



Father Zakaria Botros

Presents

**The Spiritual Way
The Life of Repentance**

**The sum-up of the spiritual way is that man
should leave all to cling to the One.”
*(Saint Isaac the Great).***



***In the name of the Father, the Son, and
the Holy Spirit ... One God, Amen.***

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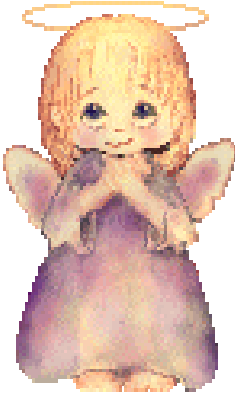
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INTRODUCTION



Just as a traveling tourist needs a guide to lead the way that he may not get lost, so are we on this journey of expatriation toward our home in heaven- in need of someone to lead the way and take hold of our hands that we may not stumble.

Our best guide and leader in this respect are the experiences of those who walked this path before us. Not just that; the Lord of glory himself, Jesus, left behind for us an example we ought to copy (1 Pe 2:21). Our teacher, the Apostle Paul, exhorts us, therefore, to look "unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

This book you are reading is an attempt at throwing light upon the spiritual way the Lord has set for us, which the Fathers walked. The first part is about "life of repentance" as the first stage on the spiritual road.

May the Lord come to our aid as we walk this road, so that, at the end of it, we may

attain eternal life, which we have been called for.

In all humility I set this book before the Lord to anoint every word of it with his holy anointment, in order to be a blessing and a cause for the salvation of the souls of those who read it, and for the glory of his holy name. Amen.

The author.



Chapter 1

At crossroads

“Stand in the ways and see,
and ask for the old paths, where
the good way is, and walk in it;
then you will find rest for your
souls. But they said, ‘We will
not walk in it.’”

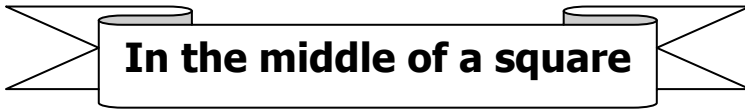
(Jer 6:16)

**** In the middle of a square**

1- A broad way

2- A treacherous way

3- A good way



In the middle of a square

When you find yourself in the middle of a square, with roads branching off from it, you must choose a way to go; a way that takes you where you want to go.

The same applies to our spiritual life; the Bible commands us to stand at the crossroads to see, and ask about the old paths, to recognize the good way, which leads to eternal life, and walk in it, that we may find rest for our souls.

The prophet Jeremiah says,
“Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’” (Jer 6:16)

We may glean three essential truths from these divine words:

- 1- Searching and thinking**
- 2- Self-determination**
- 3- Rest in the walk**

First: searching and thinking

In the Lord’s words “Stand in the ways and see” there is a plain reference to:

- * A break for searching.**
- * A look that involves thinking**

How many people are led like dumb animals in a way they don't know where it ends! "Like sheep they are laid in the grave" is the way the Scriptures describe them (Ps 49:14).

My dear reader, don't become one of those, but stand now, and search the matter seriously with yourself. Think carefully before you take a single step.

Time passes, and life ends. With every passing day we draw near to eternity.

Second: self-determination

As you have this serious break alone, you must determine your destiny with your full freedom. The Lord said in ancient times, "See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil." (Deu 30:15).

Joshua in the olden times made the people pause at the crossroads as he said to them, "And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Josh 24:15).

Determine right now, my friend, the destiny you want to secure. Know that you will attain either one of two destinies, which the Bible describes as follows,

“And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Da 12:2) Where are you heading?

Third: rest in the walk

The Lord says, “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.”

You, no doubt, look for rest; perhaps psychologically or emotionally, and have already tried so many things in your search for happiness. You may have assumed it may be abundantly found in:

Bank accounts

Self-gratification

Other requirements of the flesh

But the Lord designed true happiness to be fulfilled only in the good way, for only then you will find rest for your souls.

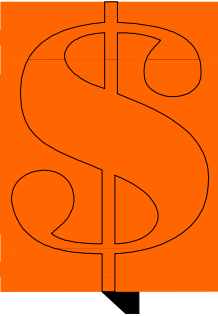
Oh I wish, my dear friend, as you are at the crossroads, that you ponder over which way you will walk. You have three ways ahead of you:

1- A broad way

2- A treacherous way

3- A good way

1- A broad way



In his deep, calm voice, and with a sorrowful and sad tone, the Savior warned his followers from the perils of the broad way, “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide [is] the gate and broad [is] the way that leads to destruction.” (Mt 7:13).

The first thing that impresses a person as they reach an intersection is the sight of such a broad way. O how wide and how easy it is to walk. There are many who take it!

It’s the way of the crushing majority of mankind. The simple-minded may even imagine it’s the only right way, by the unanimous agreement of all. But in order to grasp the enormity of this way, let me set out these facts that characterize it.

It involves:

- 1- **Illusionary happiness.**
- 2- **Heart-sickening gloom.**
- 3- **Eternal unhappiness.**

First : illusionary happiness

Man may think that the broad way is the way to liberty and emancipation; the way to happiness and fulfillment, a way with no restraints or limitations. In fact all these things are found abundantly in the broad way.

It involves unlimited liberty that extends to barbarity.

It involves unlimited emancipation that turns into libertinism.

It involves forms of fulfillment that reach the point of bondage, such as

- **Bawdy festivities and sparkling wine.**
- **Deviate affairs and titillating dances.**
- **Gambling tables and risqué jokes.**
- **Indecent dress and disgraceful make-up.**
- **Sex and lust, adultery and all sorts of immorality.**
- **Illegal gain and revolting selfishness.**

To blunt their conscience, those who take this way call sin such modern names; they civilize it. They look down on those who do not share their way of thinking as being backward and abnormal.

Second: heart-sickening gloom

Check the road well before you walk it; do not be fooled by its broadness. You ought to have a look at the other side that hides behind these temporary pleasures and physical lusts.

The toll levied upon those who take this road is excessive. It includes lack of peace, confusion, and trouble.

1- Lack of peace

The Holy Bible says,

- “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire

and dirt. There is no peace,” Says my God, ‘for the wicked.’” (Isa 57:20,21)

- “They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity ... Their works are works of iniquity ... Their feet run to evil ... The way of peace they have not known ... They have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace.” (Isa 59:4-8)
- “For I have taken away My peace from this people,” says the LORD (Jer 16:5)

It’s obvious from all this that the way of evil, as broad as it is, provides no peace.

2- Confusion:

The Lord announces in the book of Deuteronomy that he will punish those who walk in this way with confusion. He says, “The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion.” (Deu 28:20)

3- Trouble:

In this regard the Bible says, “The LORD ... has given them up to trouble, to desolation...” (2 Chr 29:8)

It says again in Deuteronomy, “You shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth.” (Deu 28:25). I hope you would be honest with yourself and face things rationally.

- As your clamorous banqueting ends, and people turn away from you, will you find peace in your heart?
- As you get up from your fall, will you not feel bitter?
- Don't you feel depressed, troubled, agitated, and downcast? Then you take one sedative after another, imagining that you will find rest in them! You won't have peace till you change your way.

Third: Eternal unhappiness

My dear friend, have you considered the eternal destiny this broad way leads to?

Hear what the Master says, "For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction." What an awful, unhappy end; worms that do not die, and fire that is not quenched. A lake of fire burning with brimstone. And despite the fire, there reigns deep dark and eternal terror. The dark comes from the torment of the wicked that rises forever. How bitter are those hopeless groans and sighs!

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." (Prov 14:12)

How many will the wretched and miserable be, who wish they had a chance of a second life, even for a few moments, to repent with tears in order to be spared this harrowing torment with its terrors!

Oh you miserable soul, how I fear for you lest sin should seal your eyes and lead you away to that unhappy end.

How much I fear for you lest the bewitching music of the world should captivate your heart and bring about your destruction, just as the pipe tunes of the Pied Piper of the German legend charmed the children of Hamelin, and lured them to follow the rat-catcher. By the time they came to themselves, they had already been engulfed by the mighty river.



2- A treacherous way

Solomon the wise unraveled the secret about this way. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” (Prov 14:12)

This way is much more dangerous than the broad way; as dangerous as a treacherous friend. About such a friend one wise man said, “Save me from my friends, and I will take care of my enemies.”

Many people guard against the broad way, but they fall prey to the treacherous one! The danger of this way lies in its good appearance, which only conceals the same perils of the broad way. It fools the simple by its looks.

The hypocrites, however, see in it a legitimization of what life should be; it's the way of treacherous, deceptive slogans.

Many are the signposts on both its sides that bear poisoned phrases, which trapped millions of people over the years.

One reads, "There is time for God and there is time for pleasure." Or, "Going to work is as good as going to church." This is how they justify being too engrossed with daily chores to remember God's worship. And again another one could read, "God knows your heart." As though this would cover up the obvious sin in one's life.

Below we will be unveiling some manifestations of this deceptive way; which are:

First : Outward religiosity.

Second: Good manners.

First: - Outward religiosity

It's to be content with the mere performance of the means of grace; i.e. fasting, prayer, almsgiving, reading the Scriptures, attending church, and partaking of the sacraments as obligatory duties:

- Which one performs without connection to his inner being.
- Which one performs without getting the desired grace thereby.

- Which one performs without consciousness or personal experience.
- Which one performs without a secret fellowship with the Lord.
- Which one performs, not as mere means through which the Lord's grace flows, and thus cast a holy anointing on life as a whole, but as obligatory duties which, once performed, lose effect.

Therefore, after the performance of these duties, one does not mind joining the people of the world in what they do; be it festivities, wine drinking, gambling, watching pornographic movies, sex, ...etc.

The wretch has numbed his conscience; he has already done his duty to God, he has “rendered to God the things that are God's,” and now is the time to “render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's”!

In the old times, the prophet Elijah stood in the middle of the road, defying the masses who walked it, and cried out to their faces, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” (1 Ki 18:21)

The Lord Jesus himself showed his displeasure with and disapproval of such behavior, as he said to a person who so behaved, “I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” (Rev 3:15,16)

Oh I would, my dear friend, that you were honest and firm with yourself! Ask grace from the Lord to deliver you from the deception of this ruinous way.

