

What is repentance? (J.C. Ryle)

- **Repentance begins with the knowledge of sin.** Sin is essentially our futile attempt to dethrone God from being our highest pursuit, love, joy, delight. Sin is substituting primarily ourselves in God's place as our highest pursuit, love, joy, delight (TWADDR). Repentance begins with understanding this. Do you?
- **Repentance expresses genuine sorrow for that sin.** It is not enough to simply understand factually what sin is. True repentance involves brokenness over sin – genuine sadness that God was not your highest pursuit, love, joy, delight – He was robbed of the glory and praise that was due Him. Being sorry for the consequences that have come from sin is not necessarily genuine repentance. Genuine repentance makes you very sad that God was not seen to be the great God that He truly is. Do you see this present in your life?
- **Repentance leads to confession of sin before God.** When I'm truly repentant, I'm not concerned that others who sinned in the process are found out too; that they admit they sinned too. Genuine repentance is not concerned if other sinners escape and go free, because repentance is still troubled that God was diminished by my own actions/inaction. Repentance makes the sinner concerned to talk with God about it – to openly agree with God concerning his own sin. Does this occur on a regular basis in your life?
- **Repentance leads to a thorough breaking off from sin.** Obviously at this point, genuine repentance has no desire to continue in what has broken the sinner's heart and led to open agreement with God about what diminished God; made Him appear inconsequential before others. When was the last time this type of thorough breaking off took place in your life?
- **Repentance produces a habit of deep hatred of all sin.** Genuine repentance equips the believer to discern where other sins exist in his own life – other arenas where God is not his highest pursuit, love, joy, delight; to see other TWADDR where self is still the highest pursuit, love, joy, delight. Do you truly hate the sin that is revealed to you?
- **Repentance is inseparably connected with lively faith in and love for Jesus Christ.** Genuine repentance sees the greatness and beauty and worth of Jesus. The punishment that is due to the repentant sinner has fallen on Jesus instead. God's wrath toward the repentant sinner has been removed in Jesus' death. Repentance means you will separate yourself from sin – but not without simultaneously entrusting your life further to Jesus. It is not enough to only focus on putting off the sin, destroying the sin. Greater pursuits of Jesus in God's word, deeper love for Him, stronger entrustment of self to Him must also simultaneously occur. Is there greater faith and love for Jesus this year than last?