

Repentance, Trying To Have God's Heart by Mike Glenn

It is recorded for us that David is a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:13-14). Yet, David was also a man of passions like ours. He committed acts that are appalling to us. In the record of 2 Samuel 11, David dwells on his lust for the woman he saw bathing. He sent for her, committed adultery. Upon impregnating her, he plots to cover his tracks ending in the murder of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah. What made David a man after God's own heart?

Beyond doubt, a big part of that was the repentance David showed. In 2 Samuel 12, when Nathan pointed his finger at David, immediately David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." I want to examine with you what it means to repent. In David's two psalms of repentance, Psalm 32 and Psalm 51, there is much to be learned about full repentance.

Let us start with Psalm 32:3-4. David makes it clear that he fully knew of his sins and that they weighed heavy upon his mind. I think it is safe to say that he was sorry for what he did. But his heaviness of heart was not repentance. While sorry, there was a period of time during which he was silent about his sinfulness. He would not confess even though he was sorrowful. Until one is ready to acknowledge his sinfulness, repentance has not taken place (Psalm 51:3-4). Brother, sister or friend, if, in our heart, we are still giving some small reason or excuse for our sins, we have not humbly repented. Any justification is a measure of pride. David points out that when we come to God, we must come with a broken spirit and contrite heart (Psalm 51:17). Paul calls it "godly sorrow" that leads to repentance (2 Corinthians 7:10).

From these two psalms, we also learn a little about the relationship of sin and God. Sometimes people act as if it is the church or other Christians with whom we are making things right. The church does not decide if we may become members. God has set the standard of repentance. Certainly, if we offend people, we have things to make right with people. But sin is first and foremost against God. Repentance must be first and foremost toward God. David used hyperbole (exaggeration) to make this point. In Psalm 51:4, he said, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." God is the forgiver. When someone repents, it must not be to get people to accept him or her, but to get God to accept them. There is no real repentance unless it is toward God. It is He who adds the penitent, baptized believer to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). Salvation is an act of God (Colossians 2:12). It is God the Son who purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). It is He who will judge us at the last day (Acts 17:31) by the very passages we have included in this article.

Jesus said so clearly in Luke 13: 3 & 5, "...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." No wonder that when some in the crowd under Peter's preaching said, "What shall we do." (Acts 2:37), the answer was "Repent and be baptized every one of you..." The answer today, if you are asking what God wants you to do, is the same: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..." The answer today, if you are asking what God wants you to do, is the same: "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins..."