Second: good manners

It is to only have commendable traits and qualities. Once this is realized, one contents himself with being:

Well-mannered, with high morals.

Courteous, with refined feelings.

Loving, self-sacrificing, and giving.

The danger about this is that the person does not feel he needs anything; he is morally all right.

To such a person the Lord Jesus said, "I will vomit you out of My mouth. Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' -- and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked-- I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see." (Rev 3:17,18)

This is a man who feels rich in commendable qualities and good works. He feels no need for anything else. This man is miserable; he needs to know that Christianity is:

**Not just to abandon the vices
Or have praiseworthy qualities;
It is the indwelling of the Lord within.**

Christianity is, in the first place, a love-based fellowship founded on two pillars:

- 1- The soul's discovery of its true state of affairs, uncleanness, and destiny.
- 2- The discovery of the wonderful, hidden secret; i.e. the love of the gentle-hearted Jesus, the love that demonstrated itself on the executioner's cross, for me! He had to be executed that I may go free, to save me from my certain destiny in eternal hellfire, and let me participate in his excellent glory. What unfathomable love is "the love of Christ which passes knowledge" (Eph 3:19)

Christianity, then, is:

**An unbreakable love-based fellowship.
Manifested in continuous perseverance.
Evidenced in inner peace with God.
Characterized by glorious, unspeakable joy.
Demonstrated in holiness, love, and moral perfection.**

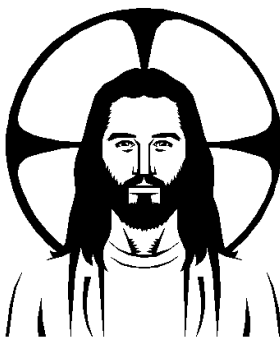
So, my friend, have you experienced the depth of fellowship with the Lord; has its fruit manifested itself in you? Or do you settle for false fruit, devoid of a love-based fellowship?

Good manners that are not based on spiritual experience are one of the byroads leading into the deceptive way.

3- The good way

Look, my friend, as you come to the crossroads, and sight a narrow, difficult, and almost invisible way that none would like to take.

It is very narrow, yet very straight. It may be uncomfortable, but light shines upon it.



It's undeniably devoid of the worldly delights, but teaming with joys of another nature.

This is the good way.

If you explore some aspects of this way, you'll find it:

First : A spiritual way.

Second : A narrow way.

Third : A way of values.

Fourth : A way of glory.

First: A spiritual way

Only the spiritual can walk it, or those who would desire to be spiritual. But the physical and the sensual man, as well as the worldly and natural man, can't walk it.

We must, then, distinguish the physical (or natural) man from the spiritual man by Christ's words: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (Jn 3:6)

1- The natural man:

It's anyone who inherits physical nature by birth from physical parents. He has:
A human's flesh-and-blood nature,
An animal's drives and instincts,
The mind and logic of worldly wisdom.

He does not relish spiritual things; they aren't worth much in his world-view, as the Apostle Paul said, "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor 2:14)

He does not receive spiritual things because he views them as nonsense.

He does not like the behavior of the spiritual.

He regards them as unnatural.

He believes they have a touch of religious hysteria- bordering on madness.

He is of the opinion that they are unrealistic, that they escape from life's realities and responsibilities. He takes for granted that they suffer from psychological complexes, for they tend to withdraw from society and do not take part in the general fun, merry-making, and wine drinking.

Saint Anthony hit the mark as he said, “Just as the simple-minded and the unlearned scorn the sciences, and refuse to listen to any of them, because knowledge exposes their ignorance, ... so they would prefer everyone to be just as ignorant as they are.

“Likewise those who lead a dissolute living, have a great desire for everyone to be more steeped in evil than themselves. They believe this to be a fair excuse for themselves, considering that the wicked are now numerous.”

The natural man is such a wretch.

He will definitely enjoy this life, but the toll he will pay for these pleasures is horrendous- in pain and lack of peace. Moreover, he will be denied enjoyment of eternity because he does not bear its citizenship. He hasn't received the spiritual nature that relishes the sweetness of the Kingdom.

2- The spiritual man:

He is the person who can walk the good way. It is the man in whom the power of the Holy Spirit takes effect; who has received the spiritual nature and has become a partaker of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4)

It's the person who has experienced in his heart of hearts a radical turning from the corrupt, physical nature to the good, spiritual one.

He is a person who has tasted the Lord's grace, and as a result all his hopes and inclinations, feelings and emotions, his life and eternity become focused on the person of Christ. He sings along with the singer:

His love captivates me;
I just can't keep away,
He is dear to me, so dear;
he is with me all the way.

He says with the Apostle Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ." (Phil 1:21)

He has experienced what the bride in the Song of Songs experienced as she said, "Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, Jealousy as cruel as the grave; its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, nor can the floods drown it. If a man would give for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly despised." (Song 8:6,7)

Second: A narrow way

This is what it looks like to the carnal, for they find in it no room for their lusts, pleasures, cravings, and profligacy. The Lord of glory said about them, "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Mat 7:14)

Finding it too difficult, many people prefer to take the broad way. Yet there is a spiritual minority who find

it quite the opposite. They see it jolly and pleasant; containing the source of their happiness and secret of their contentment: our Lord Jesus Christ. This is why our Lord instructed us to “Ask ... where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.” (Jer 6:16)

To the spiritual, the difficulty of this way turns into rest, the narrowness into vastness, the sorrows into joy and gladness. It is the way of the weaning of the flesh, and the release of the spirit.

Third: The way of values

I mean excellent values, be they spiritual or moral. You many find among the carnal some virtuous values, but they only reach a certain level of moral excellence, which vacillate and totter according to the occasion. But the spiritual way is:

- The way of perfection, as the Psalmist said, “As for God, His way is perfect ... And makes my way perfect.” (Psa 18:30-32)
- The way of uprightness, as the prophet Isaiah says, “The way of the just is uprightness.” (Isa 26:7)
- The way of wisdom, for the Lord says, “I have taught you in the way of wisdom.” (Prov 4:11)
- The way of truth. The Psalmist says, “Remove from me the way of lying ... I have chosen the way of truth.” (Psa 119:29,30)
- The way of light, as Solomon the wise says, “But the path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.” (Prov 4:18)

- The way of cleanliness and purity. The Psalmist says, “Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.” (Psa 24:3,4) These values, as well as many more, were embodied by the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore he says, “I am the way.” (John 14:6) Whoever receives Christ into his life, and allows him to dwell in him by his Spirit, to fill his inner being, will find himself walking this way of his own accord.

Fourth: The way of glory

Where does that way lead to?

It starts at the City of Destruction and Desolation, crossing over the Valley of Suffering, through arid wilderness and a dry, waterless land to lead ultimately to eternal glory; to the City of Light; to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that does not fade away; to the city which has foundations; to indescribable magnificence; to the Lord’s realm and splendid presence; to the ever-shining, never-setting Sun; to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the firstborn; to God the Judge of all; to the spirits of just men made perfect; to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. (Heb 12:22-24)

What a beautiful sound as they tread this path, sing along with the Psalmist, “I am continually with You; You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” (Psa 73:23-25)

Therefore, walk in the good way, O my soul, to
enjoy rest. Let the Lord guide your steps to the
habitations of peace.



Chapter 2



A call of repentance

“Open for me, my sister,
my love, my dove, my
perfect one; for my head
is covered with dew, my
locks with the drops of the
night.” (Song 5:2)

- 1-Jesus loves you.***
- 2-Does God hate you?***
- 3-Does God accept you?***

1- Jesus loves you

Among thieves:



It is recorded in Church history that Saint John the Apostle entrusted a certain young man, recently converted, to the care of the bishop of the church of Ephesus. After a while he returned and asked the bishop about this young man, only to learn that he fell away from the life of repentance, and became a gang-boss. The saint went to him straightaway. As the young man saw him, he fled away. The saint ran after him, crying out loud, “Have pity on my old age... Jesus still loves you.” Halting, the young man fell before the saint, and wept. It was repentance with no backsliding.

My dear brother, Jesus loves you. He came to call sinners to repentance (Mat 9:13). Hasn’t he prayed on behalf of those who crucified him, in all love, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34).

Hasn’t he addressed the criminal thief who repented in the last moments, saying, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43)

Jesus loves you, just as he loved the sinful woman and forgave her sins (Luke 7), and just as he loved the

woman caught in adultery- and didn't condemn her (John 8).

The loving Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15).

He hasn't come to destroy, but to save that which was lost (Mat 18:11).

*** *One Father said,*** "O that the sinner would know that all his sins, together with his transgressions and weaknesses, are the object of God's pity, and the target of his pardon and forgiveness... that no matter how they increase or intensify, they can't repulse his heart ..., turn his mercy off..., or suspend his love, not even for a single moment."

O that the sinner would know that! He wouldn't hold fast to his sin, settle for darkness, and seek separation from God as a screen to cover his shame from the face of God, who woos him and calls him back. O that you, my brother, trust in the Lord's love to you personally, despite your iniquities. Perhaps this would motivate you to lead a life of repentance.



2- Does God hate you ?

A desperate young man:

A gaunt young man, with sunken eyes, approached a saintly old man, experienced in the Lord, and told him in a sad, low voice, "It's all over with me. I am certain that God hates and loathes me because of my

numerous sins and filth. I'm at the end of my tether. My heart is filled with despair.”

Very quietly, the old man answered him, in wisdom of spirit, and said, “My son, God does not hate the person, rather the sin itself. He is concerned about the effects of sin on the person, for it causes him misery in this life, and torment in the life to come.”

God hates sin

Hear, my brother, the Lord's words, “You love righteousness and hate wickedness.” (Psa 45:7) Pay attention to the words of the blessed Saint Paul, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” (Rom 1:18)

God loves sinners

Jesus was “a friend of tax collectors and sinners!” (Matthew 11:19). He often had pity on sinners, accepted them, and forgave their sins, such as the Samaritan woman, Zacchaeus, the sinful woman, the tax collector, and the thief. He stated, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” (Mat 9:13).

The young man was reassured, hope crept into his heart again, his prospects seemed bright once more, and his faith was strengthened.

*** This is how a certain Father wrote on this issue:**

“The sinner presumes that sin keep him from seeking God, although it was on account of that sin that Christ descended to seek man... Sin can no more separate the sinner from God, who has sent his own Son, and paid the

price, the whole price, on the cross... It is rather the sinner's fear, apprehension, and false illusion which obscure the wounded side of Christ, in which the entire world could be cleansed many times over..."

