

The Ordo Salutis

The Order of Salvation

A Study

As of: 12/12/2021

Step 8b: Repentance

Job 42:1-6

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said,

2 "I know that You can do all things, And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.

3 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' "Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, Things too wonderful for me, which I did not know."

4 'Hear, now, and I will speak; I will ask You, and You instruct me.'

5 "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear; But now my eye sees You;

6 Therefore I retract, And I repent in dust and ashes."

Ezekiel 14:6

Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD , "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

Ezekiel 18:32

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD .

"Therefore, repent and live."

Matthew 3:2

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 3:8

Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

Mark 1:15

and saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.**"

Mark 6:12

They went out and preached that *men* should repent.

Luke 13:2-5

2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were *greater* sinners than all *other* Galileans because they suffered this *fate*?

3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were *worse* culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem?

5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Luke 5:32

I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance

Luke 24:46&47

Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

The Acts 2:38

Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Acts 3:19

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

The Acts 5:31

He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

The Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads* to life."

The Acts 17:30&31

30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

The Acts 20:18-21

18 And when they had come to him, he said to them, "You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time,

19 serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews;

20 how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house,

21 solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and **c**faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Acts 26:19&20

19 "So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision,

20 but *kept* declaring both to those of Damascus first, and *also* at Jerusalem and *then* throughout all the region of Judea, and *even* to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance.

Romans 2:4

Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

2Corinthians 7:8-10

8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it — *for* I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while —

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of* repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of* God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to *the will of* God produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

2Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

26 and they may come to their senses *and escape* from **a**the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

2Peter 3:9

The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

The Revelation 2:5

Therefore remember from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you and will remove your lampstand out of its place — unless you repent.

The Revelation 2:16

Therefore repent; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of My mouth.

The Revelation 3:19

Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore be zealous and repent.

Repentance is in the Bible

Repent: (Hebrew OT- *to grieve to the point of change; a radical change of mind*)

Repent: (Greek NT- *to have remorse to the point of change; to be of another mind*)

It is very hard to read the Bible with any degree of honesty and not realize that Repentance is a common Theme. It is both an Old and New Testament Commandment. Both Jews and Gentiles are commanded to repent. Every major figure in Scripture called people to repent. So, Repentance is a biblical Issue and one that we need to study and understand.

Yet, in spite of the fact God the Holy Spirit moved upon different men at different times to put forth this Concept- Repentance, in the modern Church, has fallen on hard times, lately. And this has resulted in Repentance becoming very confusing to many people. Yet when you carefully read the Holy Bible- you come away with this:

Genuine Repentance is a Requirement for Salvation and Always Results in a Change of Behavior

The Bible is crystal clear that we are saved by what we believe in; what we trust; what we confess; and *not* by what we do. And yet, the same Bible also teaches that without Repentance- there is no genuine Belief. So, how does this work? John MacArthur has said,

“One cannot truly believe unless he repents, and one cannot truly repent unless he believes. Repentance and faith are two sides of the same coin (but they are not synonymous terms).”¹

The Acts 11:18

When they heard this, they quieted down and glorified God, saying, "Well then, God has granted to the Gentiles also the repentance that leads to life."

So, genuine Repentance leads to spiritual “Life”- which refers to “Everlasting Life” or Salvation. And that connects Repentance with Salvation. Now the fact that the Apostle Peter refers to this as the “**repentance that leads to life**” indicates that there is *another* “type” or “kind” of Repentance that does *not* lead to life. And that means that not all Repentance is the same. And we will discuss that later.

2Timothy 2:24-26

24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,

25 with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,

¹ <https://www.gty.org/library/questions/QA163/what-is-repentance-and-how-does-it-relate-to-salvation>

26 and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

Here we see that true Repentance leads to “**the knowledge of the Truth**”. And then we see that the Knowledge of the Truth allows people to “**come to their senses**” and escape from “**the snare of the devil**”. For a person to:

- Come into the Knowledge of the Truth
- Come to their Senses
- Escape the Snare of the devil

... is synonymous with Salvation. And all three are the result of Repentance. So, here the Apostle Paul is also making the connection between Repentance and Salvation.

Now notice that the “kind” or “type” of Repentance that the Apostle is talking about here has been “granted”. And that means that this Repentance is *not* a humanly engineered “Work” that comes about through human Choice or Decision or through an Act of the human Will, but rather is a Gift of God that He *grants* to those He will save. So, the granting of this Gift to the sinner is a sovereign Act of God’s Grace. And that means that our “turning away” from Sin is merely the human *Response* of being granted this Gift of Repentance.

