

Seven Myths of Repentance (Myth #6 & 7)

by Robert Wurtz II

Genuine repentance involves turning from all sin, not just the obvious ones, and seeking to rebuild what was destroyed.

Topics: "True Repentance", "Sin Consequences"

Description

Robert Wurtz II preaches on the misconception that repentance can be selective, emphasizing the importance of genuine repentance that addresses the root causes of sin, not just the outward manifestations. He highlights the need for complete surrender to God, using examples like the rich young ruler who held back part of himself and the woman who ran off with a university professor. Wurtz contrasts the heart of the genuinely repentant, who embraces the whole will of God without picking and choosing, with the unrepentant who prioritize their own sensibilities over God's will. He also delves into the consequences of sin, stressing that repentance does not eliminate these consequences and that sin always has a price to pay.

Transcript

MYTH #6 REPENTANCE CAN BE SELECTIVE

In Richard Owens Roberts section on "Seven myths of Repentance" he states, "When anyone resorts to selective repentance, the tendency is to repent of the glaring matters, the things of which everyone knows he is guilty. There is no potential for selectivity in genuine repentance. Even if someone in your church is caught in adultery and sheds buckets of tears, and makes no self-defense, and admits openly and candidly to an adulterous relationship, it is not necessarily repentance. You have to be sure that the underlying cause of adultery has been turned from, and that cause in most instances is pride. Take as an example, a woman who forsakes her three children and her husband and runs off with a local university professor. When she is confronted by the church, she at first says, "Well, if you knew that beastly fellow I'm married to, you'd understand." But the church is very earnest in bringing her to repentance and so finally she says, "Well, I admit that I did the wrong thing." Do we then rejoice? I'd want to get underneath and discover whether she had turned from the pride that made her think she didn't need to be bound to this miserable man." People often repent of the 'symptoms of sin' but they never repent of sin itself-, which is rebellion against God, and His authoritative word.

1) One Thing Thou Lackest

Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (Matthew 19)

Many people come to God as though they can make a pretense of repenting of sin- when in reality they have not turned completely to God. They are knowingly holding back a part of themselves. Many, even now, have some sin, as did the rich young ruler, which is standing directly between them and God. The minister may not see it, but Christ does. John Wesley comments on this verse saying, "Doubtless for the dawns of good which he saw in him: and said to him - Out of tender love, One thing thou lackest - The love of God, without which all religion is a dead carcass. In order to this, throw away what is to thee the grand hindrance of it. Give up thy great idol, riches. Go, sell whatsoever thou hast." Though he had thought he outwardly kept all the commandments- his 'god' was his stuff. We must remember that we are not at liberty to pick and choose what sins we repent of. Sins that place other 'things' on the throne of our heart are paramount to idolatry and a violation of the 1st Commandment and the great commandment.

2) The Heart of the Genuinely Repentant

Charles Finney in Lecture XLV (45) of His systematic theology demonstrates the difference between a person who selectively repents and one who genuinely repents. He writes, "The saint has made the will of God his law, and asks for no other reason to influence his decisions and actions than that such is the will of God. He has received the will of God as the unfailing index, pointing always to the path of duty. His intelligence affirms that God's will is, and ought to be, law, or perfect evidence of what law is; and therefore he has received it as such. He therefore expects to obey it always, and in all things. He makes no calculations to sin in anything; nor in one thing more than another. He does not cast about, and pick and choose among the commandments of God; professing obedience to those that are the least offensive to him, and trampling on those that call to a sterner morality, and a harder self-denial. With him there are no little sins in which he expects to indulge. He no more expects to eat too much, than he expects to be a drunkard; and gluttony is as much a sin as drunkenness. He no more expects to take an advantage of his neighbor, than he expects to rob him in the streets. He no more designs and expects to indulge in sin in secret, than in open uncleanness. He no more expects to look with lust, than to commit adultery with his brother's wife. He no more expects to exaggerate and give a false coloring to the truth, than he expects and intends to commit perjury. All sin is an abomination to those who have genuinely repented and been born of the Spirit. His heart has rejected sin as sin. His heart has embraced the will of God as his law. It has embraced the whole will of God. He waits only for a knowledge of what the will of God is. He needs not, he seeks not, excitement to determine or to strengthen his will. The law of his being has come to be the will of God. A "thus saith the Lord," immediately awakens from the depths of his soul the whole-hearted "amen." He does not go about to plead for sin, to trim his ways so as to serve two masters. To serve God and Mammon is no part of his policy, and no part of his wish. No: he is God's man, God's subject, God's child. All his sympathies are with God; and surely "his fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ." What Christ wills, he wills; what Christ rejects, he rejects."