Rest assured, my dear friend, that God loves and is concerned about the bitter effect sin has on you.



3- Does God accept you ?

Perhaps, my brother, you are wondering, "Would God accept in spite of my filthy deeds?"

The answer is: Yes, of course. The Lord of glory declared, "The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out." (John 6:37)

A penitent soul

A monk heard of a girl who went astray and opened her house to sin. He went to her, and, by the grace of God, managed to bring her back to her senses. She repented and immediately went out with him heading for a monastery. Night fell upon them, and they had to sleep on the road. Waking up to pray, the monk found the girl dead. He questioned the Lord about her destiny and whereabouts. The Lord immediately revealed to him that her repentance had been accepted ever since she was in the house of sin, at the moment of her remorse. He thanked the Lord for his tender mercies and forgiveness.

Jesus is willing to accept you; he is rather overjoyed and exuberant at your return to him. The Lord declared through the prophet Ezekiel, "Do I have any

pleasure at all that the wicked should die? ... and not that he should turn from his ways and live?” (Ezekiel 18:23)

Hasn't Jesus reassured us through the parable of the prodigal son, where pointed out how the father received his son with joy and affection, despite all he had done? Overwhelmed by his joy at his son's return, he forgot everything. Music of praise was played, and a party was thrown in his honor.

My brother, hasn't Jesus plainly put it as he said, “Likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.” (Luke 15:7)

* This pleasant song was the favorite saying of a spiritual Father, “How great is the sinner's poverty! It's the intense poverty of the sinner that confidently draws off Christ's riches, just as confidently as a hungry baby draws off milk from his mother's breast. Indeed, without the sinner we don't understand Christ's love, because Christ:

- ***Does not enrich the rich.***
- ***Does not fill the full.***
- ***Does not justify the just.***
- ***Does not redeem the powerful.***
- ***Does not seek those who are found.***

Whoever is poor, hungry, sinful, fallen, or ignorant is the guest of the Lord Jesus Christ. If you come to him now he will by no means cast you out. He is willing to accept you, and he rejoices at your repentance.

Chapter 3

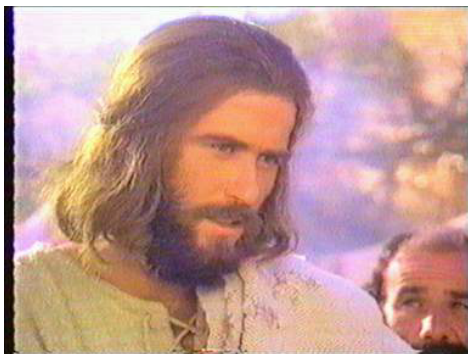


The call of repentance

“Cry aloud, spare not ...
Tell My people their
transgression.” (Isa 58:1)

- 1- *The gentle voice***
- 2- *The terrible voice***
- 3- *Hear the voice of the Lord***

1- The gentle voice



The Song of Songs paints a wonderful portrait of Jesus' tenderness, loving heart, and kind voice. With locks soaked with the night's dew, he stands tenderly, almost shyly, and calls on his

bride, "Open for me, ... my love, my dove, my perfect one; for my head is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of the night." (Song 5:2)

And again he peeks at us from the gap, from the clefts of the rock, and says with a calm smile, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ... O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the secret *places* of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice *is* sweet, and your face *is* lovely." (Song 2:10,13)

Jesus' love and affection had such impact on the bride's emotions that he captivated her mind and bewitched her heart. She could not help but give expression to the feelings of her heart. She said, "*I am* my beloved's, and his desire *is* toward me. Come, my beloved, let us go forth to the field; let us lodge in the villages ... There I will give you my love. I would kiss you; I would not be despised... His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand embraces me... For love *is as* strong as death ... Its

flames *are* flames of fire, a most vehement flame.”
(Song 7:10-8:7)

O, blessed, that you may hear the voice of the Beloved. Hear him say, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.” (Rev 3:20)

I hope you would open your heart to enjoy his sweat fellowship.



2- The terrible voice

An obstinate king:

There was a wicked king by the name of Manasseh, who did much evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger. The Bible says that God sent him a call to repent, with a gentle voice, but he wouldn't repent. It says, “And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they would not listen.” (2 Chr 33:10)

Then, owing to God's affection and love for him, he sent him forceful blows to draw him to the life of repentance. “Therefore the LORD brought upon them the captains of the army of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh with hooks, bound him with bronze fetters, and carried him off to Babylon.” (2 Chr 33:11)

It was through this forceful treatment that Manasseh repented, for the Bible says, “Now when he was in

affliction, he implored the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed to Him; and He received his entreaty, heard his supplication, and brought him back to Jerusalem into his kingdom.” (2 Chr 33:12,13)

When gentle means prove ineffective with the sinner, the Lord uses some force to urge him to repent. Sickness may be a forceful voice from the Lord to bring a sinner back from his way. God may use other means, such as want, poverty, problems, opposition of enemies, or disgraces. This was the case with Samson who sinned with Delilah, David who sinned with the wife of Uriah the Hittite, and Job who made self-righteousness his excuse. (Job 29:1-51)

The Bible states openly that he *was* righteous in his own eyes. (Job 32:1)

After God’s treatment of him, he said, “I ... repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6)

O, I would, my dear friend, that you would start the life of repentance before God uses his terrible voice with you. Listen to his gentle voice now, in order to have the grace of forgiveness “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” (Isa 55:7)



3- Hear God's voice

Habib Gerges, late principal of the Clerical College, wrote in his book “The Mystery of Godliness” an illustration of how important it is to hear the Lord’s voice and respond to his call. “If the Lord calls you, heed his voice. Listen to his command. Take initiative to meet him. You won’t have salvation till you obey his voice. God wants to address your heart, so be ready at all times to hear his voice. Don’t harden your heart as you hear his gladdening voice, rather say along with Samuel, ‘Speak, LORD, for Your servant hears.’ (1 Samuel 3:9)” “Be as soft and vulnerable as wax to the print of grace. Don’t be too hard to be impressed by its effect. Don’t lend your ears to the voice of the world, and deafen them to the voice of Jesus. Don’t be ensnared by the world’s will-o’-the-wisp, to live like a humiliated captive. Rather trample with your feet on all its lusts; considering its riches poverty, its glory shame, and its exaltedness abasement.”

The Lord’s voice is gladdening and pleasant. Happy is the man who hears and obeys it. “I will hear what God the LORD will speak, For He will speak peace To His people and to His saints.” (Psa 85:8)

Please, my friend, incline your ears and open your heart to hear the voice of the Beloved.

Chapter 4

The time of repentance

“And I gave her time to repent.”
(Rev 2:21)

“As long as we live in this world, let’s guard our hearts against the evils we committed in the flesh, so that the Lord may save us as long as we have time for repentance. Once we depart this world there remains no chance of confession or repentance.”

-Saint Clement of Rome

- 1- Repentance has got a time**
- 2- A golden chance**
- 3- It’s too late**

1- Repentance has got a time

The Lord, out of kindness and compassion, gives the sinner a chance to repent before the time comes when repentance is useless, and tears are rejected. Thus the Scriptures describe Esau's



condition, "When he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." (Heb 12:17)

Therefore the Lord says about Jezebel, the adulterous woman, "I gave her time to repent of her sexual immorality, and she did not repent." (Revelation 2:21)

Remember, my brother, that it is "Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." (Lam 3:22) The Lord still gives you time to repent, so why don't you seize the opportunity right now? Till when will your heart remain hard? Heed the admonition of the Scriptures, "In accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." (Romans 2:5).

Many are the hearts that were hardened in spite of both of God's gentle and forceful voice, calling them to repentance! Hear what the Scriptures say about the company of the hard-hearted, "But the rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues [i.e. those who

were given another chance by God], did not repent of the works of their hands... And they did not repent of their murders or their sorceries or their sexual immorality or their thefts.” (Rev 9:20,21) “And they blasphemed the name of God who has power over these plagues; and they did not repent and give Him glory.” (Rev 16:9)

And again “They blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores [the terrible voice], and did not repent of their deeds.” (Rev 16:11)

So, take care, dear friend, not to be among those. O I would that you take the chance and not waste the time for repentance.



The tourist and the statue:

A tourist saw a statue of a smiling girl, with such a thick, blond shock of hair on the top of her head. She stood on the tips of her toes, ready to go. Looking at the back of her head, he was really surprised to see it completely empty of hair. She was bald. He inquired about the theme of that statue. “It is ‘the opportunity.’” he was told, “It’s always smiles to whoever seizes it. But if one fails to seize it, it go with the wind and can’t be held.”

Now is the golden opportunity, given to you by the Lord, to repent. The prophet Hosea says, “For it is time to seek the LORD.” (Hosea 10:12)

The Apostle Paul says, “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30)

Seize the opportunity, my brother, and repent now. You may never have another chance to seek the Lord such as this. Tell him, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, and forgive my sins.” Trust that he hears the groans of the heart and rejoices at the return of the sinner. He says, “Now is the accepted time.” (2 Cor 6:2)



The Bible says about Esau, Jacob's brother, and the son of Isaac the patriarch, that he despised his birthright, and sold it for a dish of lentils. Later as he wanted to inherit the blessing, he lost it too. Why?

The Scriptures say, **“For he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.”** (Heb 12:17)

Esau, the time for repentance has gone!

You led a profane, scornful, and pleasure-seeking life. Today your conscience has awoken, you wretch, but it's too late!

Let me give you another parable narrated by the Lord Jesus Christ. It's the parable of:

The foolish virgins:

Finally when they woke up, they found their vessels empty. But about the wise ones, the Lord says,

“The bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut.”
(Mat 25:10-12)

The foolish ones went to buy oil, but no way! They eventually returned and banged on the door, but it was too late. The bridegroom had come; and the door was shut.

O how I fear for you, my dear friend, that you lead a pleasure-seeking life, heedless of Christ’s voice which calls you to repent. One day your conscience must wake up, in eternity, and it will be too late!

As long as you live, you’ve got a chance. Repent now, because you don’t know when you’ll depart this life.