Repentance is the Result of Godly Sorrow

So, how does God “grant” Repentance? What “Means of Grace” does God use to “grant” Repentance to us? The “Means” of “godly Sorrow”. Remember that the Repentance that we are studying now is *not* something that comes forth in a vacuum. It didn’t just pop up. This Repentance is the “Product” or the “Result” of us- *grieving* over our Sin.

2Corinthians 7:8-10

8 For though I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it — *for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while* —

9 I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to *the point of repentance*; for you were made sorrowful according to *the will of God*, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.

10 For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, *leading* to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

So, our desire and ability to turn away from sin (repent) is the result of being sovereignly granted the gift of repentance. But look closely again at the beginning of verse 10:

For the sorrow that is according to *the will of God* produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation ...

So, our ability to possess the Gift of Repentance is by first having a Sorrow

(over our Sin) that is “according to the Will of God”. And having this kind of Sorrow (as opposed to the Sorrow of the lost World) is predicated on being first convicted by God the Holy Spirit in the first place. So, each part of the Process of Forgiveness (ie Conviction; Confession; Grieving; Repentance) is a sovereign Work of God’s Spirit in the life of the believer. And the same God, Who began this Process by bringing genuine Conviction into our minds, will also lead us through each Part until we are able to obtain God’s gracious Forgiveness.

So, yes, God “grants” Repentance to the believer. And yes, Repentance is the Product of having godly Sorrow. And the two Statements are not contradictory. God grants the Gift of Repentance through the “Means” of the godly Sorrow. And the godly Sorrow is brought about through the “Means” of Conviction.

Now the Greek word for “Repentance” literally means:

“To have another mind”

So, for us to repent means our “thinking” about that particular Sin has changed. It means our “disposition” toward that Sin has been altered. Our “Relationship” with that Sin has been transformed. And it has been altered, changed, and transformed by a combination of the Word and Spirit of God actively moving in us.

An Example

So, for example, let’s assume that someone has engaged in Sin for the purpose of financial Gain. A man has entered into a living arrangement with a woman, with whom he is not married. And they live together as husband and wife, yet they remain unmarried because she is the widow of a man, who was in the Military. And the dead man’s medical Benefits carry over to her- as long as she remains single. The woman has developed a medical Problem that requires Medicine and ongoing Treatment. She wants to spend her life with this other man, but if she marries him- she will lose her Benefits. So, to keep her Benefits- they agree to just live together- without being married.

This couple have rationalized their Situation by saying that being married will cost them more money than living together. And so, for the sake of financial Gain- they engage in ongoing Sin.

This is *exactly* what the Apostle Paul was talking about when he said,

1 Timothy 6:10-12

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance *and* gentleness.

12 Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

So, the Sin of the Love of Money has blinded this couple to the Sin of Fornication. And like many in the modern Church, they have bought into the false notion that whatever will benefit them temporarily on earth- must be God’s Will. When people have been fed a steady Diet of a Man-centered Theology that says that God exists to benefit Man- it is very hard to

come to terms with the Reality that God expects His people to love Him more than worldly Gain; or that God would ever require of them to sacrifice financial Gain in pursuit of Holiness.

Now if this couple have been genuinely saved- God the Holy Spirit will not allow them to remain in their Rebellion. So, He brings to their Attention (either through personal Study; through other believers; or through the preaching and teaching of God's Word in Church) what the writer of **Hebrews** taught in **Hebrews 13:4-6**:

4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

6 so that we confidently say, "THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?"

... and through them reading and being illumined to this portion of God's Divine Truth- God the Holy Spirit brings true, genuine biblical Conviction to this couple that what they are doing- dishonors God; violates what God's Word declares to be true; and has blinded them. And their Response to this Conviction is genuine godly Sorrow; and a deep, remorseful, public Confession.

What Will Motivate Us to Repent?

But now comes the hard part- the "turning away"; the Change; the Repentance. It is easy to say, "I'm sorry". But to "repent" means: *to change*. And to change in *this* case would mean a *change* in this couple's Relationship. Why? Because this Relationship is sinful and does not bring any Glory to God. And, long term, this Relationship will eventually become destructive to this couple as well.