3) The Heart of the Unrepentant

Charles Finney Continues, "But right over against this you will find the sinner, or deceived professor. God's will is not his law; but his own sensibility is his law. With him it is not enough to know the will of God; he must also have his sensibility excited in that direction, before he goes. He does not mean, nor expect, to avoid every form and degree of iniquity. His heart has not renounced sin as sin. It has not embraced the

will of God from principle, and of course has not embraced the whole will of God. With him it is a small thing to commit what he calls little sins. This shows, conclusively, where he is. If the will of God were his law--as this is as really opposed to what he calls little, as to what he calls great sins, he would not expect and intend to disobey God in one thing more than in another. He could know no little sins, since they conflict with the will of God. But he goes about to pick and choose among the commandments of God, sometimes yielding an outward obedience to those that conflict least with his inclinations, and which therefore will cost him the least self-denial, but evading and disregarding those that lay the axe to the root of the tree, and prohibit all selfishness. The sinner, or deceived professor, does not in fact seriously mean, or expect, wholly to obey God. He thinks that this is common to all Christians. He as much expects to sin every day against God, as he expects to live, and does not think this at all inconsistent with his being a real, though imperfect, Christian. He is conscious of indulging in some sins, and that he has never repented of them and put them away, but he thinks that this also is common to all Christians, and therefore it does not slay his false hope. He would much sooner indulge in gluttony than in drunkenness, because the latter would more seriously affect his reputation. He would not hesitate to indulge wanton thoughts and imaginations when he would not allow himself in outward licentiousness, because of its bearing upon his character, and, as he says, upon the cause of God. He will not hesitate to take little advantages of his neighbor, to amass a fortune in this way, while he would recoil from robbing on the highway, or on the high seas; for this would injure his reputation with man, and, as he thinks, more surely destroy his soul. Sinners sometimes become exceedingly self-righteous, and aim at what they call perfection. But unless they are very ignorant, they soon become discouraged, and cry out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" They, however, almost always satisfy themselves with a mere outward morality, and that, as I have said, not descending to what they call little sins."

F) MYTH #7 REPENTANCE ELIMINATES THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

Sin always has consequences. Sin, in some way, always brings death. Sin pays wages and God will repay. God is not mocked- that is, you cannot turn your nose up to God as though you will get by with sin. Sin always has a consequence. What man sows He will also reap. The laws of sowing and reaping are as sure as the laws of physics.

1) Repentance will not 'Undo' the Sin Itself

No amount of repentance will ever bring a murderer's victim back to life. Many things are done in sin that can never be reversed in this life. A robber may repent of robbery, but prison still awaits them. An arsonist can never replace the memories and artifacts that their fire destroyed- nor can drunk drivers ever restore the lives shattered by an accident. Sin destroys things. Sin never leaves people as it found them (or they found it). One can never fix things back as they were before the sin- but they can help pick up the pieces.

This is why restitution is so important. People who have destroyed lives with their sin ought to work diligently whenever possible to help pick up the pieces. This is one of the great purposes of the Law of Moses and it was showing people how to right wrongs. Many things can never be repaired, but doing what we can to rebuild what we destroyed is the desire of the genuinely repentant. The high-handed sinner destroys and leaves others to clean the mess. Some have a "Forgive me and get over it!" mentality, but God rejects such an attitude. When the jailer scourged Paul and was later converted- he helped dress the very wounds he once created. How about you? Have you sent that letter of reconciliation? Have you called and made that apology? Have you sent the repayment for those things you stole if possible?

