



Given How Busy I Am: Am I Really Growing As A Person?

JULY 14, 2014

Again, note that the Members Bible Study has moved its meeting time from Wednesday morning back to dinner in the Capitol right after the conclusion of first-votes-back (Monday or Tuesday evenings each week of Session). Please have your schedulers note this. Come and be a part! A complimentary dinner is served, and spouses are welcome. We look forward to having you with us!

The Bible has much to say about how a person can grow. As a matter of fact, the Scriptures reveal that those who are truly in Christ *will be* growing for the better (cf. 2Corinthians 5:17). But how exactly does this take place? Or better, how is the believer (to use the appropriate theological term) *sanctified*?

Let me provide you with more than you could possibly want to know about this subject! Read on, my friend!

- Robert Aderholt, Alabama
- Michele Bachmann, Minnesota
- Spencer Bachus, Alabama
- Marsba Blackburn, Tennessee
- Jim Bridenstine, Oklahoma
- Paul Broun, Georgia
- John Campbell, California
- Tony Cardenas, California
- John Carter, Texas
- Bill Cassidy, Louisiana
- Howard Coble, North Carolina
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- Doug LaMalfa, California
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- Austin Scott, Georgia
- Tim Scott, South Carolina
- Lamar Smith, Texas
- Steve Southerland, Florida
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- Marlin Stutzman, Indiana
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- Randy Weber, Texas
- Daniel Webster, Florida
- Lynn Westmorland, Georgia
- Roger Williams, Texas
- Joe Wilson, South Carolina
- Rob Wittman, Virginia
- Steve Womack, Arkansas
- Rob Woodall, Georgia
- Ted Yoho, Florida

Weekly Bible Study During Session

Immediately Following First Votes Back. Capitol Building Family Room H324
Dinner Served. Spouses Welcome.



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I. INTRODUCTION

There are at least four major historical - theological views proffered in answer to the question as to how a believer grows in Christ. The following is a brief explanation of each.

A. TOTAL PERFECTIONISM

The first is known as Christian Perfectionism; it stems from Charles Wesley. In Christian Perfectionism a second work of Grace, post salvation, catapults the believer into a state of “sinlessness.” Another name for this view is “entire sanctification.” Believers may make mistakes, but they are no longer sinning. Increasing outward good works connotes spiritual growth. Frankly, the problem with this view is that most people end up getting married – and their spouse knows otherwise! ☺

B. PASSIVE GROWTH

The second major camp on Sanctification is the Keswick (pronounced “Kezeek”) school of thinking. In this view the believer passively grows in his or her relationship to Christ. One need only “surrender” to grow spiritually. Just keep drinking in the Bible and you will automatically mature. “Let go and let God” is a somewhat appropriate summary of this way of thinking about how sanctification occurs. Frankly, the problem with this view is that few things come easy in a fallen world (cf. Gen. 3:17-19).

C. PENANCE AND REMORSE

Amongst those with a biblical Soteriology (a proper understanding of what the Bible teaches about true saving faith), the previous two positions are often practiced by those who are intent on spiritual growth. Penance on the other hand, is a third understanding of how to grow, and is commonly practiced in false religions and cults. Penance is the idea of imposing something on one’s self in this life as a punishment for sin – it is a human attempt to

balance the scales and in so doing act as a catalytic impetus for growth. In the world of penance-seekers, neither justification (one’s salvation) nor sanctification (one’s spiritual growth) is imputed from God via His forgiveness of sin (per the truths of 1John 1:9 and many other passages). Rather, one’s salvation and sanctification are earned via self-efforts and personal merit. This camp believes conducting offsetting good deeds, works or prayers, in order to propitiate for wrongdoing results in sanctification. Herein, if I may say so, the reality of personal guilt is used as the primary means and motivation for change.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT RECEIVED THE SAVIOR, AND ARE ATTEMPTING TO EARN THEIR OWN WAY TO HEAVEN, THE PENANCE CAMP CAN BECOME AN ATTRACTIVE OPTION

The problem with this approach, as with the first two, is that there is no biblical basis for such a belief or practice (apart from pulling a few select passages from their context). The Bible repeatedly teaches – from a myriad of passages within their proper context – that sanctification in the believer’s life occurs in the following way.

D. PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION

The forth position on sanctification is the one that is supported by Scripture: Progressive Sanctification. The Bible repeatedly reveals that a lifelong cycle of sin, *repentance* and renewal progresses one toward Christlikeness – and this process of growth will only be complete when one goes home to be with the Lord. Growth and change are accomplished through the active participation and discipline of the believer whom the Holy Spirit energizes for the task. Philippians 2:12-13 and many other passages support this understanding of personal sanctification....

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence



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only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.

Notice this passage more closely. **Work out** *katargazomai* **your salvation** does not refer to salvation by works,¹ (contr. Romans 3:21-24; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; Romans 10:9) but rather *the responsibility that the believer must possess in sanctification*. This is a very important distinction to make because nonetheless the passage declares **it is God who is at work in you** to create the change! Does this portion of the passage not sound a bit Keswick? Actually this passage evidences the tension between the two:

GOD IS THE CAUSAL AGENT WHO ENGENDERS AND EMPOWERS HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER

Other passages that support the biblical teaching on Progressive Sanctification are Philippians 3:13,14 and Romans 6:19 (cf. 1Corinthians 9:24-27; 15:58; 2Corinthians 7:1; Galatians 6:7-9; Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 3:1-17; Hebrews 6:10,11; 12:1,2; and 2Peter 1:5-11; Acts 1:8). As you can see by this listing, Scripture is replete with passages pertaining to the idea of progressive, personally-responsible-for, sanctification.

II. SCRIPTURAL BASICS RELATED TO CHANGE

The aforementioned listings of Bible passages are all worth noting and pondering before moving forward in the study. In summary, human responsibility is catalytic to change – but how? What are some scriptural basics related to change? What follow are three foundational aspects of how God desires and orchestrates change for the better to come about in the life of His followers.

A. ALL CHANGE MUST ALIGN WITH SCRIPTURE

Since God inspired the Bible, it is the basis of all truth. “He is there and He is not silent,” stated Francis Schaeffer. In other words, God has revealed Himself to mankind not only in the advent of His Son Jesus Christ, but in His Holy Word. It therefore need be the final epistemological source (that is, the sole grounds for knowledge) that we ponder in regard to the basis of our faith, practice and changes. Notice Scripture’s internal testimony regarding this very thing: the use of Scripture as the plumb line for change, per 2Timothy 3:16-17....

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness...

This passage serves to underscore the idea that one of the specific reasons God inspired **Scripture** is for the purposes of **teaching, reproof, correction and training**. All these words connote change for the better: **in righteousness!** Now notice **1Thessalonians 2:13** as it relates to the idea that all change should align with Scripture....

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

Scripture states of itself that it intends to **perform a work** – to change each of us to be in accord with its instruction. Since the Bible is God’s Word to man then every change we make should align with His ordinances. This assumes, and properly so, that the Scriptures provide the basis for the right changes. 2Corinthians 10:5 echoes and summarizes this first point when it says....

... bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.



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B. ONE IS TO USE SCRIPTURE TO PRODUCE CHANGE IN ANOTHER

The first point is foundational. It is the building block for the second and third biblical basics related to the manifestation of personal change. In 1Thessalonians 5:14 Paul states....

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

Change occurs when one is appropriately challenged by the truths of God. Change results, according to 1Corinthians 1:18, because God's Word has power – power to change individuals when individuals are challenged by it....

For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Isaiah 55:11 amplifies this same truth....

So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

It follows then, that the Word of God is the conduit and source of power that we need to utilize when **encouraging, helping,** counseling or mentoring (or better, **admonishing**) one another with the hope of bringing about growth and change. States Hebrews 4:12 in summary of the importance of the Word to create change....

For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword...

A sword cuts; the Word is the believer's surgical tool to create positive growth, healing and eventual change in another. Now let's examine the proper response to Scripture and its use for the purpose of change.

C. THE RESPONSE TO SCRIPTURAL REPROOF IS REPENTANCE

2Timothy 2:25 states in this regard....

With gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.

The proper biblical response to the biblically based admonitions of another is one of **repentance** which means “a change of mind, direction and purpose.” This of course assumes the admonitions are truly necessary and based in truth, and not motivated by jealousy, or some other base motive.

