

# What is an Apology? *M Debono-De-Laurentis*

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When we apologise, we are saying sorry for having upset someone, but what does that really mean?

- ❖ I apologise
- ❖ I am sorry
- ❖ Please forgive me

These are the three most common phrases used and we usually say OK your forgiven or I accept your apology. This is as it should be - yet I pose the question: what is an apology really?

Let me ask another question: What is a promise?

We all know a promise to be an agreement. Whether it is an agreement to do something for someone, or to refrain from doing something. We all take our promises seriously, or at least we should.

If a promise is an agreement that is binding: e.g. To do or not to do something, then equally, so is an apology. An apology is a promise as much as it is a supplication to correct an error. When an apology is made, what is being said is: I will not do that again. An apology is as binding as a promise as they both result in an agreement. With an apology it is an agreement to not do something again on behalf of the perpetrator and an agreement on behalf of offended to forgive the trespass.

The next question is: when we apologise to our Messiah Yeshua (*Jesus*) and come into a relationship with Him – are we apologising because we feel guilty or are we apologising and promising to change.

Apologising because we feel guilty is good but a change must accompany that apology.

Many people apologise over and over again for the same trespass, whether against God or their neighbour or loved one. The apologies that have no changes involved are apologies of convenience; they are made for purely selfish reasons and not for true forgiveness.

EG:

The man who hits his wife once and apologises then never does it again is repentant and truly sorry for what he has done. His apology came with a promise to never do it again and he stuck to it.

However, had that man hit his wife and then apologised, yet continue to abuse her on other occasions, is not truly sorry, this is shown by the lack of change. What he is apologising for his is guilt from a selfish perspective. His apology and promises of change are purely to stop the abused partner from leaving. The abuser in this case does not want to be left on his own. Some apologies are used to control others rather than cause a change within ourselves.

When we come to a relationship with the Messiah, are we apologising and truly repenting (*Changing direction and keeping a promise to follow Him*) or are we trying to control a situation (*hedging our bets is term that comes to mind*) are we feeling that because we constantly apologise for our transgressions yet continue in them that all is well. Are we deciding that an apology is sufficient without walking in the promise that that apology makes. If the latter then the promise to change by the apology made is empty, void of any meaning. It is an apology made to make oneself feel better not the victim to whom the trespass was made.

Do not make apologies lightly; an apology is a sombre and serious undertaking. When you apologise you are promising to change, no one is perfect and mistakes can be made from time to time but that is not a licence to habitually fall back on a promise. Accidental trespasses are the reason God made promises to us that He will fulfil as He knows we cannot keep a promise perfectly whereas He can. We are expected though to walk in His righteousness and keep our word once given.

The picture here is not to be wary of your apologies but to walk in righteousness so the need to apologise constantly does not arise. ***Walk in the apology before you have to make it.***

The Scriptures talk much of forgiveness and promises and the results of both keeping and ignoring them.

Apologising and repentance work together, you cannot have one without the other and remain as an honest person with integrity – and walk according to the mandates of our Lord and God.

What is Biblical Repentance?

## Repentance

In Biblical Hebrew, the idea of repentance is represented by two verbs: שׁוּב *shuv* (to return) and נָחַם *nicham* (to feel sorrow).

In the New Testament, the word translated as 'repentance' is the Greek word μετάνοια (*metanoia*), "after/behind one's mind", which is a compound word of the preposition 'meta' (after, with), and the verb 'noeo' (to perceive, to think, the result of perceiving or observing). In this compound word the preposition combines the two meanings of time and change, which may be denoted by 'after' and 'different'; so that the whole compound means: 'to think differently after'. Metanoia is therefore primarily an after-thought, different from the former thought; a change of mind accompanied by regret and change of conduct, "change of mind and heart", or, "change of consciousness".<sup>i</sup>

An apology is followed by a decision that changes your behaviour. An apology is not just being sorry for an act perpetrated. It is understood that we are not all perfect and will make mistakes now and again as we are only human, and being prone to such emotions as anger, which if left unchecked can lead us into all sorts of problems; many of which we will need to apologise for afterward. That is why we are to watch what we say:

Job 6:24 Teach me, and I will hold my tongue: and cause me to understand wherein I have erred.

1Pe 3:10 For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Seeking the Lord to teach us to understand and refrain from speaking evil goes a long way toward keeping us from having to apologise. If we are constantly having to apologise we are not walking according to the mandates of our Messiah and Scripture. Hence, it would not be possible to walk in the joy and good days the Lord is promising. It is no wonder that we are told to forgive trespasses as we would like to be forgiven ours:

For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:  
(Matthew 6:14 KJV)

But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.  
(Matthew 6:15 KJV)

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.  
(Matthew 18:35 KJV)

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.  
(Mark 11:25 KJV)

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.  
(Mark 11:26 KJV)

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;  
(Colossians 2:13 KJV)

We can see that not only is apologising a sombre and serious issue to be considered but so is forgiveness. The two run hand in hand. When you forgive someone you are agreeing with them that they will make changes in their life to fulfil the promise they are making in apologising. This is why our Lord sees it as so important. Our repentance has many consequences which are weighed up by our integrity and honesty when making the promise of an apology.

Are you sorry? Or are you sorry and repentant?

Are you making a promise to work towards? Or are you feeling guilty and making yourself feel better by saying sorry? Are you using an apology as a form of manipulation of someone else's emotions to justify yourself? Are you saying sorry just to keep the peace?

To apologise and to be truly repentant is to break through all barriers of pride: exposing truth, honesty and integrity to the Lord, the transgressed and yourself. What a witness of a life changing event that is! - To die to your old self and be renewed to a new life, to walk in and reveal the Messiah and love of God in your life.

Remember:

To walk in repentance is to walk in the promise of change you have made after the apology. We are not to walk in a perpetual state of sorrow constantly looking for forgiveness. If one is constantly sorry then no change is happening.

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.  
(Acts 2:38 KJV)

You shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost on the condition that you repent. It is a gift but with a condition. You repent, you change your direction, you no longer live as you were in the world – lying, cheating, sex outside marriage, living with a partner out of wedlock etc... To continue to do these things after the apology is not repentance, it is a sorrow and guilt offering. God knows whether repentance is genuine or a guilt offering when it is made. Are you truly repentant or are you sorry you keep doing the same things over and over again? Are you taking responsibility for your actions and changing them or always apologising?

To change one's life takes effort, sometimes hardship, discipline, honesty and a desire to serve the God you worship. He doesn't make all bad things go away just because you made an apology: the question is – can you make those changes you have promised through your apology, even when the going gets tough? Or, do you just give up and go back to being sorry?

**Have you made any apologies lately?**

To read more on the Promises of God: [Download this free book](#). It lists all of the Promises in Scripture.

If link does not work type in browser:

<http://www.maxddl.org/PRECIOUS%20BIBLE%20PROMISES.pdf>

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<sup>i</sup> [Wikipedia](#)