2) Sin and Suffering

Sometimes suffering is directly connected to our sin, but not always. There are times in Scripture when God acts swiftly to judge a sin as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira. There are other times when people simply, "reap what they sow." In other words, "There are natural consequences to our choices." If you smoke and end up with Lung Cancer, don't blame God; you are simply reaping what you've sown. You can't drink alcohol until your liver is shot and then blame God's judgment. You destroyed your own liver! Obviously not all sickness and disease is the result of reaping what we sow, but often times our woes can be traced directly to sin. It is only God's mercy that we have not yet already been totally consumed for our sins anyhow. We should thank God in awe and wonder as we ponder the sheer number of sins that we were not directly and immediately judged for.

3) The Unforgiveness of People

Let us fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into the hands of men. (II Samuel 24:14)

I have a preacher friend who once said, "God will forgive your sin if you genuinely repent, but you are playing Russian roulette with your life if you believe you can sin and man will forgive and forget." People frequently speak of men and women falling in the faith- but rarely do we hear it preached that they rose from the ashes. Some even rejoice when a man or woman of God fall- but the angels rejoice when one sinner repents.

4) The Suffering of the Innocent

Before it was over with David had broken nearly every last one of the 10 Commandments when he sinned with Bathsheba. Sin has a way of blinding even those whose heart is after God's. Great was David's love for God. Matthew Henry writes concerning these things, "When David's project of fathering the child upon Uriah himself failed, so that, in process of time, Uriah would certainly know the wrong that had been done him, to prevent the fruits of his revenge, the devil put it into David's heart to take him off, and then neither he nor Bath-sheba would be in any danger (what prosecution could there be when there was no prosecutor?), suggesting further that, when Uriah was out of the way, Bath-sheba might, if he pleased, be his own for ever. Adulteries have often occasioned murders, and one wickedness must be covered and secured with another. The beginnings of sin are therefore to be dreaded; for who knows where they will end? It is resolved in David's breast (which one would think could never possibly have harbored so vile a thought) that Uriah must die. That innocent, valiant, gallant man, who was ready to die for his prince's honor, must die by his prince's hand. David has sinned, and Bath-sheba has sinned, and both against him, and therefore he must die; David determines he must. Is this the man whose heart smote him because he had cut off Saul's skirt? Quantum mutatus ab illo!--But ah, how changed! Is this he that executed judgment and justice to all his people? How can he now do so unjust a thing? See how fleshly lusts war against the soul, and what devastations they make in that war; how they blink the eyes, harden the heart, sear the conscience, and deprive men of all sense of honor and justice. Whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding and quite loses it; he that doth it destroys his own soul, Proverbs 6:32. But, as the eye of the adulterer, so the hand of the murderer seeks concealment, Job 24:14, 15. Works of darkness hate the light. When David bravely slew Goliath it was done publicly, and he gloried in it; but, when he basely slew Uriah, it must be done clandestinely, for he is ashamed of it, and well he may. Who would do a thing that he dare not own? The devil, having as a poisonous serpent, put it into David's heart to murder

Uriah, as a subtle serpent he puts it into his head how to do it. Not as Absalom slew Amnon, by commanding his servants to assassinate him, nor as Ahab slew Naboth by suborning witnesses to accuse him, but by exposing him to the enemy, a way of doing it which, perhaps, would not seem so odious to conscience and the world, because soldiers expose themselves of course. If Uriah had not been in that dangerous post, another must; he has (as we say) a chance for his life; if he fight stoutly, he may perhaps come off; and, if he die, it is in the field of honor, where a soldier would choose to die; and yet all this will not save it from being a willful murder, of malice prepense."

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/robert-wurtz-ii/seven-myths-of-repentance-myth-6-7/>

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