

Forgiveness/Repentance

A summary of Chs 9 & 10 from "*Steering Clear*" by Earl Wilson

When someone has sinned against you...

- Forgiveness is for you – this enables you to be released from the pain and anger in order to be able to pray for the other person's repentance. It keeps you from being damaged by the bitterness and them from fixating on your desire for vengeance.
- Repentance is for them – "Unless you repent you too shall also perish." (Lk 13:3)

Some definitions:

- Apology – "I am sorry if I hurt your feelings." (if? No ownership!)
- Asking Forgiveness – "I was wrong. I accept responsibility for doing this that caused you pain."
- Repentance – to change ones' mind, purpose, and actions.
- Forgiveness – Allowing yourself to be set free from the continued pressure of rehearsing the offense, reliving the pain, and or seeking revenge.

A person's ability to forgive someone is directly tied to the experience of having been forgiven. Eph. 4:32

Signs of Repentance:

1. Seeing old behavior for what it really is – no more white washing! (1 Jn. 1:8-10)
2. Rejecting the desire to minimize and cover up the sin. (2 Cor. 7:11)
3. Confessing and taking ownership of the old behavior.
4. Being willing to make amends. (Take the time to rebuild the trust and/or invest resources to attempt some level of restitution. Num. 5:5-7; Lk 19:8)
5. Investing in the new direction. Energies that use to go toward seeking out the sinful behavior are now diverted toward protecting themselves from going back to that behavior. (Ps. 51:12,13)
6. Practicing progressive confession. As the tentacles of related sins and consequences are discovered sorrow, repentance and forgiveness must continue. New awareness of sin should result in new awareness of God's mercy and grace. Otherwise there is the danger of depression and bitterness. (2 Cor. 2:7-11)

Principles and Boundaries that May Prevent the Need for Repentance:

1. Learn to deal with stress appropriately
 - a. Learn to say "No."
 - b. Identify and focus on your priorities.
 - c. Take time to be with God.
 - d. Cultivate your relationship with your family.
 - e. Finish tasks and turn them loose.
 - f. Take care of yourself physically.
 - g. Practice peaceful moments
 - h. Take time for people.
 - i. "If you find yourself lacking in half of these you are at risk for falling into destructive sinful patterns of thinking and living"
2. Seek input from others
 - a. Will watch my life and tell me what you see?
 - b. Do you see behavior or attitudes that cause you concern?
 - c. Is my language slipping?
 - d. Am I losing my zeal for God?
 - e. Do you see me being disrespectful?
 - f. Do you see any ways I am conforming to the world's mold?
3. A daily check up
 - a. Have I done anything to refresh my faith today?
 - b. Look down at where your feet and heart has taken you – Where are my roots? Really?
 - c. Am I surrounded by some people who seem to stimulate my growth as a believer?
4. Establishing boundaries
 - a. The Ten Commandments and principles Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount provide "Boundary Markers" of what you should and shouldn't do, think or be.
5. Check your boundaries every three months
 - a. Ask God to reveal to you any boundaries that you have allowed to slip, and then listen as you read, pray and talk to others.
 - b. Have your boundary markers moved?
 - c. Has a relationship you have with someone encouraged you to move your boundary markers?

- d. Have you developed new relationships that previously would have made you uncomfortable?
- e. Have you described personal things to someone other than your spouse?