But to change this Relationship will be painful. It is going to cost them. But without the change- without *altering* this Relationship so that it comes into alignment with God's Word- the Holiness of God continues to be belittled and denigrated. Without true and genuine Repentance- the Conviction; Confession; and Sorrow, that God the Holy Spirit brought to them- is mocked. Determined Action about this Relationship must be engaged.

But what will motivate this couple to act? Duty? Obligation? Because it is the "right thing" to do? Maybe. A lot can be done with humanly engineered Will-power and Effort. But dry, obligatory Obedience does *not* bring Glory to God. It does *not* honor Jesus Christ. The only Obedience that displays the great Value and Worth of the "Darling of the Trinity" is *joyful* Obedience; an Obedience based in a Delight to "do" God's Will. The kind of Obedience that pleases God and that brings an appropriate Honor toward Jesus is an Obedience that is founded on a deep and abiding Love for God and a Hope in His Promises. So "Gospel Obedience" contains these elements:

- ✓ A Knowledge of God
- ✓ An intense desire to honor God
- ✓ A personal Delight derived from obeying God
- ✓ Full dependence on God for both "will" and "strength"
- ✓ A determination that God alone receives the Glory

And the Reality is that no human being will act in a way that is detrimental to himself (long-term) unless what he will personally gain from obeying God dramatically outweighs the Cost. And this is where the Knowledge of God comes in. If this couple's Admiration; Awe; and Respect for God is not real, true, and powerful- their Love for God will simply not be sufficient to empower them to repent and change this Relationship. Unless their Love for God is white hot- they simply will not obey God *joyfully- especially* when doing so will cost them something that they value (their Relationship).

Mere Duty, Obligation, or Responsibility is not enough of a Motivation for Obedience, when the Cost is high. Sacrificial living requires things like Love for God; a Delight in God; and a personal Joy in obeying God. It requires that the person engaging in the Sacrifice delight in that for which he is sacrificing- or he will never even begin. It is this lack of Love; this Delight; and this Joy in God that is the Reason why so many so-called believers fail in truly "turning from" even the most blatant and public Sins that are clearly condemned in Scripture.

How Joy Motivates Repentance

Hebrews 12:1&2

1 Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Please notice that Jesus did *not* endure the Cross out of His Duty to obey His Father. He did *not* go through with the Burden of having all of our Sins placed on Him because of some sense of Obligation or Responsibility. The Bible doesn't teach that. The Bible says that Jesus obeyed His Father,

... for the joy set before Him

So, God must not only grant the Knowledge of Sin to this couple- but He must also grant this couple with an overwhelming Vision of the Majesty and the Magnificence of the Glory of God. Look at the inspired Words of the Apostle Paul:

2Corinthians 3:5-18

5 Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as *coming* from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

6 who also made us adequate *as* servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7 But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading *as* it was,

8 how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

- 9** For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.
- 10** For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses *it*.
- 11** For if that which fades away *was* with glory, much more that which remains *is* in glory.
- 12** Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in *our* speech,
- 13** and *are* not like Moses, *who* used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.
- 14** But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.
- 15** But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;
- 16** but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.
- 17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.
- 18** But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

This Passage forever destroys the notion that people change when they realize that they are sinning. This Passage utterly discredits the idea that as long as we can confront people with their wrong- doing- they will repent.

The single best Mechanism for revealing the Knowledge of Sin that has ever existed and that will ever exist on the face of the earth was the Law of God that was give through Moses. And yet not a single Sin was ever forgiven through it. Not one.

Hebrews 10:1-4

- 1** For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.
- 2** Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?
- 3** But in those *sacrifices* there is a reminder of sins year by year.
- 4** For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

The Law of God did not forgive a single Sin or save a single soul. Sins are only forgiven by God- by Grace and through Faith in the finished Work of Christ and *not* by human beings understanding a list of acceptable Behavior and then exercising human will-Power to stop or start certain Activities. That isn't Christianity and that effort does not honor God.

The Apostle Paul called the Law of God through Moses,

2Corinthians 3:9b

... the ministry of condemnation ...

... because all that the Law of God had the Power to do was to reveal Sin to us. This very same Apostle taught,

Romans 3:20b

... through the Law *comes* the knowledge of sin.

So, the Law of God cannot do anything but condemn us. We understand what Sin is- through what God revealed through the Law. So, the Law is very useful to bring Conviction to the individual. But it is not useful at all to facilitate Repentance. The Apostle taught that for our Repentance- we don't need the mentality of the Law- but the mentality of Grace.

15 But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

16 but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, *there* is liberty.

18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

When saved people, who are those who have had the veil "taken away" behold the Glory of the Lord- we are changed. And we are changed into the very same Image that we behold. And notice that the change is automatic. It is the result of beholding the Glory of God. So, the Catalyst for changing and turning away from Sin and repenting- is to behold the Glory of God. And Paul taught that we behold God's Glory in, by, and through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God:

2Corinthians 4:1-6

1 Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart,

2 but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,

4 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

6 For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Repenting of Sin is not like "turning over a new leaf" or "making a New Year's Resolution". Those are pagan Concepts that have nothing to do with biblical Repentance. Repenting is not a product of human Effort. By definition, Repentance- the turning away from Sin- is a miracle. It is supernatural. It is a "Gift" of God's Grace. The Apostle Paul likened human beings turning from Sin and being saved to the sovereign Miracle of Creation:

2Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

In the same way that God's Word created Light out of Darkness- our hearts will become filled with what Paul called,

... the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ

And so, as God's Spirit takes God's Word- God's Will- will be effectually made real in our lives. And Sin, Rebellion, and Transgression will be gladly forsaken so that our change into the glorious Image that we now behold can occur.

So, one of the main reasons why we have seen an exponential increase in habitual Sins among the people of the modern Church- is not because they don't know that what they are doing is wrong. It is because they have never beheld the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ through the Spirit- anointed preaching of the Word of God.

So, as God is revealed to us in the breathtaking Beauty and infinite Value of Jesus- that Image will create three aspects in our lives:

- ✓ A healthy Fear of God
- ✓ An unquenchable Admiration for God
- ✓ An unspeakable Awe of God

And those three aspects that flow out from beholding the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ will produce a deep and profound and ever-growing Affection/Love for God. And in that Love will be found the elements of Delight and Joy for God that are so scarce today in the entertainment- driven people of the modern Church.

Psalm 42:1

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God.

Matthew 5:6

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Song of Solomon 3:1-3

1 "On my bed night after night I sought him Whom my soul loves; I sought him but did not find him.

2 'I must arise now and go about the city; In the streets and in the squares I must seek him whom my soul loves.' I sought him but did not find him.

3 "The watchmen who make the rounds in the city found me, *And I said, 'Have you seen him whom my soul loves?'*

Panting after God; hungering and thirsting after Righteousness; seeking Him Whom our soul loves. These are not normal characteristics of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam. These Attributes do not naturally flow out from us. These are Gifts from God. God must sovereignly and mercifully "grant" these Attributes to us or we simply will not have them.

The Acts 5:31

He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

The Acts 8:22

Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you.

So, we do *not* obey *gladly*; we do *not* follow with *relish*; and we do *not* turn from Sin with *Joy* because our Love for God is paper-thin or non-existent. And we do not love God because we do not fear Him. We do not love God because we know nothing about Him that we should admire. And we do not love God because there is nothing in our minds about God that leaves us in speechless awe.

We fear terrorists; we admire Mormon morality; and we are in awe of smart phone applications; or special effects at the movies- but we do not fear God. We do not admire Him; and we are not in awe of Him. And we lack those three Elements because many have never one time beheld the Glory of God in the Face of Jesus Christ through Spirit-empowered Preaching.

Until we are once again blessed by God to be enthralled and overwhelmed by the individual Parts of the very Character and Nature of the God of the Bible- we will *continue* to love things that God made and that are passing away *as much* or even *more* than we love God. And as long as we remain ignorant of what God has revealed about Himself in Scripture- we will invariably rob God of *some* or *all* of the Glory that should rightly go to Him alone.

As God was giving His Old Testament Prophets various glimpses of the magnificence of the New Covenant that was coming through Jesus- He included parts like this:

Jeremiah 32:40&41

40 "I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; and I will put the fear of Me in their hearts so that they will not turn away from Me.

41 "I will rejoice over them to do them good and will faithfully plant them in this land with all My heart and with all My soul.

God promised that through the New Covenant that He alone would sovereignly put within His people,

... the fear of Me in their hearts...

... and God promised that He would sovereignly place within us the fear of God...

... so that they will not turn away from Me (sin)

God revealed another portion of the New Covenant through the Prophets Ezekiel when he said this in **Ezekiel 36:25-27**

25 "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

26 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

So, every ounce of Energy and Carefulness that we put forth to obey God and to turn away from Sin when we disobey- is simply a human Response to what God said He would sovereignly do for us in the New Covenant:

I will sprinkle clean water on you... I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols... I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you... I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh... I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes...

