

# *Repentance or Reformation*

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Acts 20:21 Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

- I. Any form of governing ourselves is directed TOWARD GOD or TOWARD OTHERS.
  - A. The greatest snare of the devil is to get us to do good for the wrong reason.
  - B. Those with the most noble character generally have the hardest time really finding and knowing God.
    - 1. Our goal for our children is that they have good character – so they can succeed in the world and find favor with others.
    - 2. Most of our character training is focused TOWARD OTHERS and NOT God.
    - 3. Most of what we consider good character is focused on the way it impresses others.
  - C. Most every effort that is put forth by people to serve God is really aimed at impressing other people to believe that we are of God.
    - 1. It's design is to prove to others that we have God's approval and blessing.
  - D. But the fact is, what God really thinks of us is all that matters.

Colossians 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

Ephesians 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

- 1. When our true motive is to gain the favor of others it is an affront to God. (He is a jealous God!)

- II. Repentance is one of the things that people do, but not toward God.
  - A. People repent all the time without turning to God – so it is not TOWARD God.
  - B. People repent of their sins because they are sick of them and want to improve their own lives.
  - C. People repent of their sins in order to obtain forgiveness and restore favor of another person or persons.
  - D. Repentance from sin is not the price of salvation – you must repent TOWARD God.
  - E. Repentance toward God is when we recognize the fact that we have offended Him and that it is entirely our fault.
- III. Sin brings shame and we do not want to face the shame.
  - A. People repent of their sins because they know that it is wrong because they are stamped with God's image.
  - B. At all costs we will avoid facing the shame of our sin.

- C. There are people who seem to flaunt their sin, but that is only a smokescreen to convince others that they aren't ashamed (and even themselves)
- D. God says we must confess it and forsake it if we will find mercy, but we can't confess it without facing the shame.
- E. So, many people forsake their sin by turning from it, but they never confess it because of the shame they would face before others – this is not repenting toward God.
- F. Our pride and our selfishness make us unwilling to obey God completely in this matter.
- G. This shows how that people care more about what others think of them than what God thinks of them.
  - 1. For this reason, "...many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

#### IV. Sin entraps.

- A. It is a snare that is not seen until you are entangled in it.
- B. What you thought would be a short stroll of indulgence has turned into a prison and you find that there is no escape.
  - 1. You may stop practicing the sin, but the fact that you have done it has poisoned your soul and your conscience with guilt that you can't shake.
- C. You seek for a cure and a way to fix what you have done, but there is none – except to confess it and seek mercy and forgiveness. ("come clean")
- D. To do that would bring shame and disgrace to you and what other people think of you, so you resist it with everything in you.
- E. So you decide to keep it a secret but resolve to never do it again and from this point forward you are going to do what is pleasing to God.
- F. The guilt doesn't go away, though, and there is a constant fear of being discovered.
- G. The day comes when you are confronted with the fact that someone else knows – but instead of confessing you simply deny it.
  - 1. Lying becomes second nature to you when you are living in such a state.
- H. When confronted with evidence that you can't deny you immediately start to blame someone or something else for what you did.
  - 1. ANYTHING to keep from humbly confessing and admitting that you are the one to blame and it wouldn't have happened if you hadn't chose to do it.

2 Samuel 12:7 And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

2 Samuel 12:8 And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

2 Samuel 12:9 Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

2. Pronounced judgment on David and his house and then ...

2 Samuel 12:12 For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

2 Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

3. THAT is repentance toward God.
- I. First, David was discovered and he knew that his dirty secret was known.
- J. Then he was reminded of how God had treated him and favored him and that David had repaid God's favor and blessing with total disregard and selfishness.

"He that covereth his sin shall not prosper ..."

- K. David didn't try to cover it any longer.
  1. His sin was an open book now and the shame was awful, but the focus of Nathan's message was what David's sin had cost God:

2 Samuel 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

- V. To repent toward God you must face the reality, the responsibility, and the consequences of your sin.
  - A. You must confess it.
    1. Not only to God, but also to the person you have sinned against, if at all possible.
    2. Those not affected by your sin need not know about it, but those whose lives have been affected MUST know.
  - B. You must face them and hope for forgiveness and mercy or be willing to accept rejection and shame willingly.
  - C. You must forsake your sin and give your heart back to God.

Deuteronomy 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.