A prayer of repentance:

Please, my friend, lift up your heart right now as you read this book. Stop reading and pray right now with these words: -

“Jesus, My Lord and God, I acknowledge before you that I was scornful of your words in my life, fulfilling the will of my flesh, walking in the way of sin and carnal appetites. I didn’t feel your presence when I did evil; I shut my eyes to you, and plugged up my ears in order not to hear you.

I thank you, my Lord, that you let me read this book and hear your voice; for alerting my conscience before I breathe my last, before I go to the grave- before I stand before you on Judgment Day when no repentance will do.

Now, Lord, as you came to save sinners, of whom I am chief, accept my repentance and forgive my sin. On account of your blood shed upon the cross, have mercy on me. I thank you that you accepted me. And hear me as I call you informally, as a son would, “My Father in heaven...”

At the nearest chance, go to a Father Confessor, and admit your sins to him, to receive the absolution and be able to partake of the Body and Blood of the Lord for the forgiveness of your sins.

Chapter 5

The way to repentance

“Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He teaches sinners in the way.”
(Psa 25:8)

- 1- The way back**
- 2- The convictions of the Spirit**
- 3- Self-accountability**
- 4- A request made in contrition**
- 5- Acknowledgment and confession**
- 6- The banner of faith**
- 7- The confidence of faith**

1- The way back

+ **The way back is the way of repentance.**

+ **Repentance is to return, and that is to Jesus' bosom.**

+ The way of sin departs from the domain of the Lord's grace and presence, severs you from the Father, and takes you far away to a country of swine, filth, and depravity. **Repentance, on the contrary, awakens your conscience and alerts your spirit to determine your destiny. It makes you hate sin, having already suffered bitterly on account of it. It makes you desire with all your heart to go back home to comfort and happiness. It prompts you to take practical and positive steps; it gives you a push in the right direction- toward the Father's home.**



The prodigal son

It's perhaps the most wonderful parable ever told by Jesus. It explains what repentance is. (Luke 15:11-32)

This son, having loathed living in his father's home, longed for some imaginary freedom, took his money, and journeyed to a far country, where he wasted his possessions with dissipated living. Pretty soon he ran out money, and remembering his father. He then decided, "I will arise and go to my father." This was the point of release from the prison of sin- to consider turning back. He did not stop at consideration and longing, but went

one step further; “He arose and came to his father” (Luke 15:20).

The return of a disreputable woman :

Church history tells us of a believing family, of two parents, a son, and a daughter. After the death of their parents, the son went ahead and joined a monastery, in view of becoming a monk. The daughter, on the other hand, abandoned the life of grace for the life of indulgence. Her brother, the monk, heard about her and went to seek her in disguise. She thought he was a strange monk come to her for an impure purpose. The monk, however, knelt down in tears, lifted up a fervent prayer before the Most High, to awaken her conscience and convict her of her sinfulness. Her girl’s heart just melted at the fervency of this prayer. She recalled her former life, the beauty of the life of grace, and the bliss of the life of holiness. “You remind me of the life of my saintly parents,” she told the monk, “and the life-style of my monk brother. He looks very much like you.” As he revealed himself to her, she fell at his feet, weeping. He calmed her and showed her depth of love. This moment was a turning point for her, as she turned back to her former life in the arms of the Lord, to walk in the light of Most High.



2- The convictions of the Spirit

Dear friend, repentance begins in a man’s life as the Holy Spirit convicts him of his sins, alerts his conscience, and prompts him to repent of his life spent in

sin. Let me place before you, dear friend, some individuals and groups who fell under the conviction of the Spirit, repented, and were restored.

+ A prophet under conviction

After falling in the sin of adultery, the prophet David was convicted by the Lord's voice through the prophet Nathan. That's why he expressed his remorse as follows, "I drench my couch with my tears." (Psa 6:6) And again he said, "My tears have been my food." (Psa 42:3) "I have...mingled my drink with weeping." (Psa 102:9)

These were tears of repentance and regret for his atrocity.

+ An apostle weeping

After denying the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter came under the conviction of the Spirit as Jesus looked at him in such a way that awakened his conscience. He just "went out and wept bitterly." (Luke 22:62)

+ Cut to the heart

On the Day of Pentecost, as the Apostle Peter stood up to deliver his passionate sermon, ablaze by the fire of the Holy Spirit, the hearers were so touched and convicted by it. The Bible says about them, "Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said to them, 'Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.''" (Acts 2:37,38)

If only you would give the Holy Spirit a chance to show you your hidden sins, which you managed to conceal from everybody, yet they lie open to the eyes of the Lord. Say to the Lord, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if *there is any* wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psa 139:23,24)

When the Holy Spirit convicts you of sin, say to the Lord, “O Master, forgive me my sin, and pluck it out of my heart, so that I may never again go back to it or even utter it.”

Jesus is ready to forgive and pardon, as well as pluck out all iniquity.



3- Self - accountability

Sit alone, my dear friend, in quietude. Take a pen and piece of paper and hold yourself accountable for all you’ve done since you were a child. **Start with what you can remember, as early as your memory can reach, then retrace your steps gradually, day by day and year by year. Recall all your sins, one by one; don’t overlook or underestimate the least slip-up. Don’t try to hide anything; but rather be frank with yourself, even when it comes to things you aren’t sure if they were sinful or not. Write them all up as a form of evil, for we are commanded, “Abstain from every form of evil.” (1 Th 5:22)**

To facilitate self-accountability, I set before you four basic standards of identification:

1- Purity: The commandment says, “Keep yourself pure.” (1 Tim 5:22) Search the depths of your soul over the years, and write up the sins you’ve done which were incompatible with purity, whether in thought, action, or whatever other way.

2- Humility: The Scriptures exhort us to “be clothed with humility.” (1 Pet 5:5)

Examine yourself to uncover your own pride, conceit, and self-publicity.

How often have you boasted over your own intelligence, superiority to others, and the fact that you know a lot more than they do?

How often have you slighted the opinions of your interlocutors?

How often have you shown contempt to others?

How often have you spoken of yourself and paraded yourself, in an attempt to draw attention to you?

3- Love: The commandment states, “Love one another.” (1 Pet 1:22)

- Do you love your enemies, and all those who mistreat you?
- Do you pray for them?
- Do you desire that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth?

- Do you tell them about the word of God and the love of Christ, to save their lives from eternal damnation?
- Do you love God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind?

4- Faithfulness: The Lord commands, “Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.” (Rev 2:10)

- Are you faithful with your the time you spend with God?
- Are you faithful with God’s business? Do you give him all the tithes of your income?
- Are you faithful in reading the Bible?
- Are you faithful in practicing all the means of grace?
- Are you faithful with the people’s business? Faithful with their money? Have you stolen something from anyone? Have you squandered your possessions in dissipated, unprofitable living?
- Are you faithful to your words? Or do you lie at times? Do you exaggerate?
- Are you faithful to your wife? Or do you cheat on her? And you, wife, are you faithful to your husband?
- Are you faithful in your workplace?
- Are you faithful in your study?

Having written down exact answers to all these, place them before the Lord, and shed tears of remorse and conviction over them. Then take them to your Father Confessor, as a true and powerful testimony, and confess them to receive forgiveness and have peace with Jesus-peace that passes all understanding.



4- A request made in contrition

As the self discovers its meanness and sinfulness, it feels ashamed and disgraced. It stand in line with the tax collector described in the Bible in these terms, “Standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven [for feeling ashamed], but beat his breast [expressive of penitence], saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’” (Luke 18:13)

The Bible is teaming with numerous examples of penitent souls and contrite requests. Here are a few of them: -

- 1- ***Ezra:*** Stood in the Lord’s presence, identifying with the sin and shame of his people, and said, “O my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens...to this day.” (Ezra 9:6,7)
- 2- ***Daniel:*** He said, “And I prayed to the LORD my God, and made confession, and said, “O Lord, great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and mercy with those who love Him, and with

those who keep His commandments, we have sinned and committed iniquity, we have done wickedly and rebelled, even by departing from Your precepts and Your judgments. O Lord, righteousness *belongs* to You, but to us shame of face.” (Dan 9:5-7)

- 3- ***The disreputable woman:*** Came to the Lord, as he was seated at the house of a Pharisee. Not able to stand in front of him, she stood behind him and wept, in shame, wetting the master’s feet with her own tears. As a result he told her, “Your sins are forgiven ... Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” (Luke 7:48,50)

If only you would only stand before the Lord, my dear friend, in contrition, with a broken heart, to plead for his forgiveness of your sins! He will surely answer.



5- Acknowledgment and confession

Solomon the wise says, “He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.” (Prov 28:13)

So, in order for your repentance to be acceptable to God, you must acknowledge your sin before the Lord, and before the Church, the representative and custodian of God’s mysteries. Therefore, select for yourself a spiritual mentor from among the priests of the church, a man with an experience, capable of leading you in the Way. Heed the Lord’s command given through the

Apostle Paul, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.” (Heb 13:17)

David’s decision:

As David fell into the sin of adultery, and then murder, which blunted both his conscience and memory, the Lord sent him the prophet Nathan, who asked him, “Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight?” (2 Sa 12:9) So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” (2 Sam 12:13) David acknowledged his sin before the Lord through the prophet Nathan, and thus heard from his mouth the pronouncement of forgiveness.

The people’s acknowledgment before John the Baptist:

The Bible says, “Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins.” (Mark 1:5)

And before the Apostles:

The Bible records in the book of Acts that “many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds.” (Ac 19:16).

I would, my dear friend, that you let your father confessor know about everything that he may be guide you.



6- The banner of safety

The cross, my dear friend, is the banner of safety, aflutter with love, as the bride of the Song expressed, “And his banner over me was love.” (Song 2:4)

- Whenever you feel the burden of your sins and are convicted of it,
- Whenever you feel twinges of conscience for the years that the locusts have eaten,
- Whenever you rue in your heart the life spent in amusements and sin,
- Whenever you decide to get rid of your guilty feelings that trouble your conscience,
- Whenever you yearn for God’s forgiveness and acceptance of you,

Then raise your eyes to the cross, to see the beloved Jesus hanging, spreading his arms wide, and bidding you to come. And hear his whispers of love as he intercedes for you, “Father, forgive him...”

Jesus died for you and me, as well as for every other wretched soul such as we.

