

## Repentance

If a person does not "do unto others as they would have others do unto them", they do not have faith, even though they may say that they do. The "proof" that faith exists is the presence of good works.

If any readers have been deceived into thinking that things like doing wonders and prophesying are the proof of salvation, read the words of Jesus in the 7th chapter of Matthew. In verses 15 and 16 He says "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits".

Read the verses following these two and pay particular attention to verse 22 which refers to judgment day. "Many will say to Me in that day 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?'"

Jesus replies (verse 23) "And then I will declare to them 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"

Paul says the same thing in the 13th chapter of 1 Corinthians. Read verses 1 to 3 carefully and then read the whole chapter.

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become (as) sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have (the gift of) prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed (the poor), and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, IT PROFITS ME NOTHING."

The word that is translated as "love" means "caring" (it is translated as "charity" in the King James version). If you do not care for your fellow man, you are not a believer, no matter how many outward signs (sheep's clothing) you might exhibit.

The meaning of repentance is clearly explained in the preceding sections but there are two more aspect of it that I want to clarify.

The Holy Bible does not say that repentance means "doing penance".

Penance is a punishment for sin that is either self-inflicted or performed on the command of some authority.

The word "penance" can not be found in the Bible; neither can the idea of self-inflicted punishment for sin. Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. Nothing more is required, except to repent and believe in Him.

Of course true repentance includes making up for any harm that you have done, if this is possible; and there are examples in the Bible of penalties imposed by God. See the story of David and Bathsheba, that I refer to in the next section, and note that God forgave David when he repented (2 Samuel 12:13); but there was an earthly penalty for the sins he had committed.

The word "repent" does not mean to simply "realize that you have sinned". Neither does it mean to just "be willing to stop sinning".

In the Old Testament, the word repent is a translation of the Hebrew "nacham" which means "to regret".

In the New Testament, the word repent is a translation of the Greek "metanoeo" which means "to reconsider" or "change your mind".

So the meaning of "repent" is "to be truly sorry about sinning and to make a firm decision that you are, with God's help, going to stop". This is clear when you read passages in which the word is found.

For a good example of the meaning of repentance, read Luke 19:1-10. Jesus stated that Zacchaeus had obtained salvation after he said "...I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold".