

True Biblical Repentance, What does Genuine Repentance Look Like?

Many friends of Bill Gothard and followers of the IBLP ministry are praying for the repentance of Bill Gothard for his ungodly behavior, a recantation of his teachings contrary to the Scriptures, and for the acknowledgement of sin and wrongs by the IBLP Board and Management.

What does genuine repentance look like, what does it feel like on the receiving end? If and when Bill Gothard and the IBLP Board and Management would ever make any attempts to acknowledge sin and wrongs done, and make the private and public confessions regarding these offenses and the great damage done to so many, what would characterize these words and actions as genuine, as a result of their meeting with a holy God before they issued any words or proceeded with any corrective actions?

The Scriptures provide some very specific help on these important questions. The brief survey of several Bible texts on this subject will provide some clear evidences, some obvious fruit that will accompany a repentance that was generated by a wrestling with, a confrontation about sin between each offender involved and the Holy Spirit of God whose special work is convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come.

In summary, a repentant man who has experienced true guilt about a sin and who has switched his mind and heart back to pursuing first the righteousness of God (Matt. 6:33) without reference to protection of himself or his assets, will be involved in these basic actions:

1. He will give witness that he has confessed the full sin to God. Psalm 51:1-17.
He will have uncovered all of his sins and committed to God to forsake them. Proverbs 28:13
He will have confessed all of his sins to God (I John 1:9) and God would have begun cleansing him from all unrighteousness by His Spirit.
2. The man will be quick to enter into agreement with those offended by his ungodliness and sins against them. Matthew 5:23-26. He will not be seen as delaying, obfuscating, or in any way blaming the one he has sinned against. His focus will be on his sins only and getting them cleared by confession to God and to those damaged by him.
3. The man will be seen as glad to generous in his efforts to put things broken back right again. Zacchaeus, after meeting with Jesus Christ, willingly and voluntarily offered 50% of his assets to the poor and committed to delivering 400% return to each one he had defrauded by his sins. Luke 19:1-10.
4. The man will be seen as grateful and welcoming of the opportunity to experience the mercy of God's forgiveness, and where the offended and victims can find grace, to also respond to the confessions with mercy and grace. The repentant man will be patient and gracious after his confessions and restitutions for those persons so deeply damaged by him, not expecting their ability to forgive until they have been personally healed and helped by the God of all comforts. Matthew 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32
5. The man will be counting each situation of confession and correction as a spiritual joy because it is a testing of his faith and obedience to God, a process to purify his calloused and evil heart, one who has been found out to be an "evil doer" (I Peter 4:15) in this review of the love and mercies of God. James 1:2-3.

6. The man understands the personal investment required to pursue a clear conscience, to return to a life of being above reproach, a commitment to pursue for a life time a spiritual reconciliation where any basis of trust must be rebuilt and proven over many years of consistent faithfulness to God and to other believers (Luke 16:10-15). See account of reconciliation of Jacob and Esau. Genesis 32-33; Hosea 12:2-6. See notes on Jacob and Esau Reconciliation.

Can we know and observe the difference between a good confession and a contrived / forced confession? Are there specific traits of the “sorrow of the world” in contrast to a “sorrow according to the will of God?” Yes indeed, we can.

Any godly sorrow and repentance, the full confession of sin and forsaking it, refreshes, restores the believer in his fellowship with God and the indwelling Spirit. The Holy Spirit begins the process of cleansing from all unrighteousness. The “wisdom of earth” is suddenly abhorred by the penitent and the wisdom from above is embraced.

What disingenuous looks like...

“Sorrow of the World” II Corinthians 7:10	“Wisdom of Earth” James 3:14-15
Produces death	Bitter jealousy
Reluctant to resolve it, introduces delays	Selfish ambition
No vindication	Arrogant
Blames others, offers justifications	Lying against the truth
Seeing sins in others and not in one’s self	Earthly
Angry about loss of time having to deal with it, again!!!	Natural
No sense of personal responsibility to help repair damage done	Demonic
	Disorder
	Every evil thing

What genuine and true repentance from a godly sorrow looks like...

“Godly Sorrow” II Corinthians 7:8-12	“Wisdom from Above” James 3:17-18
Initial sadness, sorrow, vs. 8	Pure
According to the will of God, vs. 9	Peaceable
Repentance without regret, vs. 10	Gentle
Leading to salvation (complete, whole) vs. 10	Reasonable
Not suffer loss in anything through us, by us, vs. 9	Full of mercy
Earnestness produced in you, vs. 11	Full of good fruits
Vindication of yourself, by obedience to God	Unwavering
Indignation, hate of sin I did	Without hypocrisy
Fear of ever repeating the sin, Gal. 6:1-2	Sown in peace
Longing, to be free from guilt, back at peace	Motivated to make peace
Zeal, for what is now possible	
Avenging of wrong, putting it back right	