Jesus demonstrated his own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died on the cross for us.

The righteous died for the unrighteous.

We were reconciled, through his vicarious death, with the Holy Father.

He endured shame and contempt to grant us righteousness and honor.

His precious blood was shed on the cross to cleanse us from all sin.

If you would only kneel down at the cross, so that he may sprinkle your heart with his blood and cleanse you to the uttermost.

If you take shelter in the cross and the stabbed side, you will be delivered from the wrath to come: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." (Rom 8:1)

A Father once said, "The sinner must not look around to seek strength from within himself or any other means than the blood of Christ, thereby he can enter God's presence to find comfort and forgiveness, lest God's excellent love and mercy should be slighted. From all the saints and penitents of the Church he receives help as he makes his entry..."



7- The confidence of faith

A repenting person ought to trust, with his heart and mind and every limb, in God's personal love to him and his redemption of his soul, that he accepted him and forgave his sins, and that his iniquities have been covered. The Apostle Paul assures us, "Let us therefore

come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb 4:16)

A person may be penitent and remorseful for his sins, willing to live with Christ, Yet he doesn't feel happy, joyful, or peaceful. Why am I sad despite my penitence? Why am I defeated despite my resolve to lead a pure living? The secret lies in unbelief, because “According to your faith let it be to you.” (Mat 9:29)

The Scriptures tells us about Abraham that “He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.” (Rom 4:20,21)

Therefore our teacher James says, “For he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord.” (James 1:6,7)

Trust, my dear friend, and believe that Jesus loves you, accepts you, and wipes your sins in his blood, that he is the companion of your sojourn, the source of your strength. Claim it from him confidently, and then live victoriously, on the ground that you got what you claimed. “Whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.” (Mat 21:22)

Saint John Climacus (John of the Ladder) said, “Faith paves the road for the reception of what we don’t expect or hope for.”

A saint said, “He is absolutely certain that his prayer won’t be answered! Who is that wretch? It is the person who prays and does not believe that he will receive an answer.”

Saint John of Damascus said, “Even if you don’t receive your request the way you like or desire, you’ve received benefit, because not receiving what you desire often means that you’ve received something superior to what you desired.”

Another saint said, “The most important thing we must strive for in prayer is to have a clear, living faith in God as we do it. And picturing him standing before us and in us, we ask him all we want in the name of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Let’s simply ask him, with no trace of doubt. And in a moment we will get the most wonderful and gigantic things, through the sign of the cross and the amazing wonders it works.

Address the Lord with these words:

My God, here is my entire life, open to you. You know about my uncleanness and pride.

**Lord, you see my lack of love for others
and my half-hearted love for you.**

**Lord, I just can't deny my unbelief, but
I know that my unbelief will not make
your faithfulness without effect. You
remain faithful forever; you cannot
deny yourself.**

**I come to you, friend of sinners, to
forgive my sins and overlook my faults.**

Cleanse my heart; sanctify my senses.

Wean me of the world.

Fill me with the richness of your love.

Shower me with your grace.

Have me completely.

Chapter 6

Hindrances to repentance

“Indeed, my children, my souls is astounded and my spirit troubled that all of us were given the freedom to be saints, but in our blindness we got drunk with the agonies of the world.”

- Saint Augustine

- 1- Self**
- 2- Young age**
- 3- Business**
- 4- Deprivation**
- 5- Failure phobia**
- 6- Procrastination**

1- Self



The biggest hindrance standing in the way to repentance is your own self, in all its forms of pride, vanity, self-display, and attachment to the worldly pleasures.

In fact, life with Christ is the death of self-life. Many don't want to die to themselves, therefore self remains a great stumbling-block in the way, as is made evident by the statements of some existentialists:

“The existence of God cancels our own existence. We, therefore, cancel God's existence in order to realize our own existence.” The poor wretches prefer self-life to God, and they, therefore, deny the sun in broad daylight.

My dear friend, I fear that self might stand in the way to your repentance!

Does your pride stand between you and life with Christ?

Does your stubbornness hinder your spiritual life?

My dear friend, if only you would deny yourself, crucify yourself, mortify yourself, that Christ may live in you “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.” (Gal 2:20)



2- Young age

The devil whispers in the ears of some young people, “You are still too young to repent. You can wait till you get old, or even right before you die, to repent. Why don’t give yourself a chance to enjoy life and have fun? Why do you deny yourself and suppress your drives when are you are so young?”

And most unfortunately, many young people fell victim to this diabolic ruse, and perished.

The dangers of this thought are masked by some untruths, which will be unmasked and exposed below:

Untruth # 1: It is to assume that death happens only to the old.

This makes some people keep on putting off their repentance till later, when they have grown old.

But death, in fact, is not confined to one age group. Many people were nipped in the bud, at the prime of their youth, whether by a stroke, leukemia, or a car crash.

A story of a university student

He was in his third year in the faculty of medicine, at Cairo University. One day he returned earlier than usual. His mom noticed he wasn’t all right; he looked pale and depressed.

“What’s wrong, son,” she asked.

“I am alright, mom. I only feel a bit dizzy and faint,” was his answer.

The mother called the family doctor, who came and checked him. He requested several medical tests. When the results came, he proved to be sick with the “cancerous octopus”. The doctor suggested an immediate blood transfusion, to empty the blood vessels from the infected blood and replace it with clean blood. He had the blood transfusion, but what a pity! The angel of death was swifter than the physicians. Thus ended the life of a young man in the prime of his youth.

There are numerous examples all around us of young, tender youth who departed, for death is not limited to the advanced in years.

Untruth # 2: It’s to picture life with God as deprivation, suppression, legalism, and gloom.

This is contrary to reality. Life with Jesus is such fun and joy! Your heart will be free from psychological conflicts that always accompany sin. The Bible says, “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. ‘There is no peace,’ says the LORD, ‘for the wicked.’” (Isa 48:21,22)

As to the enjoyment of living with Christ, the prophet and king David says, “The king shall have joy in Your strength, O LORD; and in Your salvation how greatly shall he rejoice!” (Psa 21:1)

That's why he said, "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who trusts in Him!" (Psa 34:8)

Untruth # 3: It is to assume that, if you reject repentance now, you can get it at any later time.

The bitter truth is that many who rejected repentance came to a time when they could no longer accept God's voice. The heart becomes thoroughly hardened, or they lose trust that God may accept their repentance. They may also miss the time of repentance, as was the case with Esau, "For ...when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears." (Heb 12:17)

Untruth # 4: This mode of thinking is insulting to God: Repentance of this type is false, not stemming from a heart that loves Jesus and the life of holiness, but rather from fear of punishment. This isn't a true and honest repentance.

But remember, my young brother, how many young people your age have dedicated their lives to the Lord, and are enjoying their lives with the Most High. Their youth and bloom have not hindered their holy, new life. They even shine like stars. And in their youth they have become an example for other to follow.

Some examples:

- + **Pure Joseph** strongly refused to defile himself with his master's wife.
- + **Adamant Daniel** would only worship the Lord, and even publicly acknowledged his faith.
- + **The three young men** did not fear the command of the king, but held onto their faith.
- + **The Virgin Mary** was a paragon of purity and cleanness.
- + **Henry and his sister**, two British young people, whom I visited in the winter of 1971 at the heart of the city of London. Henry was the older brother. He was a student at the university, and was a confirmed atheist. He neither believed in God nor in eternal life. He went with the university students on a trip overseas. At the camp he discovered he was the only atheist. He whiled away the time in the city's nightclubs and bars. After midnight, he would return to the camp at the top of the mountain.

One day he cried out to God. He addressed him as “the One who is worshipped by the people in the camp.” The miracle took place and he gave his life over to God. As he returned home to London, he was suddenly a different person. Dressed and shaved like decadent young people, Henry began to frequent the Red Light District, where such youth would be found, to hang around them. In one week he had delivered five young people from eternal damnation. He still has a powerful ministry among the youth. When she saw this change, his sister, who was at college, gave her life to Christ.

After she had finished her university education, she devoted her life to the Lord's ministry.

Shouldn't we follow the example of these saintly people of valor?



It's a flimsy excuse the devil uses to hide behind with the intention of preventing the repentance of many.

My brother, why don't you repent and live with God?

The swift answer is, "I am far too busy."

My dear friend, let me whisper in your ears: This is a cover-up. Are you really busy? How then do you find time for amusement parties? And time for going to the movies or watching TV, for theater and fun parks, for visiting and socializing? It's not about business; it is far graver than that. It's a matter of an unwilling heart. The adversary of your soul drowns you in business to draw you away from the salvation of your soul.

But what will you do when your soul is required of you? Don't you know, dear friend, that "the world is passing away, and the lust of it" (1 John 2:17), and that "all [*is*] vanity and grasping for the wind. *There [is]* no profit under the sun." (Ecc. 2:11)

If only you would confront yourself honestly, and receive the Lord, he will give your soul rest and your unhappy heart gladness! He is waiting for you!



4- Deprivation

Some people view the life of repentance as deprivation of pleasures and limitation of man's liberty. Therefore they reject repentance.

In fact, what they believe is pleasure is nothing but numbing the conscience, drunkenness with sin, and swallowing down heady cups of deadly poison.

The liberty they fancy is nothing but golden chains and silken bands that lock man in bitter bondage. The Bible says, "Whoever commits sin is a slave of sin." (John 8:34)

Brother, why do you see repentance as mere deprivation?

Why can't you see the gains and benefits that will accrue to you from repentance? Repentance will truly deprive you of some depraved pleasures, only to delight your spirit, soul, and body with a depth of pure and clean fellowship.

Repentance will deprive you of the useless profits of the world, to enrich the soul with the treasure of grace.

Repentance will deprive you of things that delight the foolish, to let you gain all that pleases the wise.

When viewed positively, the life of repentance proves to yield innumerable profits- permanent profits that last forever.

In view of such profits, it's easy to willingly give up the entire temporary, sinful pleasures and the deceitful falsehoods of the world.

That's why the Bible says that Moses "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward." (Heb 11:24-26)

Paul the Apostle says as well, "But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him." (Phil 3:7-9)



5- Failure phobia

When someone seriously considers repentance, the devil exerts all his efforts to hinder them. He may whisper such words in his ears as, "You will fail and stumble. You won't hold out for long. You are bound to return to sin, and your punishment will be greater." He may prove it to you by recalling all your previous failures and downfalls.

