

Published based on [Doing Life Differently](#)

Doing Life Differently

If you are in the wrong place in your life, there is only one way to get back to the right place and that is through repentance.

Two years ago, my husband and I found ourselves in the wrong place and have since experienced many life changes brought about through repentance. One of the things we have committed to in order to continue these changes is annually setting aside a week for self-evaluation and input from a Christian counselor. Last week, we spent four days in Denver, Colorado, with Michael Cusick, founder and president of [Restoring the Soul Ministries](#), a ministry dedicated to providing life-changing soul care for Christian leaders.

While I was spending some moments evaluating my relationship with God, others, and my own heart, Michael shared his definition of repentance with me – doing life differently. Although the definition contained the essence of other ways that I had defined repentance throughout the years, it struck a chord of new understanding inside my heart. For me, the definition provided a way for me to evaluate my life in relation to repentance. At that moment and for the days following, I have been looking at my life and asking myself, “Where are the ways that I can say I am doing my life differently? Where is there evidence that I have changed?”

Many times I have “repented”. I have asked for God’s forgiveness for my actions, attitudes, and words. But how many times have I continued in the same patterns? How often has there been no tangible evidence of change in my life?

The definition both comforted and challenged me. I was comforted because I truly am doing my life much differently than before. There are so many areas where truth has found its resting place in my heart and has sprouted change. Areas where I might never even remember saying the words, “Lord, forgive me,” but areas where obviously God’s Spirit has initiated and birthed change. I am different and I do life differently. I have repented.

Many of those areas were areas that I previously was unaware of, areas where I didn’t even realize that I was doing my life “wrong”. Perhaps I was just doing life in ways that were “normal” for my family of origin. In other ways, I lived with the familiar paths which had been created in my soul. But one of the beautiful things about a relationship with the living God is that He is always leading us in the paths of righteousness. He leads us to repentance. He speaks to us about our wrong ways of relating and incorrect thought patterns.

And I was challenged as well as comforted. I was able to identify areas in which there has been no true repentance in my heart because I have not changed.

As I meditated on these truths this morning, I thought of how Jesus encountered individual people. With the rich young ruler, Jesus felt love for him as the young man recited how he had kept the law. Jesus challenged him to do life differently. “Sell what you have and give it to the poor,” and the young man sadly went away from Jesus because he was unwilling to do his life differently.

When Jesus encountered the woman caught in adultery who had broken the law, he again felt love and challenged her to do her life differently saying, “From now on sin no more.”

When the religious leaders of the day came to John who was preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!”, John told them to bear fruit that was worthy of repentance. In other words, do life differently.

The work of repentance is birthed through God’s Spirit. According to Romans 2:4, his goodness leads us to repentance and that happens in many ways but however that happens, the repentance will look like change.

I suspect that I am not that different from the rest of you all, and for me, repentance often comes because of pain. Pain leads me to see that I am making wrong choices, living in wrong patterns. And God’s goodness comes in the pain and shows me the new ways He has chosen for me. Ways that will bring life to my soul. Ways that will

guard my path from wrong choices.

Jesus responds to my heart with love just as he responded to the rich young ruler and the woman caught in adultery and so many others. His love offers me the new ways to live. When I choose those ways and begin to live my life differently, I have repented.

Repentance doesn't mean perfection, but it does mean a change of direction. Our paths will still have some ups and downs as we travel in new directions, but our ongoing direction will be different.

It's a little like my GPS. When I set it on a certain destination, it tells me what road choices I need to make to get there. When along the path, I decide to take a different road, the GPS adjusts to my choices and gives me a new route to use. Sometimes that new route is much longer than the original choice but it will still get me there.

When we repent, we set our hearts on God's plan for our lives. Sometimes we take a wrong road, and God graciously gives us an alternate path. It may be more painful, take longer, and cost more, but we can still get there because God is committed to us. He began the good work inside us and He will complete that work (Philippians 1:6).

As for me, I have committed anew to some changes I know God is calling me to, some areas where I need to repent. I want to do my life differently in those areas because I know that repentance brings peace and blessing and wholeness. So I set my spiritual GPS. I align my spirit with the Spirit of God and set my course. I know those changes will cost me. They will cost me my comfort at times. They will cost me my pride at times, but ultimately they will produce the good fruit that comes from a heart set on God's path.

Hopefully in the days to come when I ask God's Spirit to come and examine my heart, there will be the fruits of repentance. I will be able to say, "I am doing my life differently."

You can also find this article published on [Doing Life Differently](#), and on the tag pages [devotionals for Christian women and men](#), [free devotional](#), [Jesus](#), [John](#), [Michael Cusick](#), [Philippians 1:6](#), [Repentance](#), [Restoring the Soul Ministries](#), [rich young rule](#), [Romans 2:4](#), [woman caught in adultery](#).