

Battling “Easy Believism”

After spending the past few years preaching and teaching to different denominations, men’s groups, conferences and seminars, I have come to this conclusion: the Christian church is obese! Not in a physical sense, (even though studies show it is that as well), but in a spiritual sense. And I don’t mean this in a good way.

Time after time in these churches and church gatherings, I see many “Christians” who are lazy and uneducated in their spiritual fitness. We no longer, as a church, practice our Christianity. People are unfruitful in the true knowledge of the lord Jesus Christ, and the number one reason for this is biblical illiteracy. Christians don’t take time to read the Bible, period. And when you don’t understand the Word of God, you’re not living out the Word of God. You’re living off of what the pastor is preaching to you—and it’s not his responsibility to grow you in the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. It’s yours.

This scares me for many reason, but mostly because of the “easy believism” that is being taught in our churches today. This teaching, I believe, will send a lot of people to hell!

First and foremost, I want to explain what Scripture says about salvation, because many who read this book will assume that “works” can get them to heaven; this is just not the case. Martin Luther once said “they should prove their faith by their good works.” And in the book of James the author writes, “But someone may well say, “You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works” (James 2:18 NASB).

Faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior is the only way to salvation. The message of the salvation is clear in the Bible. All of us have sinned and fallen short of God’s glory (Romans 3:23) and because of our sin we deserve hell (Romans 6:23). However, because of His love for us (John 3:16), God took on the form of man and died as a perfect sin offering, taking on the punishment we truly deserve (Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:21). And through His promises, He offers us forgiveness of sins and eternal life in heaven to all who receive and believe, by grace through faith, Jesus Christ as Savior (John 1:12, 3:16, 5:24; Acts 16:31).

So, where are you? Are you saved or born again? Salvation doesn’t come from a prayer, but a true experience in the belief of Jesus Christ with a repentant heart! Upon salvation, certain things should happen. First, a desire for the “truth of Scripture” should occur, a hunger for the “Word” if you will. I know from my own experience and the people I disciple, that when there is true salvation, there is

true hunger for God’s Word. Once this hunger starts becoming satisfied by reading and memorizing Scripture, your life should start looking different from the outside.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. — 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NASB)

Secondly, upon this “true salvation” experience, your life should look different on the inside. Your desires should line up more to God’s desires in the Scriptures, than the world’s. For example, let’s say you come into Christianity believing that abortion was a choice, but through your time in the Word, you then realize that murder is a sin. Your belief structure should start changing the more you are involved in the Word. Or it may have an impact first with something like cussing. The deeper you get in the Word, the more you watch your language. Whatever it may be, upon “true salvation” the things you did yesterday or the things you desired yesterday, that contradict a godly lifestyle, should make you sad, hurt or sorrowful for acting that way. Those emotions are the Holy Spirit kicking your teeth in from the inside out. It’s what we call conviction.

So, this book is written under the assumption you are saved, because the rest of this book will contain steps to grow your faith, strengthen your walk and challenge you to pursue holiness. But none of these things in and of themselves will save you without faith in Christ first, which will lead to a repentant heart.

Now, back to “easy-believism.” This is a false teaching that is going around the church today. In essence, preachers and/ or disciple makers will lead someone through a prayer, sometimes called “the sinners prayer.” Don’t get me wrong, I am not teaching a works-based religion, but saying a prayer alone will not get you to heaven, just like “works” will not get you to heaven. The “sinner’s prayer” is a great place to start, a great point of reference, but it’s not salvation on its own. Look at what Jesus said, “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS’” (Matthew 7:21–23 NASB).

My fear, as I stated earlier, is that too many “Christians” are living under the assumption that because they said a prayer they are going to heaven; but where’s the fruit? Jesus also said right before the last verse we looked at, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. So then, you will know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15–20 NASB).

So Jesus tells us that the evidence of salvation is fruit! We’ll look more at biblical “fruit” later in the book.

What I see in the church is no serving (just busyness), no giving, no loving and no salvations. We are not living a godly life—and thus we are obese, spiritually lazy.

If you feel that you are saved, but yet spiritually lazy (we all are), then join me through the rest of this book. It will challenge you, convict you and motivate you to make a difference for God’s kingdom.

If you feel you are not saved, then I encourage you today to make things right with God. Look at what Paul tells us: “Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (2 Corinthians 13:5 NASB).

Don’t deceive yourself into thinking you are saved and don’t let me talk you into doubting your salvation. I am just asking you to make sure that you know, that you know, you are saved.