People are deceived by these demonic thoughts and shrink away from repentance. That's why I'd like to explain some important points about this issue:

A. The starting point and perfection:

Don't imagine, my dear friend, that the starting point of repentance is the pinnacle of Christian perfection. When you repent you start on the road; and you are not expected to be sinless. You must know that the starting point is not the same as perfection. You are on the way to perfection, but you aren't there yet.

B. Vulnerability to fall:

As a fresh beginner on the way of repentance, you must know that you are vulnerable to fall into old sins. Satan may even tempt you with things into which you have never fallen before.

The repentant may fall into some sins, either because of his weakness or a fierce pressure from the devil. This does not mean he lost the life of repentance. These are just pitfalls on the road, from which he will rise and continue his walk. "For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again." (Prov 24:16)

C. The war of perseverance:

The war between the penitent and Satan is one of perseverance. He who endures to the end will be saved.

It's the devil's plan to drive you to despair by repeated failures and downfalls, to cause you to turn back. This is all he strives for. So persevere, hold out, and stand against him. Never surrender.

D. The fighter's rallying cry:

Let these words of the ancient prophet always be your rallying cry: "Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; when I fall, I will arise." (Micah 7:8) The "enemy" is the ancient serpent, the devil.

Let this be your battle cry as you fight Satan: If you fall, arise- and you'll be saved.

E. A helpful intercessor:

In all your wars look up to Jesus Christ, who intercedes for your weaknesses and helps you in your struggles. John, the beloved disciple, says to his children in the faith, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate ... And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:1,2)

The advocate we have, who propitiates for our sins, is the same One who helps in our weaknesses "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted." (Heb 2:18)

Don't regard Christ as someone lying in wait for you- as soon as you sin he will destroy you. Rather see him as a Helper. Hear what Isaiah said: "The Lord GOD will help me; therefore I will not be disgraced." (Isa 50:7) The Apostle Paul also says, "Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses." (Rom 8:26)

F. How many times do I fall and the Lord forgives me:

This question is so often repeated by the penitents, who fear the Lord's rejection owing to their numerous falls on a single day. They believe that God can't forgive them for having repeatedly sinned.

But let me remind you of a question the Apostle Peter asked our Lord Jesus, "Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.'" (Mat 18:21,22)

The Lord requires man to forgive his brother 7 times 70; i.e. 490 times. How much more would the Lord God forgive the sinning person? The Apostle Paul says, "Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." (Rom 5:20)

G. Restraint:

This is not to say that man should abandon himself to sin, and willfully sins so that God may forgive! God forbid! The Apostle says, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Rom 6:1,2)

Again he warns us, "For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh." (Gal 5:13)

The Apostle Peter gives the same warning, “As free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.” (1 Pet 2:16)

So, let’s not willfully sin with abandon, rather when we fall in combat out of weakness or lack of knowledge of the enemy’s schemes, the Lord’s hand will stretch down to dress our wounds, assist the fallen, and renew the hope.



6- Procrastination

The devils’ assembly:

The devils, headed by Satan, assembled in a planning session to discuss the war plan against the penitents and the believers. The chairman asked the members for suggestions regarding the most modern plans to destroy the believers.

One devil said, “We make them doubt God’s existence.”

Another suggested, “We make them doubt the Bible.”

A third one said, “We make them doubt eternity.”

A fourth one called out, “We deceive them by lusts and temptations.”

The suggestions kept coming, but the chairman approved none of them; they were all old and used-up. None of them produced sure results, because many people escaped in spite of all of them, and managed to enter the fold of faith.

A well-experienced devil, who had taken upon himself the task of designing the most up-to-date and successful

sachems for destroying mankind, said, “We emphasize God’s existence, and the reality of judgment, punishment, heaven, and hell, that the Bible is accurate and authentic, that repentance is necessary and indispensable...” But before he could finish, everyone interrupted him in rage and condemned his plan as a failure. Their objection was so severe.

The chairman beckoned them to let him continue unfolding his plan.

The designer of the this malicious suggestion continued, “...and after we emphasize all that to mankind, they will feel comfortable with us and trust our counsel. And as soon as they start to take positive steps toward repentance, we advise them to put it off till later, perhaps till the next day, in order to bid sin farewell and satisfy their appetites one last time. This way every time they resolve to repent, they will put it off till later. And thus their days will be over and miss the chance of repentance altogether.”

Everyone applauded him and commended his wisdom. And, you know, from that time on, people have been falling, in groups and individually, into this bottomless pit, not because they don’t believe in God, the Bible, or eternity, but simply because they keep on putting off their repentance till they have missed the chance.

Beware, my brother, of this subtle trap, of this vicious trick. Heed the biblical commandment: “Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.” (Heb 4:7)

**Don't delay your repentance till tomorrow;
you may depart today.**

**Or tomorrow may come, but you find
yourself busy and distracted by many
things.**

**Or your heart may be hardened tomorrow
and the promptings of the Spirit may be
lost.**

The best time for repentance is **NOW**. “In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (2 Cor 6:2)

May the Lord grant you grace today to repent.

Chapter 7

The blessings of repentance

“Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”
(Luke 7:50)

- 1- The gift of forgiveness**
- 2- Depth of peace**
- 3- The honor of sonship**
- 4- Inheritance of the eternal glory**

1- The gift of forgiveness



When you approach the Lord in true repentance, and real remorse for all your sins, the Lord opens his arms wide to you, and in the merits of his blood he forgives all your iniquities.

When the sinful woman came, in penitence and compunction, to express repentance with tears at his feet, Christ looked at her and said, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.” (Luke 7:50)

Jesus is ready to relieve you of the weight of sins that wears you out, and to remember your sins no more. He said through the prophet Isaiah, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’” (Isa 1.18).

And again he confirms this fact through the prophet Jeremiah, “For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.” (Jer 31:34)

Listen, dear friend, with full consciousness, to what the Lord says, “I have blotted out, like a thick cloud, your transgressions, and like a cloud, your sins. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.” (Isa 44:22)

And notice the secret of his love and forgiveness as he says, “I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins.” (Isa 43:25)

Receive from Jesus the grace of forgiveness, granted to us through the cross. As he hung on the cross, he pleaded and interceded on behalf of his crucifiers, and on behalf of us, who daily crucify him by our sins, saying, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.” (Luke 23:34)

Our teacher, John the Beloved, emphasizes the fact that we receive forgiveness as we come to confess our sins as follows, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)



2- The depth of peace

The state of anxiety, disturbance, and lack of peace, which accompany sin, ends immediately as we place ourselves in the hands of the Lord and receive his forgiveness. The Apostle Paul says, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom 5:1)

As he forgave the sinful woman her sins, Jesus Christ said to her, “Go in peace.” (Luke 7:50)

Peace is one of the greatest gifts the penitent receives. He will no more be disturbed by his sins because they are forgiven in the blood. Nor will he worry about his eternity because it's guaranteed in the Lord's hand. Therefore King David sang about this peace, "You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness," (Psa 30:11)

Somewhere else he said, "I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy." (Psa 31:7)

This joy and gladness is reflected in the life of Elihu, a friend of Job's, who thus expressed himself, "I have sinned, and perverted what was right, and it did not profit me. He will redeem his soul from going down to the Pit, and his life shall see the light." (Job 33:27,28)

This is the Lord's promise to the penitent soul, as the prophet Isaiah recorded it, "For thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river.'" (Isa 66:12)

And that's why the penitent will sing along with the prophet Isaiah and say, "O LORD, I will praise You; though You were angry with me [because of my sin], Your anger is turned away [because of the cross], and You comfort me. Behold, God *is* my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid; 'For YAH, the LORD, *is* my strength and song; He also has become my salvation.' Therefore with joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Isa 12:1-3).

If you want to have peace in your heart, offer true repentance, and then peace will flood your heart.



3- *The honor of sonship*

What an honor we don't deserve, that the servant would become a son!

How great is divine condescension, that the Lord would deign to call us his friends!

He himself said, "No longer do I call you servants ... but I have called you friends." (John 15:15)

Saint John the Evangelist says, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name." (John 1:12)

That's why the Apostle Paul intones this divine lineage and royal honor, saying, "But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman ... that we might receive the adoption as sons ... Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son." (Gal 4:4-7)

When a person sets about to lead a life of repentance and withdrawal from the world and its people, and to walk with the Lord in the way of grace and contrition, the Lord will receive him, and bestow this great honor of becoming a son upon him. The Lord himself will be his Father, who looks after his life, nurture, education, and

guidance. “‘Come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ Says the LORD Almighty.” (2 Cor 6:18)

Treat the Lord, my dear friend, with the familiarity of a son, not with the fear of a servant. He has given you this privilege; enjoy it.



4- Inheritance of the eternal glory

What a gift that exceeds our wildest dreams!!

Our teacher Paul the Apostle said, “The gift of God is eternal life.” (Rom 6:23) And the Lord of glory, Jesus Christ, declared, “Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32)

It’s God’s delight to give us the kingdom. This is a matter that merits amazement! If this delights the Lord, why don’t you delight his heart by receiving this free gift from his hand?

How great is this holy grace, the grace of repentance and faith! How transcendent is this gift, the gift of divine grace!

As we become the sons of God, we become natural heirs- heirs of the glory soon to be revealed. The Apostle Paul says, “And if children, then heirs.” (Rom 8:17)

When our Fathers, the saints, saw this inheritance with the eyes of faith, they despised the world with all its glory. “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” (Heb 11:13)

O Lord, raise up my sight to heaven and its glory, to the city which has foundations, to the most magnificent City of Jerusalem. Raise me up to heaven, O you Source of eternal happiness, so that the world’s glory may diminish before your Excellent Glory, so that my soul, most willingly, would hate everything the world offers in order to rejoice in your person.

Chapter 8



The fruits of repentance

“Bear fruits worthy of
repentance.”
(Mat 3:8)

- 1- Holy conduct**
- 2- Good works**
- 3- The winning of souls**

1- Holy conduct



The evident fruit of repentance in a person's life is to lead a holy life, as our teacher, the Apostle Paul, says, "But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct." (1 Pet 1:15)

Keeping a holy conduct can be explained as follows:

A. The imitation of Christ:

The Apostle Peter says about Christ, "Leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps." (1 Pet 2:21)
Job the righteous says, "My foot has held fast to His steps." (Job 23:11)

The prophet David says, "Uphold my steps in Your paths." (Psa 17:5)

Therefore John the Beloved says, "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." (1 John 2:6)

Set Jesus, therefore, before your eyes, and walk in the same way and the same manner he walked in this world, and you'll find yourself walking in the way of holiness.