**THE SCRIPTURALLY BASED,
WARRANTED ADMONITIONS OF
ANOTHER,
WITH ENSUING REPENTANCE
IN THE RECIPIENT,
IS GOD'S ROUTINE WAY
OF ACHIEVING GROWTH IN US**

This is an important objective of why God ordained marriage, by the way – He created a private safe haven for each spouse to stimulate the spiritual growth of the other in this way! It is important to note that Scripture reveals here and elsewhere (cf. Acts 5:31; 11:18; Romans 2:4; 2Corinthians 7:9,10; Ephesians 2:7; 2Timothy 2:25) that **repentance** is produced by God's sovereign grace. In other words, like the faith to believe in Christ (e.g. Ephesians 2:8, 9) **repentance** too is a gift from God. One who is trapped in sin and wants to change should therefore cry out in humility, “God have mercy on me and grant me the gift of repentance from my sin!” Again, this biblical formula is the only means to create lasting change. Any change apart from God-given **repentance** is futile, as stated by Jeremiah 13:23...



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Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil.

Sinners cannot change the essence of their very nature is Jeremiah's point. This, by the way, is the reason why biblically based preaching and counseling ministries in prisons (and Capitals ☺) is so critically important! The only way one can change anything worth changing is with God's help, which is why crying out to God in brokenness and contrition – and God creating the change in the individual – is the only way one can permanently change for the better.

THIS LINE OF THOUGHT IS ALSO THE BASIS FOR THE SAYING THAT A NATION CAN ONLY BE CHANGED BY CHANGING ONE HEART AT A TIME

It follows then that change for the better is rooted in a genuine desire for an individual to turn around. What follows are eight characteristics you will see in yourself and in others who are authentic in their desire to change directions, i.e., what follow are the biblical indicators of true repentance:

III. THE CONTEXT OF THE INSTRUCTION RELATIVE TO THE INDICATORS OF TRUE REPENTANCE

In 2Corinthians 7:9-11, Paul is tracing over the past relationship he has had with the body of believers in Corinth. In brief summary, during his second missionary journey, he spent 18 months establishing this church. After departing, he then wrote a letter (that has been lost), which confronted the immorality that he had heard existed there (referenced in and by 1Cor. 5:9). Subsequent to that exchange, Paul had heard that among other matters, divisions existed in the church, and so he penned this letter to the Corinthian church in response.² Note the following

in regards to Paul describing what true repentance looks like....

I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter.

After having sent Timothy to Corinth (1Cor. 4:17; 16:10,11), Paul found out that self-styled false apostles now inhabited the assembly he had so labored to establish. In their zeal for power, they had castigated Paul and tried to convince the congregation to no longer be involved in ministry. When he learned of this upsetting news, Paul immediately departed (from Ephesus) to visit Corinth. To his deep chagrin, upon his arrival he soon tasted of the bitter fruit of the false teachers, experiencing the disloyalty of so many in the flock. This is commonly referred to as Paul's "Painful Visit." Accordingly and reactively, upon his return to Ephesus, he wrote what is now commonly referred to as the "Severe Letter" (ref. 2Cor. 2:4) sending it to Corinth via his beloved, loyal disciple Titus. Upon Titus' eventual reconnection with Paul, Titus gave a surprisingly warm report as to the Corinthian church's acceptance of Paul's earlier letter. Specifically (years later now), many had *repented* of their rebellion against the Apostle; Paul was overjoyed to learn of this – as he wrote in 2Corinthians 7. It is in this broad context that the words of that letter need to be understood. Here



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then, in a different time and context, Paul delineates on common principles relative to the subject matter at hand:

WHAT CONNOTES TRUE REPENTANCE IN THE LIFE OF THE BELIEVER?

There is perhaps no better passage in the entire Bible than the one found in 2Corinthians 7:9-12 to unveil the many poignant insights that all followers of Christ need to possess relative to definitive true repentance – again, the key ingredient necessary for the germination of permanent change.

IV. EIGHT CHARACTERISTICS OF GENUINE REPENTANCE

Genuine repentance, the key biblical response to fostering everlasting change, states Paul, is characterized by at least eight attitudes that are motivated by God's sanctifying presence in the life of the believer.³ "Paul expands [about godly sorrow] into a whole series of acts or dispositions, all of which are inspired by that sorrow according to God."⁴ A closer look at each of these eight characteristics follows. As you study them, ask yourself if each characterizes you when you are confronted by another regarding something that is genuinely wrong in your life (again, when you live in the limelight there are many times when false accusations will be hurled upon you and should be roundly ignored – you will know because the charge or charges are simply not true).

