

### God's Sweet Sixteen – Part 3

We're in God's Sweet Sixteen and remember these are sixteen things that we will observe ourselves growing in if we're functioning in the Kingdom Life stage out of the Kingdom Progression series. And that's where we're regarding Jesus as our source, as our basis and the object of our gaze with the cross of Jesus Christ as the means by which we have every spiritual blessing. And when we do that we're bearing witness of Jesus and bringing glory to Jesus which looses the Holy Spirit to be the power in our lives because that's what He came to do. So the first week we began with pray and praise. In part two we began with seek, surrender, and rejoice. And today is part three, May 28, 2008.

Next poster. The subject for today is repentance. Godly repentance (if carried to completion) involves seven stages. The first stage is, "**I did it.**" Now obviously you cannot repent of something that you're not taking responsibility for doing. For simplicity as we talk about these things, I'm discussing this from the polarity of a sin of commission, not omission. In other words, I did it. You could just as easily take the polarity of I did not do it and I should have done it; but for simplicity I'll state it in the polarity of a sin of commission. The second stage is, "**it was wrong.**" Even if you take responsibility for doing it, you cannot truly repent if you do not also acknowledge the wrongness of what you did. These first two steps taken together constitute what the Bible calls conviction. I did it and it was wrong is the conviction through your conscience by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth. The next stage is, "**I'm sorry.**" This implies a heartfelt emotional state of regret for the wrongness that you did. It must be obviously a deeper work of sorrow than simply the sorrow of being caught at what you did. If there's no sorrow at the wrongness of what you did, then there cannot be true repentance. Simply saying I am sorry without being touched by sorrow at what you did that was wrong will never lead to the fullness and completion of repentance.

The next stage is, "**please forgive me.**" Sin grieves God. Even on a human level, any act of wrong causes loss and pain to some degree on the part of someone else. If you feel true sorrow at the wrongness of what you did and at the loss and pain that you've caused others and at the grieving of God, then you will desire the forgiveness of God and the forgiveness of others. I did it, it was wrong; I'm sorry, please forgive me. The fifth stage is, "**I purpose not to do it again.**" When I first wrote this poster I used the word *promise*—I promise not to do it again. Then I learned that no man can promise to keep a promise. If we could promise to keep a promise, we wouldn't need the Holy Spirit to empower us to purification. We could do it by self will and self effort. A better word is I purpose not to do it again. To purpose means to aim at an object or result by way of determination. After all if you do not purpose to refrain from repetition of the action for which you are repenting, then how sincere can you be about its wrongness and about the sorrow that followed and about the forgiveness that you requested? So, I did it, it was wrong, I am sorry, please forgive me and I purpose not to do it again.

Stage six: "**I now hate what I'm repenting of.**" If a liar does not grow to hate lying, then he will continue to lie. Stage seven: "**I now passionately and aggressively pursue the opposite of that which I am now repenting of.**" These last two work in concert. Together they fulfill what is described in Matthew 3:8 as the fruit of repentance. If you stop at the end of stage five when you purpose not to do it again, then you'll simply keep repeating the cycle of the same sin.

You'll be relying on the flesh if you simply purpose not to do it again. You'll simply run laps in the wilderness as the children of Israel did before they were allowed ultimately to go into the Promised Land after all the previous Israelites had died. The last two stages are where the power of God gets engaged in the action. It does so by understanding love. Imagine that! Recall that love is a passion for oneness.

I'll use the example of lying to make a point, but actually any sin could be used as an example. Something is only wrong and needs repentance because it is contrary to what God is. God is love. That's why it's wrong to hate others. God is truth. That's why it is wrong to lie. You cannot give God glory and pleasure and you cannot testify of God to others if you continue to display repetitively a character trait that is opposite to God Himself. That invalidates your testimony. Other people can lie without your God. So if you lie with your God and they can lie equally well without your God, why should they want your God. How can you testify of God as truth and of the truthfulness of God by telling lies? When you know God and know that He is love and know that He loves you, then you will love God. I John 4:19 – We love because He first loved us. We can't conjure up love. We love in response to seeing His love not as a vague theologic abstraction, but as directed and set upon you as an individual. God loves you. God has a passion to be one with you; but God doesn't love only you. God is truth. God has a passion to remain one with that which He is. He has a passion to be one with truth. This requires simultaneously a passion to be totally removed from all untruth including all untruth in you. When you love God you'll have a passion to be one with God. When you love God, you will love what God is. You'll have a passion to be one with what He is. God is truth; because that is what God is and you love Him because He first loved you, then you will have a passion to be one with Him and you can only become one with Him by loving truth and hating untruth. You must love what He is and hate what He isn't. If you do not do that, then you will never be delivered from that which you are repenting of. But when you do that, you will passionately pursue that which brings you closer, faster into oneness with your God. You will do that which fulfills His love for you because His love for you is His passion to be one with you; but He cannot become fully one with that which is what He is not—namely untruth. You will passionately pursue that which brings Him glory and pleasure; because how can you claim to give glory to that which you do not passionately desire to become like? You will passionately pursue that which accurately testifies of Him to others; because you cannot love God without wanting others to know the love of God. When you do these things, then you will passionately and aggressively pursue truth and you will passionately and aggressively strive to totally separate yourself from all untruth—namely all lies.