If you are not saved, believe in Jesus Christ, repent of your sins, and confess He is your Savior. Get into a good Bible-believing church and find someone to disciple you. Last but not least, come along for a ride in the rest of this book. I hope to give you some foundation for your journey as a Christian.

This walk as a new Christian or as an old one that is just lazy is not easy, but it’s worth the battle. As a matter of fact, your walk has eternal consequences for you and everyone you meet on the way!

Join me in this journey as we break down 2 Peter 1:5–12 and learn to make Jesus Lord of our life. I believe this will give the “lazy” Christian motivation to pursue God better than they have in the past.

To this end, after reading each main chapter of the book, you’ll find a set of questions for reflection and discussion. These workbook sections serve as a practical tool to help you get the most out of the book—to help you develop a fuller understanding of the biblical virtues outlined in 2 Peter 1:5–12 as you learn to apply them to your life and truly grow in Christ. Each workbook section also includes a practical action step.

I recommend you go through these sections with a pen in order to write your thoughts in the areas provided. Whether you go through the book and questions on your own, with a friend, or with a small group, it is my hope that *Pursuit of a Godly Life* edifies, inspires, and motivates you to live out your faith like it matters—like Jesus matters!

God bless,

Jody

P R E F A C E

There's Something about 2 Peter

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they render you neither useless nor unfruitful in the true knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For he who lacks these qualities is blind or short-sighted, having forgotten his purification from his former sins. Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you. Therefore, I will always be ready to remind you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. — 2 Peter 1:5-12 (NASB)

I hear all the time that Christians don't know what to do to "grow" their faith, and they are confused about the process. So many give up, leave the faith all together, or just live a very mundane Christian life with little to no fruit. All too many times, "Christians" are experiencing a "false conversion" because they are unsure what to do after they say a prayer or they say it without understanding the change and quench the Spirit.

In the passage above, Peter is writing to the church—to believers—and his point is that if you are claiming to be a Christian, if you are truly following Jesus Christ, there are certain things that should exist in your life. There are virtues that should be developing and strengthening at all times.

First, there should be the desire to change. The Holy Spirit will start changing you from the inside out. The apostle Paul writes, "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come (2 Corinthians 5:17 NASB). Second, that desire should lead you to Scripture! I love what Paul told the Philippians, that they should "work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13 NASB).

What Paul was saying here is that because of our salvation, we should work to obey God and His commands, with fear (obedience) and trembling (reverence). Because we do this, we want to know what God wants in and for us. The only way to find that out is through Scripture.

If you are not reading your Bible, you cannot understand what God's Word is telling you. Every day you should be waking up and reading your Bible! That is the only possible way you're going to continue to grow in the graces of the true knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, Dan Ivy says we should be making "a concerted effort."^[1] We should be applying something to our Christian walk, not just sitting and trying to soak it all in.

The more that I read 2 Peter 1:5–12, and the more I'm convinced God's going to convict me, the more that I should be walking away from the sins that are in my life and running toward God. That's what repentance is. Repentance is not waking up every day and saying, "God forgive me of the sin that I committed yesterday," but then doing the same thing the next day, and doing the same thing the day after that. Rather, repentance is the sanctification process. We're getting better today. I'm better today in God's eyes than I was yesterday. It's a process; it doesn't automatically happen. but you've got to start with the Word of God. That's the diligence, or that's the effort that needs to be applied into your walk.

Let's stop being lukewarm. In Revelation 3:16 the Lord says that "because you're lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth" (NASB). We've got to stop playing church, and we've got to start loving Jesus.

So, 2 Peter gives us a great list of characteristics that Christians should possess and how to grow them. This book will walk through each of these virtues and show how, as a Christian, they should be progressively growing in you.

This book will show you what it means to pursue a godly life.

CHAPTER ONE

Diligence

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love. — 2 Peter 1:5–7 (NASB, emphasis added)

Every year around December 28 I began to think of my New Year’s resolution. Mine usually involves my weight or getting in shape, so I head to the local sporting goods store, where I buy the latest fitness equipment.

I start with new shoes. Everyone knows that if you are going to be a runner, you need to take care of your feet and get good shoes. Then I get the new jogging suit—a jogging suit that will keep me warm in the winter and cool in the summer. I also don’t want one so tight I look like the mannequin that was wearing it in the store.

Then I wait till January 1. That day I will be able to look back at in one year and remember the first step I took to getting back in shape. Then it arrives, I get my gear on, and I head out the door. I’m so excited I run two miles. Wow, what an accomplishment! This is going to be the best year ever for my health.