B. Walking according to the Spirit:

Two men fight over the believer; the old, corrupt, carnal man, and the new, pure, spiritual man.

War rages between the two until either of them wins. This is how our teacher, the Apostle Paul, puts it, “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another.” (Gal 5:17)

Therefore the Apostle commands us, “I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Gal 5:16)

Again he says, “And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal 5:24,25)

The Apostle draws a comparison between walking according to the flesh and walking according to the Spirit in the following, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God ... So then, those who are in the flesh [i.e. under the control of the flesh] cannot please God.” (Rom 8:5-8)

The Apostle then reaches the following conclusion: “For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Rom 8:13,14)

According to all these considerations, the Apostle Paul made his memorable statement: “There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.” (Rom 8:1)

Ask yourself, my brother, if you are still walking according to the lusts of your flesh, subject to its demands, gratifying its passions, or disciplining your body and bringing it into subjection and under control, putting an end to its demands? Have you released the spirit from its prison, to soar in higher altitudes? Holy conduct is a Spirit-controlled conduct.

C. Keeping away from the circle of sin:

Imitating Christ and walking according to the Spirit require us to keep away from the circles of sin that excite bodily lusts and appeal to the appetites.

If you want to walk in holiness, disassociate yourself from old friends; “Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate,’ says the Lord. ‘Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.’” (2 Cor 6:17)

Abandon amusement centers and nightclubs. Depart entirely from the land of sin, in all its forms and shapes that cause you to stumble. Heed God’s commandment to Lot: “Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed.” (Gen 19:17)

D. Avoid the effects of sin:

Such as pornographic literature that excite lust, and love stories, pornographic magazines and films, and watching any indecent scenes. The Apostle says, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” (2 Tim 2:19)

E. Avoid anything that offends others:

Watch your conduct and manners. Do your glances offend others? Do your looks (I am talking to the ladies) offend others? Do your words, insinuations, or mannerisms offend others? The Lord Jesus said, “Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” (Mat 18:7)

The Lord said in the ancient times, “And one shall say, ‘Take the stumbling block out of the way of My people.’” (Isa 57:14)

F. A life of conscientiousness:

The Apostle Paul admonishes us to “walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil,” (Eph 5:15,16)

Be conscientious in your speech: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.” (Eph 4:29)

The Apostle adds, “neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting.” (Eph 5:4)

Be conscientious in your manners as an example to believers, for this was the Apostle’s commandment to his disciple: “Be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” (1 Tim 4:12)

Be conscientious, too, in holding yourself to account. That’s why the Apostle says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.” (2 Cor 13:5)

G. Purity of life:

The Apostle commands, “Keep yourself pure.” (1 Tim 5:22)

Solomon the wise says in the Proverbs, “He who loves purity of heart and has grace on his lips, the king [i.e. Christ] will be his friend.” (Prov 22:11)

Therefore the Lord says through the prophet Isaiah, “Be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.” (Isa 52:11)

Whoever wants to live in holiness must observe a life of purity- purity of eyes, purity of heart, purity of thought, and purity of senses.

Join David in asking the Lord for this purity as he says, “Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin ... Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow ... Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psa 51:2,7,10)

H. The fear of the Lord:

God says through our teacher, Paul the Apostle, “Let us cleanse ourselves ... perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (2 Cor 7:1)

In order to conduct ourselves in holiness we must set the fear of the Lord before our eyes. We must fear God and keep his commandments. Our teacher, Solomon the wise, says, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all.” (Eccl 12:13)

Hear what the Scriptures say about a man who fears the Lord, “Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity ... The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.” (Psa 25:12-14)

If anyone walks in the fear of the Lord, the Lord will teach him the way of holiness, guide him to the paths of goodness, show him his secret, and reveal himself to him.

Solomon the wise has determined that “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” (Prov 9:10) So, if we would like to be wise in the way of holiness, we must have the fear of the Lord in our hearts. We must keep away from all things that displease him.

Let the standard of our lives not be the fear of man, but the fear of the Lord.

Someone said, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the fear of man is the end of crime.”

I. Spiritual atmospheres:

One of the most important constituents of our spiritual life is for the penitent to be involved in the atmospheres of grace; to live in a new, holy environment, and breathe pure air, devoid of the microbes of sin.

Therefore the Apostle Paul exhorts us: “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another.” (Heb 10:25)

That’s why the Apostle exhorted his disciple to get involved with the believers in order to escape sin. He said to him, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim 2:22)

The Apostle John made involvement with the believers an evident mark of having passed from sin to grace: “We

know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.” (1 John 3:14)

J. The means of grace:

In order for a believer to lead a life of holiness he must constantly practice the means of grace, which are the channel through which the waters of grace flow in order to reach our hearts.

Some of these means are:

1) Prayer: The Apostle says, “Pray without ceasing.” (1 Th 5:17)

The Lord Jesus admonished us to “pray and not lose heart.” (Luke 18:1)

He himself used to continue all night in prayer (Luke 6:12).

Prayer to the believer is like air and water; it gives him life and binds him with the One he loves dearly; it brings him into the realm of God.

2) The word of God: A powerful means of spiritual growth, through which we receive the mind of Christ and become wiser than our enemies. The prophet David said, “You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than

the ancients, because I keep Your precepts.” (Psa 119:100)

Therefore the Lord Jesus advises us regarding it, saying, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.” (Josh 1:8)

Whoever experiences the power and the delight of the word in one’s life will say along with Jeremiah, “Your words were found, and I ate them, And Your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” (Jer 15:16).

Because of the importance of God’s word to man the prophet Moses admonishes, “Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deu 11:18-20)

3) Fasting: is to discipline the flesh so that the spirit may be released. It is the mortification of the body, bringing the body into subjection to the will of the Spirit. That’s why Moses, Elijah, the prophets, Jesus himself, and the Apostles fasted in their lives.

King David says, “I humbled myself with fasting.” (Psa 35:13)

The Lord commands his people to fast: “Consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly.” (Joel 1:14)

Our teacher, the Apostle Paul, emphasizes the importance of devoting oneself to fasting as follows: “That you may give yourselves to fasting.” (1 Cor 7:5)

4) Partaking of the communion: This is a means of abiding in the Lord. The Lord Jesus Christ said, “He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56)

K. Spiritual leadership:

One of the most important factors that keep a person in the life of holiness is to attach oneself to an experienced, spiritual leadership, and subject oneself to the spiritual guidance of a wise, Spirit-filled Father. The importance of that becomes manifest in the admonition of the Apostle Paul, “Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.” (Heb 13:17)

2- Good works

One of the most important fruit of repentance in the life of a believer is the radiation of grace in the form of good works practiced by the believer.

* Good works are an obvious fruit of true repentance, as John the Baptist says, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,” (Mat 3:8)

* It’s also the fruit of orthodox faith “Faith working through love.” (Gal 5:6)

* It’s even a sign of living faith, as the Apostle James indicates, “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom.” (James 3:13)

He also says, “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” (James 2:17,18)

* Therefore the Apostle commands us to “walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work.” (Col 1:10)

* In fact the Lord has re-created us for good works, as the Apostle says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph 2:10)

* Through these good works the name of God is glorified. The Lord Jesus himself says, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” (Mat 5:16)

* Therefore the Apostle encourages his disciple Titus to affirm this matter, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain it: “These things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works ... that they may not be unfruitful.” (Titus 3:8,14)

For that reason the Apostle requests on behalf of all believers that they should abound in good works: “And

God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work.” (2 Cor 9:8)

* Even the Apostle Paul takes a such an interest in this matter, that he makes us hold each other accountable about it, that we stir up one another to practice it: “And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,” (Heb 10:24)

+ My brother, having said all that, do you really lead a life of holiness, which is reflected in your works and actions? Do you consider practicing good works, so that the name of God may be glorified in you and through you?

+ People don’t want to hear sermons; they need to see saints.

+ They don’t need to hear about the incarnation of Christ as much as see him incarnated in you.

+ They don’t need to hear from you about the attributes and love of Christ; they rather need to see these attributes in you.



3- The winning of souls

**** A love fellowship:**

Anyone who enjoys the sweetness of the Lord’s fellowship and have a foretaste of the kingdom, will be eager to draw everybody, so that they, too, may enjoy the Lord like him. This was the case with the Apostles. John the Beloved says, “That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the

Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” (1 John 1:4)

**** A burden for the souls:**

This eagerness, which fills the heart of the believer for the salvation of others, will soon turn into a burden for those souls. So much so that he may even feel pain and agonize for them. This made Paul the Apostle say, “I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh.” (Rom 9:1-3)

The prophet Jeremiah also says, “My heart within me is broken...All my bones shake. I am like a drunken man, And like a man whom wine has overcome, Because of the LORD, And because of His holy words. For the land is full of adulterers ...Their course of life is evil, and their might *is* not right.” (Jer 23:9,10)

The prophet Micah also say, “Therefore I will wail and howl, I will go stripped and naked; I will make a wailing like the jackals and a mourning like the ostriches.” (Micah 1:8)

The prophet Isaiah felt the burden and said, “Therefore I said, ‘Look away from me, I will weep bitterly; Do not labor to comfort me Because of the plundering of the daughter of my people.’” (Isa 22:4)

**** A positive act:**

Before long this love and burden turn into a positive act. Jude, the brother of the Lord, says, “And on some have compassion, making a distinction; but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.” (Jude 1:23-24)

What prompted our Fathers the Apostles to roam through the entire world to save everyone? It was a positive act of our Fathers the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the Preachers. They took up Paul’s battle cry and made it a lamp to their feet: “But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.” (Acts 20:24)

O that the Lord would kindle your heart with his love, that you may love the people just as he does, and persevere to communicate the gospel of the grace of God to everyone. “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who proclaims peace, who brings glad tidings of good things, who proclaims salvation.” (Isa 52:7)

