consequently, God can be angry when His people sin. His anger is never hostility towards us, but "rooted in His divine righteousness in response to sin" (Lifeway). While consequences to sinful actions exist, they do not get the final say. This is the ultimate Good News of Christ – He came to vanquish the death sin demands.

God Hears (1 Kings 8:49-53). Solomon now asks for the Lord to listen to the people, forgive and have mercy on them, and

vindicate them against their enemies and captors. Why? The Israelites were God's chosen people, a people created for Himself, "His special people" (Deut. 4:20, Ex. 19:3-6) and "picked out of all the nations of the earth... to be His special possession" (1 Kings 8:53, NET). I imagine anyone we would refer to as "special" and "handpicked" would be blessed to us – imagine how much more blessed the Israelites were to the Lord. He desired relationship with His people and if we've read much of the Old Testament, we bear witness to how time and time again the Israelites departed the Lord, only to repent and return repeatedly. Each time the Lord forgave, but as stated above, there were consequences for their adulterous actions against the Lord. "Repentant people demonstrate humility before the Lord. Humble people consciously evaluate their need, as well as God's willingness to respond" (Lifeway).

Blessing Offered (1 Kings 8:54-60). Solomon offered his prayer to the Lord and the next verse mentions his posture, "He had kneeled and spread out his hands towards the sky" (v. 54). Rather than focusing on external posture Solomon enacted, let's remember "prayer is not dependent on body positions" (Lifeway), but instead the posture of our hearts. Solomon then stood and issued a blessing over the people of Israel. He praised the Lord for the fulfillment of all His promises and commissioned the Israelites to find security in the Lord's surety of His word. Solomon also urged the Israelites to keep all God's commands (God's directives for our behavior), statutes (boundaries God sets for our lives), and ordinances (His justice). Even though Solomon has finalized his prayer, "only God could move the people to walk in all His ways... humanity's natural inclination follows its own desires toward destruction" (Lifeway).

Proverbs 14:12 warns us, "There is a way that seems right to a person, but its end is the way that leads to death." Be quick to repent, petition, admit, confess, and return to the Lord.

Emily Beth Crews currently resides in Montana but was born and raised in Mississippi. She is the daughter of regular contributor, Laura Lee Leathers.