... and what is the Result of God doing all of this for us and in us?

... and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

So, the way that God facilitates Repentance in His people is *not* patterned after the "Ministry of Condemnation" that dominated the Pharisees. God does not tell people to act against their Desires. All that does- is produce dry, dead, lifeless people who obey out of fear; or out of a sense of duty or obligation- rather than out of a genuine Delight. And God is not honored by that kind of Obedience.

The only kind of Obedience that brings Glory to God is *joyful* Obedience; *glad* Obedience; an Obedience founded on the unshakable idea that my desire to be happy and God's Desire to be glorified are both accomplished in, by, and through Salvation in Jesus Christ. So, if any of us is going to obey God with Joy- God must first sovereignly change what we enjoy. He must give us new Loves and new Affections; and put in us a new Joy that delights in obeying God. And that is *exactly* what happens to sinful rebels in the New Birth.

Being born again is the supernatural transferring of human Desires from sinful things to God. It is the sovereign Opening of our eyes that everything that has been made is passing away and that only Jesus Christ can bring the fullness of Joy. So, possessing the new Divine Nature is the setting of our Affections on Jesus; and away from things that were created and that are temporary.

So as a new creature- we don't stop wanting to be happy. All that changes is what makes us happy. As lost and fallen sinners- we see the "here and now". Our eyes are only focused on ourselves and what we can do for ourselves. But true Joy; lasting Joy; deep and abiding Joy doesn't come through that Self-centered Way. Human beings were created to love and serve God. And only by doing that- can we find the fullest expression of Joy and Happiness.

Psalm 16:11

You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

John 15:7-11

- 7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.
- 8 "My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit, and *so* prove to be My disciples.
- 9 "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love.
- 10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.
- 11 "These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and *that* your joy may be made full.

John 17:13

But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

John 17:25-26

- 25 "O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me;
- 26 and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

... but Sin stops that from happening.

So, God, in His Mercy determined to save some of the unworthy sinners by what He alone does for them. And the end Result of that New Birth is that God's people truly find the highest level of personal Satisfaction in humble Submission to God and His Word.

So, Salvation is God- developing in wicked rebels- the Ability, not to simply know Him- but to actually *enjoy* Him; to *delight* in Him; to *love* Him; and to see Jesus as the greatest Treasure in the Universe. And when that is true- whatever has to be sacrificed in pursuit of humble Obedience is deemed to be worthwhile and a Joy in itself. So, knowing Who God is; and that what God has promised is infinitely better than anything this world can offer- is the key to happy Obedience.

So, our Obedience is best realized by replacing something that we value (Sin) with something that is infinitely *more* valuable (Jesus Christ). And when Jesus is viewed as the greatest Treasure in the Universe- then sacrificing anything to please Him is truly a Pleasure. So, this couple's success in actually doing what God's Word requires with Joy- is predicated on their vision of Jesus.

The Historic Understanding of Faith and Repentance

We are not the first generation of believers who have sought a biblical Understanding of both Faith and Repentance. Christianity is 2,000 years old, and many, many believers all throughout the centuries have sought to put these pieces together.

500 years ago, as the fire of the Protestant Reformation swept the earth- the leaders of the Movement put on paper a way to understand the correlation between Faith and Repentance. Here is a sampling of what they said:

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM, Question & Answer 21

“What is true faith?” “It is not only a certain knowledge, whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed to us in His Word; but also a hearty trust, which the Holy Ghost works in me by the Gospel, that not only to others, but to me also, forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and salvation, are freely given by God, merely of grace, for the sake of Christ’s merits.”

WESTMINSTER CONFSSION OF FAITH, 14.2

“By this faith, a Christian believeth to be true whatsoever is revealed in the Word, for the authority of God himself speaking therein; and acteth differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth; yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatenings, and embracing the promises of God for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.”

WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM, Answer 72

“Justifying faith is a saving grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and Word of God, whereby he, being convinced of his sin and misery, and of the disability in himself and all other creatures to recover him out of his lost condition, not only assenteth to the truth of the promise of the gospel, but receiveth and resteth upon Christ and his righteousness, therein held forth, for pardon of sin, and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation.”

