

- “I mean, they deserved it, but I guess I was wrong.”
- “I could’ve been better.”

David pointedly acknowledged “I have sinned” (2 Samuel 12:13). True confession doesn’t blame another (Genesis 3:8-12), it takes the blame upon oneself. It also specifies what one has done. General confessions to God are not good enough. Be specific with Him. Confess specific sins and acknowledge actual struggles. If you stole, don’t say you borrowed. If you lusted, don’t say you were recognizing beauty. If you lied, don’t say you were uttering a half-truth.

Will repentance take you as far as confession?

Action?

Repentance and the actions that follow are two different things (Ezekiel 14:6; Matthew 21:29). Although they are different, true repentance will be followed by a change of action. Repentance (the mind), will lead us to confess (the tongue), which will lead us to change our behavior (our hands). The Ephesians “burned them (the magical books-NO) before all men.” Changing a behavior is not easy. Despite the upward climb, no one will be forgiven without change.

What actions must we change? First, we must stop sinning. The man who stole will steal no more (Ephesians 4:28). The man who lied will put away lying (Colossians 3:9). The man who was involved in fornicating will stop messing around (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Second, we must go from lethargy to laborious—we must get to work. For Christians, it means becoming involved in church works and evangelizing the lost. Laodicea’s sins were not necessarily sins of action, but inaction (Revelation 3:17). They too were obligated to repent—apart of that was zealotry (Revelation 3:19). For sinners, it means to change places. Peter told the Jews “Repent ye therefore, and be converted” (Acts 3:19). For a sinner true repentance will be demonstrated through baptism.

Will repentance take you as far as changing your actions?

Restitution?

Someone observed, “Whatever the cost of putting a thing right, it can never be more than the cost of leaving it wrong.” Another said, “Many people use mighty thin

thread when mending their ways.” If repentance is the hardest action, restitution might be the second.

Restitution has to do with the feet because we must go to the one we have wronged. The Ephesian saints were not recorded as having made restitution; however, to some degree it was made in the process of confession and giving up their wicked deeds. They had not been giving God holy hands, so they restored their hands to Him by giving up their sinful reading.

The words “restore,” “restored,” and “restitution” occur 73 times and it means compensation for harmful behavior. Every dispensation discusses the importance of restoration (Genesis 20:7; Exodus 22:1-12; Leviticus 6:4-5; 24:21a; 2 Samuel 9:7; Proverbs 6:31; Nehemiah 5:11-12). The last part on the fruit of repentance is that we make sure we are on good terms with people (1 Samuel 12:3). In fact, restitution is just the natural response to repentance.[2] Salvation cannot be obtained if restitution is not made. The man who stole cannot only steal no longer, but he should, to the best of his ability, give back the money he stole. The woman who gossiped must not only gossip no longer but also correct lies she has told. Sometimes restitution cannot be made in the fullest sense (murder, adultery, etc.); however, one should try his best to make the necessary corrections. “In the washroom of his London club, British newspaper publisher and politician William Beverbrook happened to meet Edward Heath, then a young member of Parliament, about whom Beverbrook had printed an insulting editorial a few days earlier. ‘My dear chap,’ said the publisher, embarrassed by the encounter. ‘I’ve been thinking it over, and I was wrong. Here and now, I wish to apologize.’ ‘Very well,’ grunted Heath. ‘But the next time, I wish you’d insult me in the washroom and apologize in your newspaper.’”[3]

Will repentance take you as far as making restitution?

Repentance is costly, difficult, and essential. People have gone great lengths to change for the better—how far will you go?

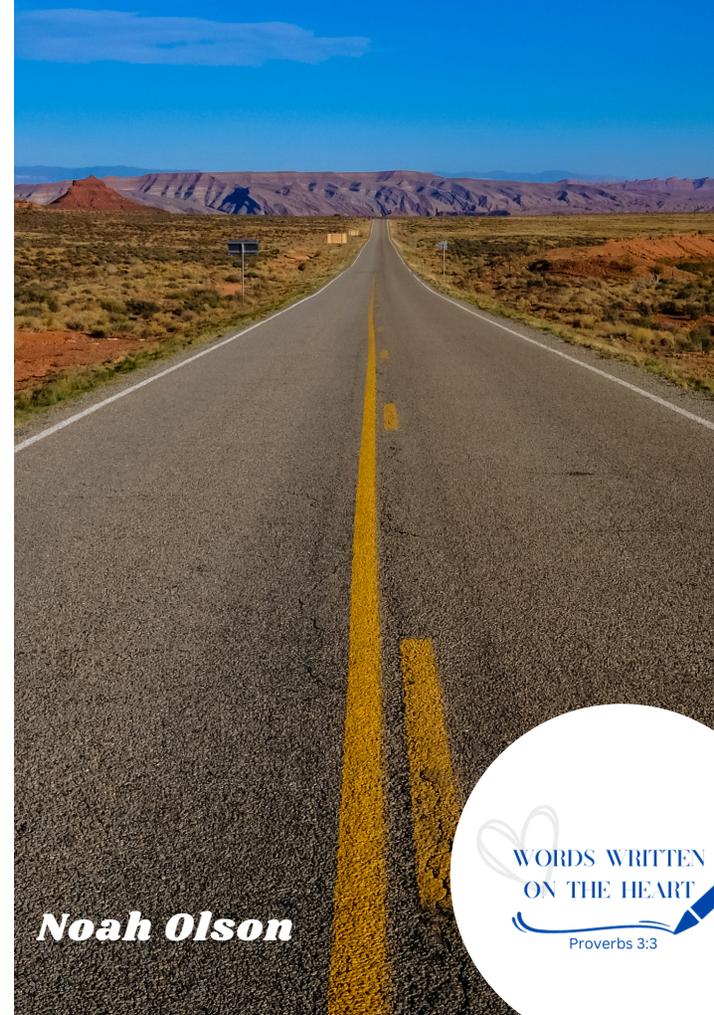
Endnotes

[1]Forgotten source

[2]<https://youtu.be/iIozehBRn1E>

[3]<https://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/c/confession.htm>

How Far Does Repentance Take You?