So let's look at a few Scriptures to make this point so that you don't simply think that this is "Buddy-ology." Matthew 3:2 (John the Baptist cries out) – "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Matthew 4:17 (where we have the first words of Jesus as He began His ministry) – "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Psalm 97:10 – Ye who love the Lord hate evil. Proverbs 8:13 – The fear of the Lord is to hate evil. Amos 5:15 – Hate the evil and love the good. And then the summary verse given by Jesus in Luke 16:13 – You cannot love two masters; you will love the one and hate the other or love the other and hate the one. You cannot love the Lord without hating evil. You cannot fear the Lord without hating evil. You cannot love the good without hating evil. They're not two separate things that you contemplate; they are linked as two sides of the same coin. To do the one is to do the other. True repentance of lying

always is to end with loving truth because that's what God is, and hating lies because that's what God is not. Stopping short of that process will abort deliverance from that of which you are repenting.

Next poster. This poster depicts the conscience in graphic form and in a simplistic manner. We can think of the conscience as a meter. The ideal function of the conscience is to measure for me the gap between my motives and actions and the motives and actions of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the God man, the sinless man; thus, He is our standard and our model for all things. At any moment the conscience, if fully activated, is to register for me the difference between what I am thinking, saying, and doing and what Jesus would be thinking, saying, and doing under the similar circumstance. The conscience can also be written as a mathematical equation. The conscience calculates the amount of the difference between Christ and me and the difference is what I am convicted of. Recall that conviction means the first two stages of the process of repentance. I did it and it was wrong and it was wrong because it's not like Christ; and it's not like Christ is important because Christ is the revelation to us of God Himself. We then face certain choices about what to do when we are convicted. When our conscience registers in our consciousness that we have fallen short of Christlikeness in any arena of our lives, a response is called for. Our response to the conviction will lead to either completion of the process of repentance or abortion of the process of repentance. And this is important because the fullness of repentance is what leads to deliverance. And being delivered from that of which you are repenting is what completes the process of transformation into Christlikeness.

One of the things we can do is to murder the conscience. The conscience is the messenger; this is to shoot the messenger. This is to refute the conviction, to argue against the conviction, to refuse to hear the conviction, and to refuse to accept the conviction. It's to attack the conscience instead of repenting. This is what sears the conscience in Biblical terms. It brutalizes and hardens the conscience. If continued, then the light of the conscience will begin to dim. Ultimately, in its fullness, it would murder the conscience. That would result in the sociopathic condition of functioning with total indifference to afflicted pain on others, to any sense of right and wrong, and to any grief that you're giving your creator God. This is to negate one's own humanity. This is the liar who is totally untroubled by lying and totally untroubled about the brutality of his lying and its influence upon anyone else.

Second is to con the conscience. This means to pretend to respond to your conscience, but with no deep intent to do so. The con job can fool others, and maybe even to a degree yourself, but can never fool God. This is the liar who is caught lying but then continues to lie even after repentance and to the same degree as before. So he runs laps in the wilderness. I did it, it was wrong, I'm sorry, please forgive me and I purpose not to do it again, but with no deep intent to follow through on that. So his life is unchanged and he goes to his grave as a liar to the same or greater magnitude than he was before.

Next is to compromise the conscience. This is to respond to the conviction by seeking to appease God by coming part way, but while remaining largely unchanged. It continues the con, but in slightly miniaturized form. This is the liar who is convicted of lying who then repents and then lies a little less than before. He believes in his self determination that a lesser degree of

uncleanness to a slight degree should be sufficient to appease a Holy God. If he can slow the process of change enough, then he can finish life on Earth largely unchanged.

The next is condemnation. Condemnation is when the response to conviction is to flee from God in shame instead of going to the throne of grace to receive forgiveness. Self condemnation sounds humble, but is actually pride. Self condemnation makes several nonverbal statements to refute Scripture. Acts 10:11-16 tells the story of Peter's vision in which he saw animals that were unclean according to Jewish law. God told him to eat, but Peter refused. The voice said to Peter, what God has called clean, do not call unclean. As Christians we are clean by the blood of Jesus Christ. We have the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We have the forgiveness of all sins. To continue to walk in prolonged self condemnation is to call unclean that which God has called clean by the blood of His Son. Recall that God being holy is the only self determined thing in all of existence. That means that His meaning and His value are intrinsic within Himself. All other things have their meaning and value set by God, not by human beings. This includes the value of the blood of Jesus. God has told us the value of the blood of His Son in His Word. It is of more weight and more value than that of all the sins of the world including yours past, present, and future. To continue to walk in prolonged self condemnation is to proclaim that the weight of your sin is greater than the weight and value of the blood of Jesus Christ. This is to walk in self determination, not God determination. This is to judge God as being wrong about the value of the blood of His Son. This is self worship, not God worship. Prolonged self condemnation after conviction is another sin to be repented of, not something to receive back-patting consolation from Christians about how humble you are because of your wallowing in self condemnation. It is not to be validated as humility when it is actually pride, not humility; because you are determining the weight and value of your sin compared to the weight and value of the blood of the Son of God. Now I'm sure you figured out that the proper response to conviction by our conscience is not to murder, not to con, not to compromise, and not to dwell in condemnation. The proper response, and only proper response, is fullness of repentance including all seven stages.

Next poster. This poster is meant to capture and review a few aspects of my guilt. Denial—denial is my judging that I am not guilty, or I'm guilty to a lesser degree than what my conscience is convicting me of. This is to take the legitimate conviction of your conscience and simply to pronounce that your conscience is wrong in whole or in part. Only by self determination and functioning in denial can you murder, con, and compromise your conscience. This aborts the God-given process of progressive purification into the image of His Son. The correct response when convicted (if you have any doubt about the accuracy of the conviction) is to pray, to search the Word of God, and to ask trusted saints their Biblically informed perspective about the legitimacy or illegitimacy about what your conscience is telling you.

The next is conviction. And by this, I'm saying more than just I did it and it was wrong, but am implying acceptance of the knowledge rather than denial of the knowledge. I truly did it and it truly was wrong. Such acceptance of the conviction of your conscience rather than denial is what allows the God-given process of progressive purification to continue.

The next is shame. Shame is the emotion associated with my guilt when you accept the conviction of your conscience. It is the emotional response that occurs when you fully accept the

knowledge of your guilt and fully accept the wrongness of what you did. This is meant to be a transient phase along the pathway. True shame includes sorrow; because if you truly feel ashamed, you will feel sorrow at what you have done. If you do not feel shame and do not feel sorrow at the wrongness of what you did, then you will abort the process of repentance because you will be largely untroubled by it.

The next is self condemnation. This is my judging of my guilt or lack thereof. This is to accept the conviction, to feel the shame and sorrow; but to get stuck there by your own self determination rather than completing the process. This is to fix your gaze upon yourself and your sin rather than fixing your gaze upon the Son of God Who paid the price for your sin. This is to continue to self appoint yourself as the final judge of your guilt rather than letting God be God and be that judge including the judge of the value of His Son. In an ultimate sense, my guilt is to reject Jesus Christ and, of course, that would be to hang onto your guilt forever. Here, of course, I'm addressing the lost, not this distinguished group. Even the lost have a conscience. They can receive conviction, feel shame, express sorrow, ask forgiveness, and purpose not to do it again. But they cannot grow in hatred of what they're repenting of and they cannot grow in love of the opposite of what they're repenting of because that is a work of God. When you go through the first five stages as a lost person, this can somewhat lead to better relationships on Earth, but it does nothing about guilt before a Holy God. Only the cross of Christ can take care of that. There is little point to being the best sinner in the lake of fire for all eternity.

The next is to accept Christ which means, of course, that you are not guilty. This is to accept the conviction that you are guilty before a Holy God and that there's nothing that you can do to pay the price for that difference from godliness. But by the grace of God you receive faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified as having paid the price for all of your sins. This is cause for joy, not continued shame and cause for joy, not continued self condemnation.

