

Many Christians Recoil at This Word—But You Can't Love God Without It

Do not despise repentance. Every season of significant spiritual growth in your walk with God will be precipitated by a time of deep repentance. If, however, you recoil at the word repentance, it is because you do not want to change. You need to know the importance of repentance. When the thought of repentance is not shrouded in gloomy images of sackcloth and tears, when correction inspires rejoicing and shouts of praise to God's grace, know that your spirit has truly become pure. It is at this point you are walking the way God calls holy.

Examine Your Faith

Would you buy a car without driving it? Of course not! Yet many of us accept various "plans of salvation" that do not really save us from the distresses of hell. In spite of the fact that Jesus came to give us abundant life, we remain sick, sinful and selfish. If our Christianity does not work in this life where we can test it, it is foolhardy to hope it will successfully transport us into eternity where, if we fail the test, we suffer eternal separation from God. I do not wish to imply, however, that unless we get every doctrine right and every interpretation perfect, we will be refused entrance into heaven. Christianity is more a matter of the heart than the head; it is a maturing of love more than knowledge. The test of truth is not an intellectual pursuit but whether you are drawing closer, week by week, to knowing and loving Jesus Christ.

Questions for Faith

If we have been indoctrinated to believe that the kingdom of God—and Christianity itself—does not really have to work, or

if the absence of holiness and power fails to trouble us, something is wrong with our concept of truth. In testing our faith, we should seek answers to three very important questions. First: Is my faith effective? Ask yourself if your prayers are being answered and if your life is becoming godly. Second: If my doctrines do not work, then why not? You must seek to find out why things are not working for you. And third: If I do see the fruit and power of the Holy Spirit revealed in another's life, how did he (or she) receive such grace from God? Do not be afraid to sit as a disciple under the anointing of another's ministry. The final test of faith is seen in the kind of life it produces. Continual, persistent walking with Christ will produce a life like Christ's. We will walk as He did, with holiness and power.

Trusting Our Teachers

All too often, Christians accept teachings "by faith"—not faith in the living God but faith that their church doctrines are correct. We unconsciously hope that whoever is teaching us has not made a mistake. We must recognize the fallibility of all our teachers. Remaining free from deception is a responsibility each of us must assume as individuals. Without becoming suspicious or mistrusting, in humility let us re-examine what we have been taught. The virtue of any teaching is in its ability to either equip you to do God's will or empower you to find God's heart. If either objective is missing, the information is not worth your time. {eo}

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