

11-9-19

THE SURE WORD by Jonnie Hutchison

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REPENT?

Most of our readers are familiar with the term repent or repentance. However, there seems to be a great deal of misunderstanding regarding the Biblical meaning of repent. What does it mean to repent according to the Bible?

Consider that repentance involves a change of mind which results in a change of action. Jesus taught the following which clearly illustrates the meaning of genuine repentance. "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but **afterward he repented, and went.**" (Matthew 21:29). What was the evidence of the first son's repentance? At first, he said that he would not go to work in his father's vineyard, but he had a change of mind which resulted in his going to work. When one truly repents of sin in his life, he will change his mind regarding it and cease his participation in it. For example, if one is guilty of the sin of adultery if he truly repents, he will recognize and admit how wrong the practice is and will cease practicing adultery. No one can truly repent of sin while continuing the practice of sin.

Genuine repentance involves what the Bible calls "godly sorrow." 2 Corinthians 7:10 reads, "For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." Note the contrast between "godly sorrow" and "the sorrow of the world." "Godly sorrow" produces repentance but the "sorrow of the world" produces, not repentance, but death. Sometimes those caught in some sin are sorry that they were caught, but not sorry for what they did. This is the sorrow of the world. Simply saying "I'm sorry" is not repentance. Genuine repentance requires "godly sorrow" but "godly sorrow" is not repentance - it produces that state of mind which leads one to repent. It involves the realization that one has sinned against God and that one's soul is therefore in jeopardy. In Acts 2:37 some were "cut to the heart" after realizing they had crucified the Son of God and asked what they should do. They experienced godly sorrow and it produced repentance (Acts 2:37-41).

Repentance stands between the sinner and salvation. The Bible tells us that God "commands all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30). Jesus said, "...Unless you repent you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). Friend, please heed these words before it is too late - "Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19).