

“EXCEPT YOU REPENT...” (2)

By Keith Greer

Suppose you found one of your children with his hand in the cookie jar after telling him "no snacks before dinner." Immediately, he turns to you and says "I'm sorry." Now, is he truly sorry for disobeying his father, or, is he sorry that he caught him? Only his future actions or "change of conduct" will tell you if he has truly repented. Unfortunately that little boy was me and I was sorry I got caught!

Likewise, it is the same with many of God's children. They appear to be sorry they got caught, but there is little evidence of repentance.

The church at Corinth had many problems, not the least of which was immorality, and yet, Paul said "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Corinthians 7:9-11)

What is **godly sorrow**?

Basically, we need to be able to look at sin the way God sees it. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23) "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4)

Whether or not our sin includes another person, all sin is committed against God, and separates us from Him. We should have such sorrow for the sin in our lives that we will do everything we can to be in a right relationship with God.

A godly sorrow is produced by faith in God that He will truly forgive us. Such repentance will bring about a "change of conduct".

The Pharisees were great ones for practicing the "Letter" of the law when at the same time their hearts were far from God. We need to be careful that we do not do the same.

Some may say "Well, you don't know what's in my heart." That's true. We may fool each other, or even ourselves, but we will not fool God. He knows what we really are.

Unfortunately, sometimes the only person I may fool is myself. People see the consistency, or inconsistency, in our lives. Hypocrisy will be a big hindrance to the cause of Christ. We cannot hope to bring others to Christ if they don't see Him in us.

When John, the baptizer, preached that the kingdom of heaven was at hand, he told the Jews to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance." (Matthew 3:8)

Likewise, when the apostle Paul spoke before King Agrippa, he said that he had preached to the Jews and the Gentiles that they should repent, turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. (Acts 26:20)

So, what are "works meet for repentance?"

Jesus said "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit." (Matthew 12:33)

Jesus also said that "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16) (Cont.) ***