Then the next morning comes. I can’t feel my legs. My hamstrings “twang” when I walk because they are so tight. My toes feel like balloons and my pride, well, let’s just say there is none since I just had my wife put on my socks because I can’t bend over.

So this is where my journey ends. It takes me a couple of days to recover and then my desire goes away. My shoes go in to the closet and my jogging clothes in the drawer. By now I am hoping that somehow someone comes out with a pill with no side effects that will make me look like that picture I have in my mind. So I wait.

Can you relate? If so you know where I’m going with this. How many times have you decided you are going to read your Bible? Every day? We start fast and furious. We get the new Bible, new highlighters and a notebook. We sit down and start at Genesis and by the time we hit Numbers and Deuteronomy we are spent, confused, and just plain tired. Then, the next thing you know, it’s been months since we last picked up a Bible. Why does this happen so often? Well, Peter tells us in the first verse of this set of Scriptures. It’s lack of diligence.

The definition of diligence is a constant and earnest effort to accomplish what is undertaken¹. It is constant persistence. God commands us to be diligent, to both learn what we should do and then diligently do it!

The same reason I don't ever become a picture of perfect health, is the same reason Christians are lukewarm (Revelation 3:16) and that's because of a lack of a constant and earnest effort to do so.

In our “microwave” culture, we want everything now! We can't wait more than a few hours to get anything—thanks to things like texting and Amazon Prime—and God forbid we ever have to exert any effort to get it. But with our faith, that is what has to happen. Peter says, “apply *all* diligence.” In other words, we need to put forth effort in our faith. But how?

I believe that Christians can apply diligence to their faith in three ways: Drawing on the Bible, prayer, and practicing repentance.

Drawing on the Bible

How sweet are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth! — Psalm 119:103 (NKJV)

The current biblical illiteracy rate among professing Christians is astronomical. Researchers George Gallup and Jim Castelli write, “Americans revere the Bible—but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates.”^[2] This doesn't mean that Americans can't read their Bible; it means they *don't* read their Bibles.

A study done by the Barna Group^[3] found these alarming stats:

- Fewer than half of all adults can name the four Gospels.
- Many professing Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples.
- Sixty percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments.
- Eighty-two percent of Americans believe “God helps those who help themselves” is a Bible verse.
- Twelve percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife.
- A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over fifty percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife.
- A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that Billy Graham preached the Sermon on the Mount.

Really? I wonder if these statistics describe you? If so, you may be biblically illiterate. As I stated earlier, it doesn't mean you can't read; it just means you don't.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not talking about being a theologian, I am just talking about being a person who is actively reading, searching and trying their best to understand Scripture and its meaning in your life.

¹ Dictionary.com

A biblically illiterate society affects people and their surroundings. It affects us personally. When you and I don't take part in a daily reading of the Word, we start to lose sight of what God gave us to guide us through this dark and cruel world. The Bible should be our first and most often source of encouragement, education, and a spiritual map for our lives. There is a delight that overcomes us when we spend time in the Word; it keeps us from getting sucked into the darkness of this world.

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and in His law he meditates day and night.
— *Psalm 1:1-2 (NASB)*

Spiritual Food

When discipling others, I tell people not to eat physically until they eat “spiritually.” What does this mean? There is much imagery in the Bible that relates the Word of God to food that satisfies and drink that ends thirst. The psalmist writes that God “satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

The prophet Jeremiah wrote, “When your words came, I ate them; they were my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, LORD God Almighty” (Jeremiah 15:16 NIV). Now, Jeremiah did not literally eat a parchment scroll! What does this mean, then?

Jeremiah wasn't saying he had taken a fork and a knife to the Word of God. Jeremiah was making a profound statement: The Word of God had *become a part of him*.

The human physical body needs food to survive. Eating makes digestion and thus assimilation of what was eaten possible. When the body operates normally, the result of eating is energy, health and strength, and thus a joy-filled life! But notice: Eating comes first. Food must be ground or crushed in a person's mouth in order to get the full taste out of it! It must mingle with saliva, and be chewed and chewed until the least possible amount is left to swallow. This food, ultimately, becomes a part of a person! James M. Gray writes,

The man who does this has learned one of the great secrets of his physical being. He has learned how to keep well, and how to eat almost anything he likes without ill results. Keeping food in the mouth is the key to it all.^[4]

Something like this is true in the spiritual realm. Usefulness and joy in a person's spiritual life depends on their spiritual health and strength. But these character traits, in turn, depend on a person's spiritual nourishment—its kind, its quantity, and its condition. The only true food for people's souls is the Word of God. Peter writes, “Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby...” (1 Peter 2:2 KJV); the more Scripture you ingest, the more it becomes a part of who you are. It becomes a part of your innermost being.