A. EARNESTNESS *spoude*

When a believer expresses sorrow in a godly manner, there will be a sense of diligence on his or her behalf to eagerly and assertively pursue a righteous course. There will be "speed involved in the carrying out of a matter...a willingness to do good."⁵ Herein is the initial reaction of repentance that is borne from above. "This is an attitude that ends indifference to sin and complacency about evil and deception."⁶ The first earmark then, of

genuine repentance is that godly sorrow, once present, will produce a sense of effort and hurry that is self-motivated from within: an **earnestness**. It is the internal unction to "bear fruit in keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8).

B. VINDICATION *apologia*

In regards to this specific characteristic, "When they [the unrepentant Corinthian believers] thought of the infamy which sin had brought upon the church, they were quite eager to clear themselves of complicity in it and angry with themselves that they had ever allowed such a thing to be."⁷ Here is the second mark of true repentance: "A desire to clear one's name of the stigma that accompanies sin. The repentant sinner restores the trust and confidence of others by making his genuine repentance known."⁸ There is an **earnestness** to outwardly rectify, to **vindicate** that which the sin caused. Conversely, the falsely repentant are characterized by an attitude that remains stayed on self:

IS THERE MORE CONCERN ABOUT DAMAGE TO PERSONAL IMAGE THAN PUNCTUALITY TO REMEDY THE MATTER?

Such people remain hung-up on themselves, and the ramifications of their actions to their reputation and their standing among peers: Outward self-preservation is much more important to them than God-glorification and righting a matter.

C. INDIGNATION *aganaktesis*

This same Greek word, as used elsewhere in several other gospel narratives, denotes the idea of anger at one's own wrongful actions. The early Church Father, Chrysostom, interpreted this portion of the passage to mean that the authentically repentant believer will be characterized by a personal **indignation** or anger "because of the scandal they had permitted to continue unchecked in the church and the consequent affront to the holy name of God." This is a clear indication of real repentance: the believer will possess an internal hatred and



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anger over their sin and a discontentment relative to the indignity it has brought on the Lord's name and His church to whatever degree that may be true. In actuality this self-**indignation** is a blessing from God that can be likened to the internal molten pressure found in a volcano. If the admonisher's accusations are true, there will be an authentic self-hatred that brews inside the true believer's heart – heartache over the division that the sin has caused – that can only find its release through total rectification with offended parties.

D. FEAR *phobos*

In the case of the wayward Corinthian believers, they **feared** the apostolic authority of the one to whom they had been disloyal. They **feared** that he could seek retribution for their sinful ways “with a rod” (cf. 1Cor. 4:21). A manifest characteristic of true repentance then, means there will be a healthy sense of **fear** not only of God, but also of His ambassadors. Consciously aware and on the heart of the Holy Spirit-sensitized repentant believer is the truth of 2Corinthians 5:20... fellow believers are “His ambassadors.” After the time of the Apostles, (definitely Apostles were those who had seen Christ and therefore do not exist today) today Christ's ambassadors are charged with the need to discipline genuinely wayward saints.⁹

To summarize the first four points, the genuinely repentant are those who possess an *earnestness* to *vindicate* themselves with an offended party. This motivation stems from a self-*indignation* and **fear** of the retributive judgment of a Righteous God.

E. LONGING *zelos*

This refers to a yearning, a **longing** for, and desire of the repentant sinner to restore the relationship(s) with the one he or she has sinned against. God-driven repentance will include an outward ambition, a **longing**, to clear up the matter. In like spirit, Jesus said that if you know of someone who has a problem with you, that you should go to that person – that you should take the

initiative to clear it up (cf. Mt. 5:23-24). The **longing** *zelos* mentioned here is descriptive of a vehement desire stemming from an internal, Holy Spirit driven compunction of the heart.¹⁰ The Corinthian believers (in their repentance) possessed a zealous desire to honor Paul and his apostolic authority. More deeply, they possessed a yearning to follow Paul's example, one of wholehearted, pure devotion to the cause of Christ. All of these attitudes express an aspiration motivated-by-God to do the right thing! Why? John Murray states,

**[TRUE] REGENERATION IS THE
RENEWING OF THE HEART AND MIND,
AND THE RENEWED HEART AND MIND
MUST ACT ACCORDING TO THEIR
NATURE¹¹**

The genuinely repentant will always yearn and **long** for right relationships with other people. I realize too that many wrongs are a two way street; it takes two to tango. In addition, Satan often spins such situations so that it is virtually impossible to unscramble the egg. Paul too was cognizant of these types of situations (when he was in prison other believers railed on him! cf. Phil. 1:12-18) and so he concludes that it comes down to one's own personal responsibility in a matter – as evidenced by what he wrote in Romans 12:18....