Chapter 9

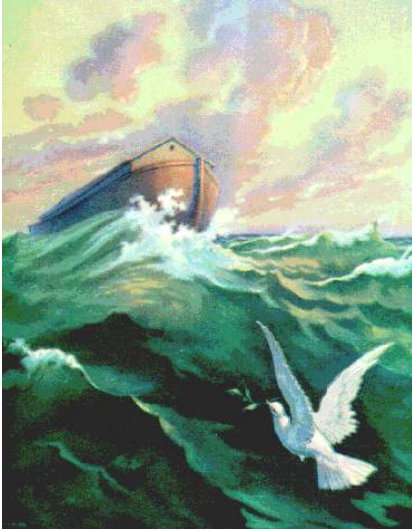


The seriousness of rejecting repentance

“How shall we escape if we
neglect so great a salvation?”
(Heb 2:3)

- 1- Curses**
- 2- Afflictions**
- 3- The devouring of the Lord**
- 4- Eternal damnation**

1- Curses



How dreadful are the curses that fall upon those who reject repentance. The Scriptures say, “But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God ...that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you.” The Scriptures go on to enumerate the different sorts of curses, of which I will name:

A. A curse everywhere:

The Bible says, “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country.” (Deu 28:16) Hear the Lord’s judgment against Cain who killed his brother Abel, rejecting the voice of the Lord and persisting in evil: “So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth.” (Gen 4:11.12)

B. A curse any time:

Rejecting repentance will be met by a curse at any time. Therefore the Lord says, “Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out.” (Deu 28:19)

C. A curse in anything:

All he has will be curses; his possessions, children, house, field, ...etc. The Bible says, “Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. Cursed *shall be* the fruit of your body and the produce of your land.” (Deu 28:17,18)

D. The curse of confusion and trouble:

The Bible tells us clearly about the secret of those physiological and nervous illnesses that are prevalent among people today. It says, “The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.” (Deu 28:20)

God stresses this curse in Jeremiah, “I will hand them over to trouble, to all kingdoms of the earth.” (Jer 15:4)

This is what really happened to the obstinate nation in the old times. The Scriptures record: “Therefore the wrath of the LORD fell upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has given them up to trouble, to desolation, and to jeering, as you see with your eyes.” (2 Chr 29:8)

This curse falls upon all those who reject the voice of the Lord and choose not to walk in the way of repentance.



It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God...

How tremendous are the afflictions that come over every obstinate, disobedient soul! The Bible records some very terrible kinds of afflictions. It will suffice to name only a few of them:

A. The affliction of diseases:

The Bible says, “The LORD will make the plague cling to you ... The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, ... with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish ... The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.” (Deu 28:21,22,27)

I read a book by an atheist in which he said that people in the past needed what they called “God” as an opiate to fall back on in their sicknesses, that it may heal them. Right now science has supplanted those myths! There is a medicine for every sickness. We are in no need then of these gods!

It’s rather amazing that whenever a medicine is discovered to heal a known disease, the Lord sends on the disobedient new diseases, such as AIDS or cancer, that render medicine and science quite helpless. Thus all mouths are shut!

B. The affliction of madness and confusion:

This is another affliction that overtakes the obstinate wicked. The Bible says, “The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart...So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes

see... you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul... Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. In the morning you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were evening!’ And at evening you shall say, ‘Oh, that it were morning!’ because of the fear which terrifies your heart.” (Deu 28:28,34,65-67)

C. The affliction of eating one’s own children and placenta:

How severe is the affliction when the Lord sends trouble, siege, and famine that compel people to eat their own children and the placenta of their fetus. How ugly and painful to the soul! This is exactly what the Bible foretold: “You shall eat the fruit of your own body, the flesh of your sons and your daughters whom the LORD your God has given you, in the siege and desperate straits in which your enemy shall distress you. The sensitive and very refined man among you will be hostile toward his brother, toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the rest of his children whom he leaves behind, so that he will not give any of them the flesh of his children whom he will eat, because he has nothing left in the siege and desperate straits.” (Deu 28: 53-55)

The Bible says again, “And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I also will walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. You shall eat the flesh of your

sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.” (Lev 26:27-29)

This actually took place at the siege of Samaria in 2 Kings 6:24-29. The famine was so severe and the situation was so bad that a donkey’s head was *sold* for eighty *shekels* of silver, and dove droppings were used for food. Moreover, a woman complained to the king of her neighbor, saying, “We boiled my son, and ate him. And I said to her on the next day, ‘Give your son, that we may eat him’; but she has hidden her son.” The king couldn’t help tearing his clothes.

The Bible says again that the tender and delicate woman, who would not venture to set the sole of her foot on the ground because of her delicateness and sensitivity, will refuse to the husband of her bosom, and to her son and her daughter, her placenta which comes out from between her feet and her children whom she bears; for she will eat them secretly for lack of everything in the siege and desperate straits (Deu 28:56-57).

It’s really dreadful and fearful to be under God’s wrath. It should be enough to read about the bowls of the wrath of God in the Book of Revelation to repent and take refuge with Christ from the wrath to come.



3- The devouring of the Lord

The image of a quite and meek lamb soon changes into the opposite- into a roaring lion ready to devour the resisting and those who reject repentance.

***“So I will be to them like a lion;
Like a leopard by the road I will lurk;***

***I will meet them like a bear deprived of her cubs;
I will tear open their rib cage,
And there I will devour them like a lion.
The wild beast shall tear them.” (Hosea 13:7,8)***

These words of the Lord were not an empty threat; he did what he promised. The prophet Jeremiah recorded what happened at his time as follows:

“The lion has come up from his thicket,
And the destroyer of nations is on his way.
He has gone forth from his place to make your land desolate.

Your cities will be laid waste, without inhabitant.

For this, clothe yourself with sackcloth,

Lament and wail.

For the fierce anger of the LORD Has not turned back from us.” (Jer 4:7,8)

Hasn't the hand of the Lord stretched to stamp out groups and individuals down the generations?

Hasn't he destroyed thousands in the wilderness as they disobeyed his commands?

Hasn't he incinerated Sodom and Gomorrah when their evil reached heaven?

Do you recall how the Lord dealt with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram? Hasn't the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men, together with all their goods?

Hasn't a fire come out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who violated the Law? (Numbers 16)

Hasn't the Lord destroyed whole nations and people groups with pestilence?

Woe be the people who come under the Lord's devouring wrath and destruction. That's why the Bible warns us: "Now consider this, you who forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." (Psa 50:22)



4- Eternal damnation

Everything a sinner suffers from in this world as a result of sin is nothing compared with what he would suffer from eternally. We set out below some of the dreadful things the Bible tells us about:

A. Eternal torment:

There will be no rest from the succession of torments to come, and the different types of dreadful suffering. In this life one may have some respite from hardships every now and then, but there, according to the Bible, "they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." (Rev 20:10)

This punishment will be everlasting; i.e., unending, as Christ pointed out, "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." (Mat 25:46)

In the Apocalypse John reveals this terrible scene of suffering: "And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night." (Rev 14:11)

What an enormous torment! The rich man cried out, “I am tormented in this flame.” (Luke 16:24)

B. Eternal shame:

In this world a sinner may manage to hide his conduct from people and may even not care what they think of him. But their shame later will be made public, for the Bible says, “And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt.” (Dan 12:2) They will, therefore, cry out on that day, saying to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” But no one will respond!

C. Slaughter:

The Lord Jesus Christ says, “But bring here those enemies of mine, who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me.” (Luke 19:27) Jesus Christ, who was slaughtered for the sinners, will slaughter those who refused to accept his sacrifice on their behalf.

D. Everlasting fuel:

This is the inevitable destiny of the wicked: to become everlasting fuel for fire that shall never be quenched and fodder for the worm that does not die. The Bible makes this very clear in several places: “To go to hell, into the fire that shall never be quenched; where ‘Their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.’” (Mark 9:34,44)

E. Deep darkness:

It's strange that after all this fire, there won't be any light, rather blackness of eternal darkness: "For whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever." (Jude 1:13)

F. Wailing and gnashing of teeth:

In the midst of this odious atmosphere rise the sounds of wailing and gnashing of teeth: "And cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (Mat 13:50)

Dante's description of hell:

In the Divine Comedy, the famous Italian poet Dante wrote a dramatic description of hell, expressive of the tragedies of those in it. He said:

"Here is the way to the City of Torment... Here is the way to Everlasting Suffering... Here is the way to the people of perdition ... I entered in to the world of mysteries ... There echoed a sigh, a cry, and loud wailing ... in an atmosphere with no stars ... For the first time this made my eyes tear... strange tongues ... terrible screams ... words of grief ... screams of anger ... loud, deaf sounds ... accompanied by hand slaps, caused a continued loud noise. In this everlastingly dark atmosphere, like sand particles blown by a storm...?"

This is what a poet wrote out of his imagination about hell. How much more will the reality be!
How dreadful is eternal damnation!

Oh that every soul would be wise to escape the wrath to come, and do well to heed the biblical warning:

“Only fear the LORD, and serve Him in truth with all your heart ... But if you still do wickedly, you shall be swept away.” (1 Sam 12:24,25)

May the Lord grant you grace to have a clean start right now.

The Lord is ready to accept you, blot out your sins, and cast your iniquities into the sea of oblivion, no more to remember them.

**He loves you ... He calls you ... He wait for you.
Come to him in repentance and contrition, being confident that he will accept you. He said, “The one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.”**



Epilogue

Dear reader,

I hope that you confront yourself honestly to discover who you really are. Do you want to walk in the spiritual way?

Do you want to start with the life of repentance?

Will you accept Christ's invitation, who came himself to invite you to his own wedding and kingdom?

Will you let his Holy Spirit work on your heart, to convict and transform you?

Have you really resolved to quit your past life to have a clean start?

Has your soul been longing for peace and happiness in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Do you want to spend the rest of your life in heaven on earth?

Will you offer him yourself entirely, that he may use you for the glory of his name and the extension of his kingdom?

If so, kneel down right now and pray. Renounce yourself willingly so that Christ may live within you.

Say to him "Receive me, Lord, entirely. Grant me to walk in the Spirit and do your will."

He is ready right now to receive, sanctify, and fill you with the Holy Spirit, and use you mightily as a faithful witness of the power of his grace. To him be glory forever. Amen.



**JESUS CHRIST
IS THE WAY TO THE HEAVEN**