Perhaps Job describes what eating God's Word really means:

I have not departed from the commands of his lips; I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread. — Job 23:12 (NIV)

The Word of God is likened to milk (1 Peter 2:2), to honey (Psalm 19:10, 119:103) and to strong food or meat (Hebrew 5:12, 14). Faith—our spiritual life—is sustained by only through nourishment from the Word of God.

Varieties of Bible Intake

Proper diet from the Word can come in many forms:
Hearing the Word.

And they could not find anything that they might do, for all the people were hanging on to every word He said. — Luke 19:48 (NASB)

Reading the Word. “It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes...” (Deuteronomy 17:19 NASB). Now, some of you may not be early birds, but whatever a good time is, just schedule a time for you to read the Bible. Make sure you read you Bible every day! Start small. Read a chapter. Re-read that chapter and try to understand what God is telling you. Then move on when you feel comfortable.

Studying the Word. “Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so” (Acts 17:11). Paul commended the Bereans because they did not simply take what Paul said as truth, but went back to the Scriptures—the Old Testament—to see if it aligned up with what Paul was saying.

Memorizing the Word. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6–7 NASB). Memorizing the Word of God is a vital step to the Word becoming a part of who you are. This is the beginning; the Word then drop down in to your heart and begin to transform you.

Meditating on the Word. “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things” (Philippians 4:8 NASB). Once you’ve memorized some Scripture, next meditate on it—think about it, contemplate it, and “marinate” on it. Biblical meditation has been likened to a cow chewing its cud! When a cow chews its cud, its mouth secretes saliva. This saliva contains a natural antacid that helps the cow to digest food better and to eat more feed, which helps her produce more milk. Cows spend upwards of eight hours a day chewing their cud!

This is where the Latin word *rūmināre* comes from, which means “to chew food over and over again.” I’m sure you recognize the English word ‘ruminate,’ in that word—meaning “to turn something over and over in one’s mind. This is biblical meditation. The famous Protestant reformer Martin Luther said rumination is “saying verses aloud to write them more deeply in us. We sing, whisper, mumble, or proclaim the Bible aloud to soak our souls in it, transforming our outlook and actions, in Christ.”^[5]

One thing to note: devotion and study are two different things. Devotion involves sitting down in the quiet of the day and reading the Scriptures, and looking at, listening to and meditating on what God wants you to know from your reading. Then there is Bible study. This is a pure in-depth study of the Scripture, with consideration taken of authorship, geology and the sociology of a certain book, chapter, or section of Scripture. It involves considering the cultural and historical context, which may change how you interpret a passage.

I suggest, as you are doing your devotion, that you keep a notebook nearby and write down things you want to research more in-depth. Don’t do it while doing your devotion. If you decide to go deep in the understanding of the Bible and its form and function, Rick Warren wrote a book to develop a great study method, called *Rick Warren’s Bible Study Methods: Twelve Ways You Can Unlock God’s Word*.^[6] I used this when I first started studying the Bible.

As you grow in the Word, the Holy Spirit will grow in you. This is an organic response that naturally happens as you start looking at and listening to God in His holy Word.

Prayer Life

...pray continually... — 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (NIV)

Another way to apply diligence to faith is by committing to strive for a consistent prayer life. Recall that diligence is “constant persistence.” Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18 that we are to “pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and request” (NIV). We are to be continually praying!

Prayer is not magic; it is not something that guarantees we will get what we want. God is not a genie, granting wishes day in and day out! Prayer is actually for our benefit—through Jesus, we have relationship with God the Father, and this relationship is primarily engaged through our quiet communication with Him—as we slow down to listen to His voice and consider His will over our lives.

C.S. Lewis wrote about this discipline of prayer saying, “The moment you wake up each morning all your wishes and hopes for the day rush at you like wild animals. And the first job each morning consists in shoving it all back; in listening to that other voice, taking that other point of view, letting that other, larger, stronger, quieter life come flowing in.”^[7] This is paramount for growth in faith.

Prayer Is Relationship

Prayer is a relationship between the Creator and His created beings. It means approaching God humbly and sincerely, confident that He will hear, and expectant that He will answer. This prayer relationship encompasses certain disciplines: confession, praise, adoration, supplication, and

intercession. Let's consider them, for a moment, and how discipline will contribute to your relationship with God.