1689 LONDON BAPTIST CONFSSION OF FAITH, 15.3

“Saving repentance is an evangelical grace by which a person who is made to feel, by the Holy Spirit, the manifold evils of his sin, and being given faith in Christ, humbles himself over his sin with godly sorrow, detestation of his sin and self-abhorrency. In such repentance the person also prays for pardon and strength of grace, and has a purpose and endeavours, by supplies of the Spirit’s power, to walk before God and to totally please Him in all things.”

So, the Work of God the Holy Spirit in Repentance is that we are enabled and empowered to comprehend two very important things:

1. How holy God is
2. How wicked we are

.. and these two Realities bring forth several other aspects

- ✓ Great Sorrow over our Sins
- ✓ Humility
- ✓ A “hating” of our Sins
- ✓ Self-loathing

... and it is in this desperate Condition that we repent and cry out to God for Forgiveness.

The Connection Between Faith and Repentance

Mark 1:14&15

14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God,

15 and saying, **"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."**

Nowhere in the Bible is the Command given to, "accept Jesus into your heart". That statement (that has become dominant in the modern Church) is a manufactured doctrine that has replaced the Biblical Mandate to:

1. Repent
2. Believe

And my Objection to this statement is not merely semantical. The Theology behind telling someone to "accept Jesus into your heart" to be saved and the Theology behind telling someone to "repent and believe the Gospel" are not even close. Asking Jesus into a person's heart requires no turning away from Sin. It requires no radical Departure from the Way of Life that the individual already has. Yet the Old Testament Prophets; John the Baptist; Jesus Christ; and the New Testament Apostles *required* people who wanted to be saved- people who said they believed- to turn away from Sin.

2Kings 17:13&14

13 Yet the Lord warned Israel and Judah through all His prophets *and* every seer, saying, **"Turn from your evil ways and keep My commandments, My statutes according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you through My servants the prophets."**

14 However, they did not listen, but stiffened their neck like their fathers, who did not believe in the Lord their God.

2Chronicles 7:14

and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

Jeremiah 5:3

O Lord, do not Your eyes *look* for truth? You have smitten them, *But* they did not weaken; You have consumed them, *But* they refused to take correction. They have made their faces harder than rock; They have refused to repent.

Jeremiah 15:5-7

5 "Indeed, who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem, Or who will mourn for you, Or who will turn aside to ask about your welfare?"

6 "You who have forsaken Me," declares the Lord, "You keep going backward. So I will stretch out My hand against you and destroy you; I am tired of relenting!"

7 "I will winnow them with a winnowing fork At the gates of the land; I will bereave *them* of children, I will destroy My people; They did not repent of their ways.

Ezekiel 14:6

Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord God, "Repent and turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations.

Ezekiel 18:30-32

30 "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord God. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.

31 "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?

32 "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord God. "Therefore, repent and live."

Ezekiel 33:7-16

7 "Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so you will hear a message from My mouth and give them warning from Me.

8 "When I say to the wicked, 'O wicked man, you will surely die,' and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require from your hand.

9 "But if you on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your life.

10 "Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus you have spoken, saying, "Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?"'

11 "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'

12 "And you, son of man, say to your fellow citizens, 'The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day of his transgression, and as for the wickedness of the wicked, he will not stumble because of it in the day when he turns from his wickedness; whereas a righteous man will not be able to live by his righteousness on the day when he commits sin.'

13 "When I say to the righteous he will surely live, and he *so* trusts in his righteousness that he commits iniquity, none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his which he has committed he will die.

14 "But when I say to the wicked, 'You will surely die,' and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness,

15 *if a* wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

16 "None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he shall surely live.

Matthew 3:1-12

1 Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying,
2 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "*THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'*"
4 Now John himself had a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey.
5 Then Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the district around the Jordan;
6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.
7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?
8 "Therefore bear fruit in keeping with repentance;
9 and do not suppose that you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.
10 "The axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.
11 "As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.
12 "His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Matthew 4:17

From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**"

The Acts 2:37&38

37 Now when they heard *this*, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?"

38 Peter *said* to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Acts 3:19

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord;

The Acts 17:30&31

30 "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all *people* everywhere should repent,

31 because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

So, here we see a Connection between Believing and Repentance; between Trusting and Turning. So, what are we to make of this Connection and does the Command for us to "do" these two things constitute a "human Work"?