Next poster. This poster is meant to be a somewhat abbreviated flow sheet, but to capture the essential characteristics of the God-ordained process for purification in the Christian. The reason for including it here is to show that repentance is a critical link in the pathway. I'm using the word test at the top to mean any external circumstance that brings pressure to bear upon you. I'm using the word temptation to mean the inner solicitation to do evil under the pressure of the test. When you're in a test and have an inner solicitation to do evil this, of course, presents your will with a choice. As always we know that that choice is between God and un-God. It's between those two frames of reference of being God determined or self determined. The one that you choose reveals what you love; because you will only choose that which you have a passion to be one with. When you choose un-God over God, it is the revelation of certain things such as secret sin, false idols, unbelief, ignorance, and lack of love of God, and lack of love of man. Your conscience then convicts you. You are to respond with repentance. Repentance then begins with I did it and it was wrong. This is conviction. It progresses to I am sorry, please forgive me and I purpose not to do it again.

This brings us to a critical fork in the road. This fork in the road is not the subject for today. We recently covered it in the series on Kingdom Progression. I mention it here as a reminder as we add precept upon precept. We have reached the fifth stage of repentance—namely, I purpose not to do it again. The question now is simply, how do we go about fulfilling that which we have

purposed? One way is to use the will to turn into the flesh where self is on the throne and to rely on your willpower to perform the work of not committing that sin again. This is to access the system of law and to apply the law of sin and death which will result in defeat, failure, and death. A system of law based on works which you perform under the power of self will always result in defeat, failure, and death because it brings no glory to God and all glory to yourself.

The second way, and the way of escape when tempted, is to use your will to make the choice to turn into the spirit where you regard Jesus as the source of all things, Jesus as the basis of all things, fix your gaze upon Jesus, and regard the cross of Jesus Christ as the means by which the Son of God has purchased every spiritual blessing for you. One of those blessings that He purchased for you is the indwelling Holy Spirit. Even before conviction you have regarded Jesus as your Savior because He paid the price for your sin. But now, under conviction, you look to Jesus (not to yourself) to deliver you from that sin. When you do that, regarding Jesus as the basis and the source and the object of your gaze, you are bearing witness of Jesus and bringing glory to Jesus and the Holy Spirit is now loosed to be your helper. He cannot help you function under the power of self not to sin, but He can help you as you fix your gaze upon Jesus the author and completer of your faith. He's already paid for your secret sins. He's already paid for your false idols. He's already paid for your unbelief. He's already paid for your ignorance; already paid for your lack of love of God; already paid for your lack of love of man. Your revelation then under the conviction of your secret sin, when you turn to Jesus in the spirit realm, is to receive the ever increasing revelation of the grace of God that transcends anything you ever knew before, before you were convicted of your secret sins, false idols, ignorance, unbelief and lack of love. Your revelation of His love grows because of His grace flows out of His love. You then see the awesome love of God which is bigger than you ever knew before your conviction. You see the awesome grace of God lavished upon you which is greater than you ever knew before you received your conviction. You then grow in love of His love. You grow in love of His grace. You grow in love of Him because you're seeing Him more clearly than you saw before the conviction. But you only see it by looking at Him and His cross. You do not see it by looking at self and your efforts of self not to sin, the sin which you're asking forgiveness of. You cannot glorify Jesus Christ and Him crucified without growing in hatred of what He was crucified for. You grow in hatred of that which you are repenting of because you see a greater measure of the agony of Christ on that cross was to pay for the very sins that you're now being convicted of. This is to grow in love of the opposite of what you're repenting of because in full display of Jesus Christ and Him crucified, is the revelation of the opposite of what you're repenting of. Your power of self will never grow in love. But the love of God accessed through fixing your gaze upon Jesus Christ and Him crucified will never fail. This is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. As the love of God is poured out in greater measure in your heart; because Scripture tells us the love of God is shed abroad in your heart by the Holy Spirit. But it's not going to be shed abroad in your heart when your gaze is fixed on yourself.

So to conclude, the fullness of repentance is the following. I did it. It was wrong. I am sorry. Please forgive me. I purpose not to do it again. And as I gaze at Jesus Christ, I'm growing in hatred of what I'm repenting of because it's what put Him on that cross and I'm passionately pursuing the opposite of what I'm repenting of because that is what My Jesus Christ is. That alone fulfills His love for you. That alone gives Him fullness of glory. That alone accesses the abundant life for you. And that alone gives accurate testimony to the world of Who your Savior

is. All of that is why to repent is one of the Sweet Sixteen. But only the fullness of repentance is fully sweet. That's because only the fullness of repentance brings deliverance. And only deliverance transforms you into Christlikeness and only increasing Christlikeness brings God glory and brings you the freedom for which He set you free. That is the repentance without regret. Thus, Paul could write in II Corinthians 7:9 – I now rejoice; not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to repentance. May it be the same with us.

So my time is more than up and I thank you for listening.