

Good News

From Getwell

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The Truth in Love
 WHBQ-AM 560 / FM 98.5
 Sundays, 8:00 a.m.

SCHEDULE OF WEEKLY ACTIVITY

SUNDAY

Bible Study.....9:30 a.m.
 Worship.....10:20 a.m.
 Worship.....5:00 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bible Study.....7:00 p.m.

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ON THE HOME FRONT

It is so encouraging that congregations throughout the nation are using the Spiritual Sword for evangelistic efforts. Last week we received an order for a bundle of fifty to be sent to a congregation in West Tennessee. Their plan is to leave them in public places for others to pick up and be exposed to the truth of the Gospel. This plan reminds me of George and Nell Barber who after reading a particular journal would leave it at their doctor's office for others to pick up and read. The Barbers were faithful members at Getwell for many years.

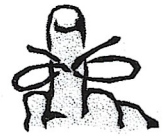
In connection with this, recently I was in the main library in Memphis and on the magazine rack was a copy of the Spiritual Sword. Let me suggest in your community, contact your local library about placing the Spiritual Sword on their magazine rack for pursual. The last two issues are especially thought provoking and attention getting. The themes were "The Oldest Church in the World" and "Questions and Answers About Life After Death." Make a point to get a copy of the latest issue. The theme is "Understanding The Restoration Plea."

This past Lord's day was a great day, we rejoice over the restoration of Brittany Watkins. Brittany grew up at Getwell and I had the privilege of teaching her in our teen class. Be sure to encourage her and pray for her. She is a wonderful young lady.

Until next week!

Ron Wallace

RON'S REMINDERS



The Most Difficult COMMAND

Is the most difficult command in Scripture to love your neighbor as yourself? (Luke 10:27). To be pure in heart? (Matthew 5:8). To wait for sex till marriage? (1 Corinthians 6:18). To be baptized for the remission of sins? (Acts 2:38). To love your enemy? (Matthew 5:44).

These can be daunting challenges to many of us, but none is the hardest. The most difficult command is found in Acts 17:30: "God . . . now commandeth all men every where to repent." American Bible scholar J. W. McGarvey said that if God were giving special miraculous gifts today, he would not ask for the gift of healing, prophecy, or tongues. Rather he would ask for the power, above everything else, to cause men to repent. People do not change their minds or lives very easily. Since repentance involves both, it is challenging. Further, repentance implies one is on the wrong path (Luke 13:3), and none of

Repentance culminates in reformation of life. We cannot turn back the clock and relive a single yesterday, as much as we might want to undo certain sins. We are in control, however, of our todays and tomorrows. It can be very demanding to give up lifestyle sins (1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Matthew 19:6-9; cf. Ezra 10:2-3; Matthew 14:1-4) and pleasure sins (Ephesians 2:3), but it is required (Luke 13:3; Romans 6:13). A Bible teacher asked her class what *repentance* meant. One boy said, "It is being sorry for your sins." A girl corrected him, saying, "It is being sorry enough to quit."

We can be like one four-year-old boy who hated soap and water, especially when his mother washed his face and ears. She tried reasoning with him, asking: "Don't you want to be clean?" He thought for a second and replied, "Yes, but can't you just dust me off sometimes?" True penitents do not desire a superficial dusting but a thorough washing (Psalm 51:2; Acts 22:16).

THREE REQUIREMENTS TO LEARN

Repentance is (1) a change of mind (2) produced by godly sorrow (3) resulting in reformation of life. Since actions are prompted by thoughts and behavior by decisions (Proverbs 23:7), the process of repenting begins in the heart. An unrighteous man must forsake his thoughts (Isaiah 55:7). The Bible sometimes calls this process "dying to self" (Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:5-6).

This change of mind must be motivated by godly sorrow. Paul wrote, "I rejoice . . . that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (2 Corinthians 7:9-10). Worldly sorrow results from the negative consequences of sin and may cause one to reform, but there is no salvation in it. An adulterer may break up with his mistress solely to save his marriage; an alcoholic may put down the bottle to save his liver; a politician might clean up his language to be more electable. While these may be beneficial in the short-term, they will not save the soul. But when one ceases adultery, alcohol, and filthy speech in response to learning and obeying the gospel, he can be saved eternally.

THREE REASONS TO CONSIDER

In making such a life-changing decision as the one to follow Christ, one should weigh carefully the choices (Luke 14:26-33). Here are three reasons to repent:

One should repent, foremost, to be saved from sin (Acts 2:38). No accountable person has ever been—or will ever be (Luke 13:3, 5)—saved without repenting. It is an all-men-everywhere doctrine (Acts 17:30). It will be a question on God's final exam (Acts 17:31; 2 Peter 3:9). Eternity in either heaven or hell weighs in the balance of the decision to repent (Matthew 25:31-33).