Noah Olson



A little boy had stolen money from his parents' money jar. He had taken it to buy the coveted baseball bat in the widow he had seen at the local store downtown. His action was eventually manifested and he apologized saying "I'm so sorry dad, I promise I will not do it every again." His dad answered and said, "I forgive you...now what are you doing to do about it?"[1]

Repentance is the hardest command to obey because it requires change. Many will be lost, both sinner and saint due to a lack of repentance (Luke 13:3, 5). Some will meet the Lord with their sins on their sleeve because they failed to repent (cf. Acts 3:19). If God calls everyone to repent (Acts 17:30), it must be important.

Repentance is often misunderstood. It is with this misunderstanding that people refrain from truly repenting. Repentance is not:

- Uttering a prayer.
- Saying "sorry."
- Changing an action.
- "Going forward to the front pew in a worship service.
- Baptism.

Repentance comes from the word Greek word *metanoia* which means to change one's mind. It is preceded by godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10) and mournfulness (Matthew 5:4), but it is much more than those—it is a decision to think differently than what one had previously been thinking. It is a change of purpose or intent (Exodus 32:12; Jeremiah 18:8). Hebrews 12:17 illustrates this word perfectly, as it describes Esau not being able to find a change of mind in his father Isaac concerning the blessing that was given to Jacob (Genesis 27:34-40). Repentance is important for it involves the deepest parts of man—his mind and soul.

Since repentance takes place in the mind, everything that comes after must be the fruits of repentance (Matthew 3:8). Paul wrote "...that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). Repentance can be judged by actions. A sincere, penitent heart will manifest itself in different actions. "Ken Bailey was a laborer on the Alaska Pipeline back in the mid

70's. He worked up in the icy cold for a year and came back home and decided to visit church. The first Sunday he walked through the doors and sat in the back seat. He had a beard, looked like a Grizzly bear and perhaps a man that would never become a Christian. That morning the gospel was preached and an invitation given...Tears came down his face as he gave his life to Jesus. The next Sunday he came back to services and he was dressed in a 3 piece suit and no beard! When someone asked what caused him to shave and dress up he said, 'Jesus changed me on the inside and I want people to know it - so I changed the outside.'"[2] Repentance must be essential for one is judged by what it produces (cf. Matthew 7:20).

People have paid an expensive sum for repentance; the Ephesians did (Acts 19:13-20). After many miraculous works were performed (Acts 19:11-17), those who had previously believed (i.e. obeyed the Gospel) "came and confessed, and shewed their deeds" (Acts 19:18). Witchcraft was a common plight in Ephesus. These Christians' action is noteworthy. They came to burn the books that they had used for their sins. The cost was supposedly up to \$35,000! Repentance cost a hefty price.

How far will you let repentance take you? Will it take you as far as:

Confession?

Confession is an enemy to many. Confession to crime, confession to an action, and confession to bad habits are proclamations not many people want to make. True repentance (mind) will be followed up with true confession (mouth) (cf. Romans 14:11). Those in Acts are said to have confessed their wrongdoing, showing what they had done (Acts 19:18). Will you let repentance take you to the point of confession?

The word confess can mean reverence and Hebrew one word can be defined as to bemoan. The Greek words denote an acknowledgement or an agreeance. Confession is the acknowledgement of wrong behavior after one has sinned (Psalm 32:5). Not only is the change of mind required, but also the sacrifice of the lips in agreeing with God about one's sin is important too. We learn many things about confession from Scripture:

Silence is harmful (Psalm 32:3-4). Did you ever do something behind your parents back and attempt to hide it from them? Perhaps you worked even harder to keep the secret than you would if you would have just told them what happened. David felt inward and outward pain when he didn't tell God His sin. When we refuse to confess our trespasses the hand of God is heavy upon us.

Confession usually involves weeping (Ezra 10:1). Because confession is preceded by repentance and repentance is preceded by godly sorrow, confessions may include crying. God welcomes tears from sinners (Matthew 5:4). D.L. Moody called repentance "the tear in the eye of faith."

Usually, confession is done through prayer (Psalm 32:5-6). Often, when the dirtiness of sin afflicts our souls, lifting up our souls to God in prayer is the mode. Simon was told to repent and pray (Acts 8:22). Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel all confessed sin to God through prayer (Ezra 10; Nehemiah 1; Daniel 9). A confession does not have to be long; it can be direct and to the point. Many have confessed in a prayer while driving, before bed, or while eating. Begin your prayers with confession as someone suggested, "For a successful season of prayer, the best beginning is confession."

Confession is a prerequisite for forgiveness (Leviticus 5:5; 1 John 1:9). Sinners approaching the altar were not forgiven until they confessed their wrong. Solomon wrote, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). Although one may change his mind about a sin, if he does not tell God that he did wrong, he cannot be forgiven.

Confession without repentance is not sincere (Exodus 9:27; 1 Samuel 15:24). Verbal recognition of wrong is not enough. Some say things they do not mean (2 Kings 10:18-19; Matthew 2:8; 26:48-49). Some confess their wrong because they were caught or because it may produce a lesser punishment. True confession follows a penitent heart; it is never without one.

Confessions should be specific (Joshua 7:19-21; Daniel 9:4-20; Luke 15:21). Some confessions are watered down and are excuses. Some may say:

- "If I've sinned."
- "I probably did wrong."