First of all, Faith and Repentance are *not* two different Aspects that are completely unrelated. They are two different Manifestations of the same Work of God in the Salvation of sinners. So, Faith and Repentance are merely "two sides of the same coin". And so, it is correct to think that we cannot repent without believing; and we do not possess true "saving Faith" without turning from Sin. Each one proves that the other is real and each one facilitates the other in being real.

No one can turn from Sin unless that person has been brought under deep and powerful Conviction by a sovereign Act of God the Holy Spirit. But that same Act of God in bringing us into Conviction also makes Jesus to be real and true in the mind of the individual. And so, as we turn away from Evil and Wickedness- it is done so, out of a true and living trust in Who Jesus is; and what He has done on our behalf. And, conversely, as we believe Who Jesus is; and what He has done; to be real and true- we are empowered and enabled to repent.

Another way of understanding this is that true Faith is a "*repentant* Faith"; a "*penitent* Faith"; a "*broken and humble* Faith". Likewise, true Repentance is a "*trusting* Repentance"; a "*believing* Repentance"; and a Repentance based in the Truth about Who Jesus is; and what He has done on our behalf.

Repentance Involves More Than Being Sorry

When the people asked John the Baptist what genuine Repentance looked like, this is how John responded:

Luke 3:7-14

7 So he *began* saying to the crowds who were going out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 "Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.

9 "Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 And the crowds were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?"

11 And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise."

12 And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?"

13 And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."

14 *Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages."*

The crowds were told that Repentance looked like sharing their tunics and their food. Tax collectors were told that truly turning away from Sin required them to completely re-organize the way they ran their business. And soldiers were told that repenting meant they had to be kind and truthful and content with their wages. So, according to the infallible Word of the living God- in every case- Repentance unto Salvation *cost* the people something. It placed *Requirements* on them. It *imposed* a Standard of Behavior on them. And true Repentance *expected* a radical change in the Behavior of the people who said they believed. And this change was never understood to be anything other than permanent.

During the early days of Christianity, new Converts were told to take forty days to ponder their Conversion; memorize certain Scriptures; and to understand the various Elements of the Apostle's Creed before they were baptized. But another very important aspect of waiting forty days was so that new Converts could begin to bear the Fruit that was "in keeping with Repentance".

For example, former thieves went into the community and repaid what they had stolen. Liars found a way to prove their Repentance was genuine by serving the people they had defrauded. So, after the forty days were accomplished and these new believers were baptized and accepted into Membership into Christ's Church- it was a really big deal and the entire community rejoiced.

Is This a "Works- Based" Salvation System?

Some would suggest that to expect new converts to actually "turn from Sin" to prove that their Faith is genuine- is to *artificially* institute an ungodly "Works- based" System onto Salvation. But nothing could be farther from the Truth. Legalism is a horrific Heresy because it ignores the Grace of God; and teaches that lost sinners have to "do" something in order to earn God's Favor. Legalism says that we have to perform certain Tasks to put ourselves in line for God to give us His Grace. So, Legalism teaches that our "Works" come first and our Works result in God giving us His Grace for Salvation.

What the Bible teaches is exactly the opposite. First of all- genuine Faith; saving Faith- is a Gift from God.

Ephesians 2:8&9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is the gift of God;*

9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Here the Apostle Paul says that we are not saved merely "by" the Grace of God- but that we are also saved "through" our believing (Faith). Yet he is also quick to teach that the Faith *through which* we are saved- is "**not of yourselves**" meaning that it doesn't originate from us; we don't initiate it; it isn't inherent in us. Paul goes on to say that the Faith that it takes to be saved is "**the gift of God**". So, anything we "do" based on the Gift of saving Faith- like repent- is not a "Work" but is merely a human *response* to what God has already given to us.

Romans 10:9&10

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Here the Apostle teaches that what we confess and believe saves us. But how do we know if our Faith is “saving Faith”? Paul answers,

for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness...

... where “Righteousness” is understood as “Obedience”. So, our believing must result in Obedience (ie repent) or our Belief is not saving Faith. So, a “Work” is something that *we* initiate that results in God responding favorably to us. And that is what Legalism wrongly teaches. But the Bible teaches that human beings *respond* to the “Gift of Faith” that God gives- by repenting. So, the effort to repent is not a “Work” that is designed to earn Salvation. It is the “unmistakable Proof” that the Belief and Faith that the individual has shown- is genuine. So, Acts of Repentance are simply Fruits that are lovingly manifested in the Life of the individual who has already truly believed.