

#4 CONVICTION OF SIN TOWARDS HEAVEN Many readily see their sin against their fellow man but do not see that a holy and just God has been offended and His name blasphemed (Romans 2:24). The prodigal admits that his greatest offense is toward heaven: "...I have sinned against heaven..." David illustrates this in Psalm 51 when he prays in repentance for his sin with Bathsheba: "Against THEE, THEE ONLY, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight..." (Psalm 51:4). It is not until we realize that it was our sin that nailed Jesus to the cross that there will be any genuine repentance of our sin. It was Jesus love for us that caused Him to die on the cross. Pilate didn't kill Jesus, nor did the Roman soldiers or the Jews. Jesus clearly said that no man could take his life from him (John 10:18). Men only die because they are sinners (Romans 6:23). Jesus was the sinless lamb of God (2 Cor. 5:21) who was incapable of being put to death. On the cross he willingly bore in His own body the sins of the whole world. It is understanding this truth that leads a man to genuine repentance. "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should LIVE UNTO RIGHTEOUSNESS; by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter 2:24).

5 CONVICTION OF SIN THAT LEADS TO HOLINESS When the prodigal "came to himself" (Luke 15:17), he recognized what his sin had done to him. The wages of sin is death and destruction (Romans 6:23; Proverbs 14:12). Sin will always take you further than you intended to go, it will always keep you longer than you intended to stay, and it will always make you pay more than you intended to pay. One of Satan's most clever deceits is to hide from the sinner the FINAL PRICE TAG OF SIN! Once a sinner recognizes sin for what it is, he flees from it. The prodigal didn't return back to his riotous living, he arose and went back to his father (Luke 15:16-18). Every sinner who has truly repented will forsake his life of sin. The Bible teaches "let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him (Isaiah 55:7).

6 CONVICTION OF SIN WITH RESTITUTION It is important to set matters right with both God and our fellow man. In Luke 19:8 we read of a tax collector who took more from the people than he had a right to do. He had become very rich. When Zacchaeus became a saved man he said: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold". The goal of Paul's life as a Christian was to have a conscience void of offense both towards God and towards man (Acts 24:16).

CONCLUSION

"Another proof of the conquest of a soul for Christ will be found in a REAL CHANGE OF LIFE. If the man does not live differently from what he did before, both at home and abroad, his repentance needs to be repented of, and his conversion is a fiction. Not only action and language, but spirit and temper must be changed... Abiding under the power of any known sin is a mark of our being the servants of sin, for "his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Idle are the boasts of a man who harbors within himself the love of any transgression. He may feel what he likes, and believe what he likes, he is still in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity while a single sin rules his heart and life. TRUE REGENERATION implants a hatred of all evil; and where one sin is delighted in, the evidence is fatal to a sound hope..." Charles H. Spurgeon. "I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

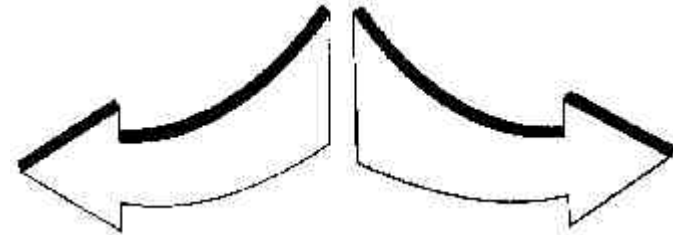
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BIBLICAL ANSWERS TO CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

REPENTANCE



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REPENTANCE

Jesus said, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to REPENTANCE" (Matt. 9:13). Paul declared, "God ... now commandeth all men everywhere to REPENT" (Acts 17:30). John's message to prepare the way of the Messiah was "...REPENT; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). Jesus in beginning his public ministry proclaimed the identical message, "...REPENT; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). REPENTANCE is an essential part of the saving gospel. Peter preached, "REPENT, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins..." (Acts 2:38). The Greek word for REPENTANCE means literally a change of mind. Those who heard Peter's message on the day of Pentecost were challenged to change their mind about their sin and the Savior -- Jesus Christ. Formerly, they rejected Jesus Christ refusing to believe His claim of deity or obey his teachings. In their prideful sinful rebellion, they had Him crucified. But Peter proclaims, "...God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). When they understood they would one day stand before the very Christ they crucified to be judged for their sins they were "pricked" (convicted) in their hearts. It was at this point that Peter preached REPENTANCE. Those who responded with faith in Jesus Christ turned from their sin and "continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine". Their beliefs, values and lifestyle were changed. Genuine repentant believers will manifest the new life of Christ within them by an obedient life of holiness. The Thessalonians "...turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God" (1 Thess. 1:9). When one understands that it was his sin that crucified the Son of God, it is inconceivable that having trusted Christ's shed blood for forgiveness of sins (Rom. 3:25), he would continue to live in sin. Paul declares in Romans 6:1,2 "...Shall we sin that grace may abound? God forbid..."-

TRUTH OUT OF BALANCE LEADS TO HERESY!