One should repent to enjoy an abundant life now. Contrary to popular opinion, sinners do not enjoy life more than Christians (cf. 1 Peter 3:10-11; Proverbs 13:15). Jesus promised an abundant life in the here and now (John 10:10) and heaven hereafter (John 14:1-2).

One should repent to restore purpose and usefulness to life. How did the prodigal feel about his purpose in life as he fed the pigs? (Luke 15:11-32). In Michael Faraday's (1791-1867) laboratory, a workman accidentally dropped a valuable silver cup into a tank of acid. The workmen watched the cup quickly disintegrate. But Faraday rushed

to a cabinet, took out a bottle, and poured a chemical into the tank. The silver was precipitated to the bottom and recovered, and he sent the shapeless mass to a silversmith to be refashioned.¹ Repentance does this for us. After sin has damaged God's likeness in us (Genesis 1:26) and disintegrated our positive influence on others (Matthew 5:15), Christ's blood can recover our true value and remake us in His image (Colossians 3:10).

THREE OBSTACLES TO OVERCOME

The devil is not indifferent to whether we swap sides. He will place as many barriers as he can in our path to Christ (1 Peter 5:8).

Some do not repent because they are unaware that they are sinners. They look around at their associates and think they are as good as the next person. They may even know a Christian and figure they compare favorably with him. In such comparisons, they miss the point. The question is not, "Am I as good as others?" but, "Am I a sinner?" Since the answer to that question is, yes (Romans 3:23), the follow-up question is, "Have I been forgiven of my sins?"

At this point, one must realize that simply being religious is insufficient. Religious people have often opposed the very purposes of God (John 16:2; Acts 23:9). We must make sure that the religion we follow is genuine New Testament Christianity. Jesus said there is no salvation in any other (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).

Further, we must make our calling and election sure (2 Peter 1:10) by comparing what we are taught with Scripture (Acts 17:11). Many religious leaders teach the doctrines and commandments of men, which cannot save (Matthew 15:9). To begin, make sure the plan of salvation one follows matches God's holy word. God's plan includes five steps: learning the gospel (Romans 10:17), believing in Jesus as God's Son (John 3:16), repenting of sin (Acts 2:38), confessing faith in Christ (Acts 8:37; Matthew 10:32-33), and immersion in water for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Romans 6:3-4).

Some do not repent because they are proud and stubborn (Luke 18:9-14). "Pride goeth before destruction" (Proverbs 16:18), so make sure that it does not keep you out of heaven. Be less concerned with what others think of you than what God thinks of you.

Some do not repent because they love a certain sin too much. The gate to heaven is small enough to require unloading every sin in order to fit (Luke 13:23-24).

Some would be Christians except they love gambling too much to give it up; others would obey but they cannot part with an adulterous relationship; others can't give up alcohol or drugs. The rich young ruler loved money and things too much. When offered a seat in the kingdom, he turned it down, and "went away sorrowful" (Matthew 19:16-22). Remember, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy" (Proverbs 28:13).

One little girl saw a pearl necklace that she desperately wanted. Her mother, noting that it cost almost two dollars, said, "No." Seeing how deeply the little girl desired it, though, she relented and said she could purchase the necklace with the money from her piggybank. Her daughter was delighted.

She did not have enough to cover the cost, so she did extra chores and used the dollar her grandmother gave her for her birthday to purchase the necklace within a couple weeks.

She wore it everywhere. She never took it off, except to shower and swim (because her mom told her it would turn green if it got wet).

One night her dad came in to read her a bedtime story, which was their nightly ritual. When he finished, and they had prayed together, he surprised her by asking, "Can I have your pearl necklace?" She was stunned.

"No, daddy, not my necklace, but you can have my favorite white pony with the pink mane."

"That's okay," he replied, and kissed her goodnight.

A few days later he surprised her a second time by asking if he could have her pearls. Again, she said no, but told him that he could have the new baby doll she got for her birthday. Again, he graciously refused and kissed her goodnight.

The next night she was sitting on the edge of her bed weeping when he came in. "What's wrong, honey?" he asked.

She raised her hand out to him and said, "Here, Daddy, I want you to have this." He looked down to see her pearl necklace.

He reached out with one hand to take it and with the other he reached into his pocket and took out a velvet case. He opened it and pulled out a genuine pearl necklace and presented it to her.

He said, "I was wanting you to give me the dime store necklace so I could present you with a real set of pearls."

God has His hand in His pocket. Are you willing to trade?

¹ Macartney