

Repentance.

Repent (verb intransitive) means:

1 : to turn from sin and dedicate oneself to the amendment of one's life

2 a) : to feel regret or contrition; b) : to change one's mind

repent (verb transitive) means:

1 : to cause to feel regret or contrition

2 : to feel sorrow, regret, or contrition for

In many denominational churches today "conviction" is mistaken for "repentance." It is one thing to feel conviction for our sins, but quite another to do an about face and turn from those sins. I remember feeling conviction when the preacher really got to shucking down the corn when I was growing up but I didn't repent. I was told to come up front and accept Christ as my personal saviour and that's what I did. I didn't know that in order for Christ to accept me, I had to first REPENT. I cannot honestly say that I ever recall hearing the words "repentance" or "repent" coming from the pulpit of the little church where I grew up. May God forgive me if I am wrong, but I just cannot remember that being emphasized at all. Was I sincere? Yes. Had I truly repented? NO! As a matter of fact, I have had people tell me that we are all sinners and we are all going to commit sins every day. Duh! Why did Jesus come in the first place? Matthew 1:21 reads, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for He shall save his people FROM THEIR SINS."...(NOT IN THEIR SINS). Folks, this is why there are so many miserable "so called" Christians out there. They got in the game (so to speak) and hit the ball, but they did not touch first base. It just will not work out. It never has and it never will. It has GOT to be God's way or else! We're going to hit this sin issue hot and heavy in UNDENIABLE BELIEF # 6:

Sanctification: What is sanctification? For now we will stick with the repentance stage, but I hope you are getting a handle on what I am trying to share with you.

Moses was told to put off his shoes at the burning bush because the ground he was standing on was Holy Ground. God is Holy, and while He loves sinners He HATES sin! Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (except, of course, He who knew no sin - Jesus). Since we've all sinned, it is imperative that we repent of those sins and do an about face or a 180 as some people put it. To continue practicing the same sins as before over and over and over indicates a very serious problem. John the Baptist refused to baptize a group of people one time. He told them to bring forth fruits meet for repentance first, in other words don't get baptized just because you think it is the thing to do since everyone else is doing it or has done it. First, repent and make a commitment on your part to change everything that you have control over and I will assure you that God will take care of the rest. I can say that unequivocally from first hand experience! One should NEVER get baptized until AFTER they've repented.

Repentance is symbolic of the death of Jesus. When one truly repents they die out to sin, self and the world. Remember the Old Testament was full of "types" and "shadows" of things that were coming (and are now here). What was the first thing the priest approached when he began the ceremony of Atonement? The brazen altar. The place of sacrifice and death. That, my friend, is where you and I die through genuine repentance.

The message of John the Baptist was repentance - Matthew 3:2&11

Jesus preached repentance - Mark 1:15 & Mark 2:17

Jesus told his disciples to preach repentance starting at Jerusalem - Luke 24:47

Peter preached repentance - Acts 2:38

God commands all men everywhere to repent Acts 17:30

God warns a Church to repent - Revelation 2:5

Godly sorrow worketh repentance - 2 Corinthians 7:10

God doesn't want anyone to perish, but that all would repent - 2 Peter 3:9

Repentance is a fundamental and thorough change in the heart of a person, about sin and towards God. Although, faith and repentance are inseparable since without some measure of faith one would hardly repent. Elements of godly sorrow towards God due to sin (2 Corinthians 7:9-10; Matthew 5:3-4 and Psalms Chapter 51) should produce an inward repugnance to sin which should result in the actual forsaking of it (Matt 3:8; Acts 26:20; Hebrews 6:1), and an humble self surrender to the will and service to God (Acts 9:6). Repentance in its lowest and most imperfect form may just arise from fear of the consequences of the penalty of sin, which is remorse only. The next stage is recognizing the baseness of sin itself, but here again it is merely a burden from which one wishes to be free from with vain attempts (until he recognizes and receives the power of the Holy Ghost that sets the captives free). The most complete and most powerful form of true repentance is experienced by those who are motivated by godly sorrow to turn from their sinful ways and have come to know the Lord through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Repentance is actually a gift from God (Acts 5:31; Acts 11:18; and Romans 2:4). God has given us His Word with its revelations of sin and salvation as well as the Holy Ghost to impress Truth and awaken our consciences to lead us to repentance. But as with faith, so it is with repentance, it is left up to us to make the decision for ourselves. We indeed choose the road we wish to travel.

There is a story about a traveling salesman who was lost out in the country. He stopped by a farm house and asked the old gentleman, who was sitting in his rocking chair on the front porch, "Will this road take me back into town?" The old man just sort of hesitated for a moment and said, "Son, that road will take you anywhere you want to go." How true this statement is. We can choose the wide road of popularity, acceptance, rituals, traditions and doctrines of man which will lead to destruction because these can never satisfy the hunger and emptiness God has placed down deep in our soul (and neither will they meet God's requirements), or we can choose the straight and narrow path of repentance which will lead us to life "more abundantly" and that heavenly city on high. Either way, it is the road we are own right this very moment that will take us wherever it is we want to go. If we plan to make Heaven our home, we had sure better know something about "genuine" repentance.

Bobby G. Richardson.