This is vitally important in understanding the doctrine of repentance. The message of the gospel of Jesus Christ that brings salvation has two sides to it. Those who emphasize the "faith" side of the gospel message ONLY, end up with an "easy believism", "cheap grace", gospel. Those who emphasize the "works" side of the gospel message ONLY are in danger of a "lordship salvation", "works salvation" or "legalism" gospel. In our day, it seems that the faith side has been exalted to the detriment of the works side, so that the result is myriads of "professing Christians" with little or no change in their lives. The purpose of this booklet is to clearly demonstrate that genuine faith in Jesus Christ will result in a lifestyle of obedience to our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. As Charles Spurgeon has said: "Although we are sure that men are not saved for the sake of their works, yet we are equally sure that no man will be saved without them."

THE FAITH AND WORKS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE

Many passages in God's Word demonstrate the balance between faith and works. For example, in Ephesians 2:8,9 Paul clearly writes that believers are not saved by works but by grace through faith. But, he quickly follows with verse 10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus UNTO GOOD WORKS...". We are not saved by works, but we are saved for works. The Savior's name was called Jesus because he saves His people FROM THEIR SINS, not in their sins (Matt. 1:2 1). Titus 3:5 says it is not works of righteousness which we have done that saves us, but God's mercy. But listen to 3:8: 11 ... they who have believed in God might be careful to MAINTAIN GOOD WORKS". The same grace that brings salvation teaches believers to deny "ungodliness and worldly lusts ... 11 and to "...live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present age" (Titus 2:11-13). 1st John 5:13 informs believers of the certainty of their salvation if they have believed in Jesus Christ. But look at 2:3 "...by this we do know that we know him, IF WE KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS." An obedient life of holiness can not be

separated from genuine saving faith. John Macarthur writes: "By separating faith from faithfulness, it leaves the impression that intellectual assent is as valid as wholehearted obedience to the truth". This is why Scripture precisely defines faith as coming from the heart not the head: "...ye have obeyed FROM THE HEART that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17). And again in Romans 10:9 "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and BELIEVE IN THINE HEART that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. Faith from the heart produces obedience in the life!

AN ATTITUDE TOWARDS REPENTANCE

"For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, ye, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things you have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter" (2 Cor. 7:1 1). Genuine believers will exercise great carefulness about their souls, to avoid sin and to please God. They call sin by its right name -- SIN! They confess and forsake their sin (Prov. 28:13) rather than seeking to cover and justify their evil deeds. They have indignation at the sin and at themselves for committing the sin (Psalm 51:1-19). Ezekiel describes a repentant sinner in the following way: "And there shall ye remember your ways, and all your doings, wherein ye have been defiled; and ye shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for all your evils that ye have committed" (Ezekiel 20:43). Because a repentant sinner fears God he doesn't cling to sin but departs from it (Rom. 3:18; Prov. 16:6).

GENUINE ELEMENTS OF REPENTANCE

#1 CONVICTION OF SIN WITH HOPE Many people have gone through an emotional experience of shedding tears because of the guilt of their sin only to return right back to their life of disobedience (2 Peter 2:19-22). Godly sorrow for sin will always lead to repentance! "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Cor. 7:10). God's conviction of sin always leads to HOPE! Satan's condemnation of sin leads to DESPAIR and often to the point of suicide. When the prodigal son "came to himself" out of genuine conviction of his sin he returned to his father to find his father's loving arms ready to receive him back (Luke 15:17,20).

2 CONVICTION OF SIN WITHOUT COVER-UP When the prodigal returned to his father, he took personal responsibility for his sin. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I HAVE SINNED against heaven ... 11 (Luke 15:18). He didn't try to blame his sin on society, lack of education, lack of proper upbringing, his friend's influence etc. He admitted that his sin was because of his choice, not because he was conditioned by his environment (1 John 1:6-10).

3 CONVICTION OF SIN WITH HUMILITY The prodigal in going back to his father admitted that he was no longer worthy to be called a son (Luke 15:2 1). A genuinely repentant sinner is not just sorry he got caught, he is broken hearted and grieved at his rebellion towards God and he is keenly aware that he is deserving of God's wrath and judgment (Psalm 51:17). He is willing to turn from being the boss of his own life and yields himself to a life of obedience to the master. Every criminal in prison is sorry he got caught, but that doesn't mean when he is released he will live a different life. He must be convinced that his way of life is wrong and needs to be forsaken. The prodigal recognized what he justly deserved from his father and went back to his father's house willing to be recognized as a servant rather than a son. Because he had such an attitude the father understood he had truly repented and was worthy of his blessing (15:19). God tells us in Proverbs 28:13 "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them SHALL HAVE MERCY".