

Question 38: What is true repentance?

Short answer

True repentance is a change of mind and direction: recognizing sin, being sorry for it, asking God for forgiveness, and choosing to return to Him, leaving what is wrong behind.

Explanation

Repentance is not only feeling guilty or being sad because “I got caught.” The Bible speaks of a repentance that comes from the heart and leads to real change.

True repentance includes four steps:

1. Recognize the sin

Don’t make excuses and don’t blame others. Tell the truth: “I was wrong.”

2. Feel sorrow for having hurt God and others

Not only “I’m sorry for the consequences,” but “I’m sorry because it is wrong and because I hurt others.”

3. Ask forgiveness and rely on God’s mercy

Repentance is not despair: it is returning to God knowing that He forgives.

4. Change direction

Repentance bears fruit: you try to stop, to make things right, to do good. You don’t become perfect right away, but you change course.

Repentance and faith go together: you turn away from sin and you draw near to Jesus. It’s not only “stopping doing,” it’s also “returning to God.”

Reference verses

- **Acts 3:19** — “Repent therefore, and turn back...”
- **2 Corinthians 7:10** — “Godly grief produces repentance...”
- **1 John 1:9** — “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us...”

In simple words

To repent means to say, “I was wrong,” and return to God. It is not only feeling sad: it is asking forgiveness and trying to change direction. It is leaving what is wrong and choosing to follow Jesus.