

Distinguished From Remorse



Foundations (Day 61)
by Derek Prince

Of course, there are some passages in some translations where the verb "to repent" is used in a different sense, but when we examine these passages carefully, we find that the English word "to repent" is used to translate some other word in the original language. For example, in the 1611 King James Version we read in Matthew 27:3-4 that when Judas Iscariot saw that Christ had been condemned to death, afterward he "repented" of betraying Christ for money.

Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? See thou to that.

Here we read that Judas "repented himself." But the Greek word used in the original is not the word metanoein defined earlier. The Greek word used of Judas, metamelein, denotes that which people often wrongly interpret as repentance: remorse, anguish. There is no doubt that at this moment Judas experienced intense anguish and remorse. Nevertheless, he did not experience true, scriptural repentance; he did not change his mind, his course, his direction.

On the contrary, the very next verse says he went and hanged himself; in Acts 1:25 this is expressed by the words: "Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place". Certainly Judas experienced emotion – strong emotion, bitter anguish and remorse. But he did not experience true repentance; he did not change his mind or his course. The truth is that he could not change his course; he had already gone too far. In spite of the Saviour's warning, he had deliberately committed himself to a course from which there could be no return.

He had passed "the place of repentance."

What a terrible and solemn lesson this is! It is possible for a man, by stubborn and wilful continuance in his own way, to come to a place of no turning back – a place where the door of repentance has, by his own wilfulness, been forever slammed shut behind him.

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Another man who made this same tragic error was Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birth right.

> "For you know that afterward, 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)

In a foolish, careless moment Esau sold his birth right to his brother Jacob in exchange for a bowl of soup. Genesis records: "Thus Esau despised his birth right" (Gen. 25:34). We must remember that in despising his birth right, he despised all the blessings and the promises of God that were associated with the birth right. Later, Esau regretted what he had done. He sought to regain the birth right and the blessing, but he was rejected. Why? Because he found no place of repentance. (In the margin of the 1611 King James Version the alternative translation is: "He found no way to change his mind" Heb. 12:17).

Here is further evidence that strong emotion is not necessarily proof of repentance. Esau cried aloud and shed bitter tears. But in spite of all this, he found no place of repentance. By a trivial, impetuous act he had decided the whole course of his life and his destiny both for time and for eternity. He had committed himself to a course from which afterward he could find no way of return.

How many men today do just the same as Esau! For a few moments of sensual pleasure or carnal indulgence, they despise all the blessings and promises of almighty God. Later, when they feel their mistake, when they cry out for those spiritual and eternal blessings which they had despised, to their dismay they find themselves rejected. Why? Because they find no place of repentance, no way to change their minds.

Devotional

Transcript: WD-B052-061-ENG
Last Updated: 03 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com

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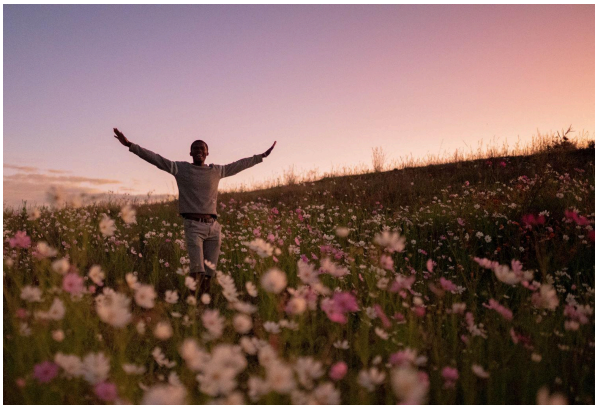

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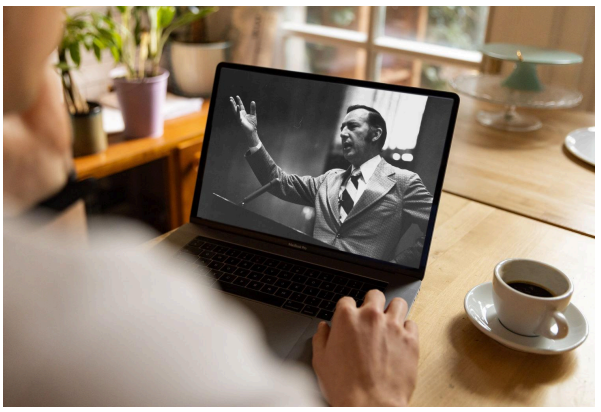

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