Confession. Confession involves dealing honestly with sin. It means seeing our sin and agreeing with God that it is wrong. God promises that when people confess their sin to Him, “he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9 ESV). Confession prepares a person's heart to hear from God. During prayer things often come to mind have grieved the heart of God; it is important to deal with those things, seek His forgiveness and trust God will remove that sin “as far as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12 ESV).

Praise. The book of Psalms is filled with praises to God. Psalm 18:3 says God is “worthy of praise” (NIV) and Psalm 21:13 the psalmist says, “Be exalted in your strength LORD; we will sing and praise your might” (NIV).

Adoration. Praise means to worship and acknowledge God for who He is—His character, his faithfulness and His sovereignty over all things. In prayer, spending time adoring God recognizes His sovereignty and acknowledges He is Lord over all. When a person truly loves God, and reveres Him, they grow in relationship with Him.

Supplication. The Lord's Prayer perhaps best of all describes what supplication is: It is a fervent, personal petition of God for your needs, presenting requests before Him knowing thought He provides all of our needs, it may not be what you want. This is one small part of prayer, and yet it often becomes the primary focus of prayer. Though we are to present our requests to God, we are to intercede for others as well. This is what Jesus modeled in John 17, right before He was to be crucified; yes, He presented his request before God that “this cup be removed,” but he also prayed for those who would later believe in Him.

Thanksgiving. God's Word often exhorts believers to be grateful for all of the good things God has done for them, and provided. He is merciful, loves His children deeply, nurtures and protects them. Thanksgiving naturally shifts one's heart from bitterness, regret or anger, to joy and rest. Disciplining yourself toward having a grateful heart will organically result in an inward awareness that God's presence is with you always.

In all of these areas, the believer's attitude is paramount. God's Word says we must not approach God with a haughty spirit, but in humility: “If my people, who are called by my name, will *humble* themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, *then I will hear from heaven...*” (2 Chronicles 7:14 NIV, emphasis added). One must come before the other; humility opens the ears of God.

Diligent Prayer

While very ill, John Knox, the founder of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, called to his wife and said, “Read me that Scripture where I first cast my anchor.” After he listened to the powerful prayer of Jesus recorded in John 17, he seemed to forget his weakness. He began to pray, interceding earnestly for his fellowmen. He prayed for the ungodly who had thus far rejected the gospel. He pleaded in behalf of people who had been recently converted. And he requested protection for the Lord's servants, many of whom were facing persecution. As Knox prayed, his spirit went Home to be

with the Lord. The man of whom Queen Mary had said, “I fear his prayers more than I do the armies of my enemies,” ministered through prayer until the moment of his death.^[8]

That is *diligent* prayer.

Practicing Repentance

Finally, applying diligence to faith might best be exhibited through the act of repentance. The word in the New Testament usually translated “repent” is the Greek word *metanoeo*, meaning, “to change your mind, to reconsider or to think differently.”

All of the Old Testament prophets spoke about this concept of repentance, using a Hebrew word *tshuv*, meaning “to return, or to turn around.” This Hebrew concept is where the idea of repentance is derived. In the New Testament, John the Baptist arrives on the scene to prepare for the Messiah’s advent, calling people to “Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 3:2 NIV). And finally, Jesus Himself called people to repentance, echoing John: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (Matthew 4:17 NIV).

Though “repent” does mean to change your mind toward a certain sin in your life, the meaning of repentance goes much deeper than simply stopping a particular sin. Ultimately, true repentance is when someone who is not saved changes his mind about how to bridge the relationship back to God—and accepts His way of salvation.

Practicing repentance means continually examining your conscience to identify and name specific sin as God reveals it to you, so that you can turn away from those things that may be destructive. Take the blame for your sinful condition before God; place blame on no one else for your offenses. It also involves sorrow for sin, as “godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation” (2 Corinthians 7:10 KJV). Ultimately, repentance leads to confessing sin. The sinner hides nothing, owns his sins and pours His heart out to his God.

Repentance Is Perpetual

Repentance happens more than once—in fact, it happens over a lifetime! Believers will repent until the moment God takes them home to heaven. It is a lasting mindset—a constant hatred of that which is evil. This is why Paul in Philippians 2 says to “work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12b–13 NASB). It is in this place of repentance that God’s children find healing from sin.

Stand Firm!

*I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. — **Philippians 3:14***
(ESV)

Peter was aware of how believers would need to press on in their relationship with God in order to grow. Without diligence, without putting forth constant and earnest effort in faith, growth will be

stunted. However, persisting in reading and studying your Bible, prayer and repentance will keep your feet from slipping; you will find yourself standing on a firm foundation.