

A Broken and A Contrite Heart

In Psalm 51:17 David speaks about the broken and contrite heart as a sacrifice that is acceptable to God. Isaiah 57:15 states that God is with him who has a humble and a contrite spirit and will revive the humble and contrite. A contrite heart is one that has been ground to pieces. Perfect contrition is sorrow that arises out a pure love of God. The unbroken, proud and arrogant heart is not pleasing to God. In order to commune with God, we must be humbled, acknowledging our sin and our need for cleansing by Him.

We remain with a proud heart because we do not allow God by the power of His Spirit to examine our heart.

David asked God in [Psalm 139:23-24] to search out his heart, try him and reveal any wicked way. Jeremiah 17:10 says: "I, the Lord, search the heart; I try the reins (test the emotions), even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

As we make the decision to allow God to examine our heart, then, and only then, do we begin to see the true condition of our heart. This revelation will bring us to the place of repentance. Repentance is not primarily making things right with others, but it is first and foremost making things right with God.

Often people ask: "How could David, who committed adultery and murder, be called a man after God's own heart?" [I Samuel 13:14]. His confession in Psalm 51:4 reveals his secret: "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight." The number one characteristic of the repentant heart is a readiness to acknowledge guilt. In I John 1:8 this principle is addressed: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."

There are obstacles to repentance, such as being proud, self-righteous and unwilling. The proud are self-righteous and look down on others; the broken esteem all others as better than themselves [Philippians 2:3]. The proud have to prove they are right; the broken yield the right to be right [John 3:30]. The proud desire to be served; the broken are motivated to serve others [Galatians 5:13]. The proud claim their rights and have a demanding spirit; the broken yield their right and have a meek spirit [Matthew 5:5]. A principal hindrance however, is our failure to take God's Word as the standard of measurement for our life. God will measure us according to His standard, and that standard is His Word.

Repentance has many benefits. Repentance brings us joy and peace because we are assured of God's forgiveness and cleansing [I John 1:9]. We find ourselves nearer to Jesus than ever before because He loves the contrite heart of the repentant sinner [Psalm 51:17]. The repentant person cries over the right things: his sins and the sins of others. In other words, the repentant heart is grieved over the things that grieve God. Repentance brings us home to the heart of the Father. It is the gift of the Holy Spirit who breaks the human heart into pieces so that the Father can make us into a more useful vessel [II Timothy 2:21].

We need to pray that God would give us the grace of repentance and a broken and contrite heart that afterwards we would have a humble and penitent heart that is pleasing to Him.