If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

This is a good passage to memorize, meditate on and practice in such situations: **So far as it depends on you** is the operative point to take away when the other side is less than reconciliatory in attitude and actions – even though you **long** for such and they don't. Suffice to say, when division has resulted due to wrongdoing of the other party, or both parties, there needs to be a **longing** on behalf of both parties for true reconciliation to occur. We get that.



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F. ZEAL *epipothesis*

Another attitude that runs parallel to true repentance is the **zeal** that the Corinthian believers possessed to take up Paul's defense and stand against the false teachers who had taken over the Corinthian Church. "[The Corinthian believers desired] to see the restoration of their former relationship of trust and affection."¹² Their response to Paul's Severe Letter was not one of anger, but one of sobering, accepting and realizing that they had been disloyal to the Apostle's teaching. Their repentance produced this **zeal** to now do the right thing. They had **zeal** to reaffirm their love of him and their allegiance to the truths he had taught. To the contrary, people who are unrepentant or humanly sorrowful in a selfish way will remain disloyal and avoid associating with the person(s) that they have offended. *Loyalty is always a good litmus test* relative to true and false repentance.

G. AVENGING OF WRONG *ekdikesis*

Perhaps the strongest indication of true repentance is the one that is hardest to perform by selfish, non-God-empowered means. This word reveals the fact that in God-empowered repentance, the sinner thinks not of protecting him or herself. The overriding concern is for justice to be done. States one commentator, "he wants to see the sin avenged no matter what it might cost him." Whether or not Paul was referring in our home passage to the Corinthians **avenging of the wrong** relative to their interpersonal relationship, or the Corinthians **avenging of wrong** in having allowed the false apostles to lead in the church does not matter relative to this study.

ARE YOU WILLING TO PAY WHATEVER THE COST MIGHT BE TO ACHIEVE RESOLUTION?

In both cases, the now-humble Corinthian believers had a desire to seek requital. The all-consuming objective was to put their house in order no matter what the cost.

H. INNOCENT IN THE MATTER

bagnos

The last of the eight descriptors, the characterizing words that Paul chooses to express what, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, typifies true repentance was the Corinthians' innocence relative to their past sin. The Greek word here for **innocent** *bagnos* means "clear" or "pure, holy." He chose this word because the connotation of it has to do with a ritual purity. Without going into greater details or illustrations of early word use, the idea carried here is that if a procedure is followed, then purity results. And that is why Paul uses it last on his list of characteristics. Paul's word choice displays a beautiful, human illustration of the theology behind 1John 1:9, which states....

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In essence then the Corinthian believers, in Paul's mind, were now **innocent of the matter** because they had confessed and repented of their sin as was more than evident by the seven previous new attitudes and actions indicated in and by this insightful passage. Of further interest, the Greek word chosen by Paul was also used to express "a compliment for faultless execution of an office."¹³ Here then is another insight into Paul's careful choice of words: he is complimenting their actions while simultaneously declaring them **innocent of the matter!** What is in evidence then is this: Important to the reconciliation process, the offended party was quick to forgive and forget – and thereafter act as if it had never happened!

Do you forgive others who have offended you, or do you hold a grudge, if not an unwillingness to forgive? It is important to note here that Paul doesn't rehearse the sin; he simply calls it **the matter**. Why? In that they had satisfactorily taken care of their sin as evidenced by their actions of godly sorrow, in Paul's mind, the past had been



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“made as white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18) because they had borne “fruit in keeping with repentance” (Matthew 3:8). The past had been made right and it was time to move on – not rehash it! Paul is expressing an attitude of exhilaration over the completion of **the matter!** He was willing and quick to forgive and forget!

**WHEN
DEHABITUATION AND REHABITUATION
ARE WELL UNDERWAY
THERE IS A CRITICAL NEED FOR A
“FORGETTING WHAT LIES BEHIND”¹⁴
ATTITUDE
TO BE PRESENT IN BOTH PARTIES**

Having set straight the old matter it is not worth mention ever again! This is an appropriate fruit of true repentance on the part of the person offended.

V. SUMMARY

There are those who say that change is not too likely in most adults. This study suggests otherwise! Change for the better is possible even for you and me! Here then are eight characteristics depicting the presence of genuine repentance relative to another’s use of the Word to challenge you in a certain area.

