

# Repentance

John MacArthur states, "Repentance as Jesus characterized it...involves recognition of ones utter sinfulness and a turning from self and sin to God (I Thessalonians 1:9).... It is much more than a mere change of mind—it involves a complete change of heart, attitude, interest, and direction.... True faith is never seen as passive—it is always obedient" (MacArthur, p.32) (c.f. John 3:36; Romans 1:5; 16:26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).

**Change of mind + Change of purpose = Turning from sin (obedience)**

—————▶ **Living for God instead of self.**

"Repentance is not merely being ashamed or sorry over sin, although genuine repentance always involves an element of remorse. It is a redirection of the human will, a purposeful decision to forsake all unrighteousness and pursue righteousness instead" (MacArthur, p.163)

I know there have been many times in my own life when I have been entangled in sin and have moved away from owning up to my sin and began to blame others to protect myself. Darkness gets very uncomfortable in the light.

## **A Page from My Past** **Reflections on Repentance and Forgiveness**

I saw something lived out in my father's life I would like to share. When I was 10 years old and my father was around 40 years of age, he had an affair with a married woman, which resulted in the divorce of my parents and the divorce of the other woman from her husband. Two families, four adults and 5 children were thrown in turmoil. My father married the other women about a year later.

I listened for many years after as my father blamed my mother for how miserable his life had become. No one ever seemed to speak of the truth and there seemed to be no evidence of repentance as described in the quotes above.

I even heard things like God is a God of forgiveness. But I wondered if repentance had anything to do with walking in fellowship with God. I waited and waited to hear my father confess that what had occurred was sin. All I heard was justification, blaming, and excuses.

A number of years ago I was so beat up with shame and anger that the Lord led me to forgive my Father for the pain he caused in my life. I had hardened my heart toward forgiveness for years -- since I was waiting for my father to admit his sin and perhaps say that he was sorry.

Then the Lord showed me that my repentance was not dependent on my father's repentance. I was instructed to release him from the debt I thought he owed me—not based on whether he deserved it, but based on the Lord's forgiveness in my life.

When I shared with my father what I thought was great news regarding forgiveness, I was met with these words: "I have never done anything to hurt you." It was tempting to pick the "debt" back up and resume the anger. However, the Lord reminded me what forgiveness is based on. I'm not saying the pain was gone (or is even gone now), but the need to repay pain for pain had ceased.

My father passed away a few years ago at the age of 82. As far as I know he carried to the grave hardness toward repentance in the aforementioned area of his life.

I realize that if I am not careful the sins of my father could come upon me. I'm not talking about the specific sin of adultery or damaging the lives of those God has entrusted me with--what I am talking about is hardening my heart toward the Lords commands, promises, and teaching. I'm talking about justifying my sinful actions, blaming others, or making excesses.

If I am not careful, watching my step, I could try to meet my needs apart from God. If I am not careful and sober-minded I could begin to act like God has not provided for all of my needs on the path of righteousness. Let God's will be done!

Thanks for listening! LR

## **What's Your Next Step?**

### Bibliography

MacArthur Jr., John F. (1988). The gospel according to Jesus: What does Jesus mean when he says, "Follow me"? Grand Rapids: Zondervan.