In recap of this passage notice the human element in all this, lest someone adopt a Keswick idea of change with a “let go and let God” type of reaction. One commentator echoes this....

The descent into our own hearts, the painful self-scrutiny and self-condemnation, the sorrowing according to God, are not waste of moral force; they apply to the soul the pressure under which it manifests those potent virtues which St. Paul here ascribes to the Corinthians. All sorrow, indeed, as he is careful to tell us, is not repentance; but he who has no sorrow for his sin has not the force in him to produce [the eight characteristics listed above].

There is certainly a need for one to take biblically appropriate responsibility for one’s actions. But having said that, a worldly kind of self-centered sorrow over sin will not manifest these attitudes characteristic of true, genuine repentance. Furthermore such a response to sin is stagnating to one’s spiritual growth. Remember, the Greek word for repentance means, “a change of mind” whereas *lupe*, the Greek word for remorse means, “pain of body.” Repentance leads to dehabituating and rehabilitating – that ‘s to say, biblical thinking and actions in my life – a life of upward and continual spiritual growth. An attitude of remorse over sin, on the other hand, is indicative of the “sorrow of the world [which] produces death” (2Cor. 7:10). Furthermore remorse does not heal the soul, but it makes it worse. It will stymie a believer’s future fruitfulness for the Kingdom. This is illustrated by King David in Psalm 32:3 & 4. After failing to achieve a biblical form of repentance relative to his sin with Bathsheba he confessed....

When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer.

One commentator states about the sorrow of the world:

Human sorrow is unsanctified remorse and has no redemptive capability. It is nothing more than the wounded pride of getting caught in a sin and having one’s lusts go unfulfilled. That kind of sorrow leads only to guilt, shame, despair, depression, self-pity and hopelessness.

Illustrative of this sorrow, which is not repentance, but to the simpleton may appear as such, is Psalm 32:10....

Many are the sorrows of the wicked.



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It is this wrong form of sorrow that we should be apt at discerning: Again, *it is vastly different from true repentance!*

May God grant you this economy – His economy – for achieving your personal growth and sanctification for His glory and usefulness! The believer needs to possess an attitude that repentance in one sense is no big deal – in fact it is welcomed, humility is welcomed, rather than dreaded – because it is God’s way of bringing about sustained and continued growth in my life! Amen!

¹ Since salvation is explicitly revealed in Scripture to be a gift to those who will by faith repent and receive Jesus Christ as Lord

² This letter (1Cor.) is actually then, the second letter and 2Corinthians is actually the third letter to the church at Corinth. The first being lost, the last two are part of the canon of Scripture, and called 1Cor. and 2Cor. respectively).

³ As stated, repentance is actually a gift from God, given along with the ability to believe in Christ, at the day of one’s salvation. Importantly and additionally, this gift of repentance is ongoing in its operation – not only in salvation, but in sanctification (throughout the life of the believer) as inferred by the Apostle in this passage under study.

⁴ The Expositors Bible, Second Corinthians 7: 9-11 comments.

⁵ *NIDONTT*

⁶ *TMSB*

⁷ *NICNT*

⁸ *TMSB*

⁹ See Matthew 18:15-20 (cf. 1Tim. 1:19, 20; 1Cor. 5:1-5). It should be added here that there are church leaders today who are in ministry for the power, and/or who misuse power in their supposed correction of other believers. In *Character Assassins* (Hammond, Abshire and Bathman; Christian Liberty Books, 2004), the authors build the case for the need of proper adjudicative practices to be conducted in and by the church when it comes to correcting others – and thereby avoid incorrectly tarnishing if not destroying the public reputations of innocent people. As a Public Servant you know that the achievement of

justice – the adjudicative process – is a very intricate discipline that requires years of training and preparation to adequately achieve, a training and discipline that most pastors and lay elders have little or no concept of. Jonathan Edwards and William Carey are but two illustrations of believers who were beat up by aberrant church leaders motivated perhaps by vengeance, jealousy, or just plain ignorance.

¹⁰ Whenever Paul spoke of a good desire in the NT, (as he does 13 times) he uses this Greek word that is translated as longing. (Conversely when he speaks of a wrong, lustful desire he uses *epithymia*).

¹¹ Murray, John *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*, (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1955) p. 106.

¹² *NICNT*

¹³ *NIDONTT*

¹⁴ Cf. Philippians 3:13