

forgiveness of all your sins, the Holy Spirit to live in you, a family of loving believers, understanding of the greatest book ever written, and eternal life in heaven—all for the repenter.

Even a dog recognizes the difference between the rancid old chicken bone in his mouth and the fresh T-bone steak set before him.

Repent now and come to Christ.

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# *The Change of Mind*

By Jim Elliff

The young man was dying—without Christ.

“I have a habit,” he said, as he looked up from the bed that had been moved into the living room for his last few weeks on earth. “I know that it is sin and that God does not permit it. I want to continue my habit, however, and I honestly don’t intend to stop it. On the other hand, I desperately want to go to heaven. May I become a Christian?”

How would you answer this question?

I responded by saying that it was impossible for him to be converted to Christ while at the same time loving his sin. It is true that anybody who comes to Christ will come with sin. In fact, he or she will come precisely because of that sin—



that is, to be rid of it and its awful result. But to come to Christ while loving and cherishing sin is totally impossible. It is like an airplane trying to fly in two directions!

Was I being cruel? No, in fact I was as loving as I possibly could be. I wanted the man to know the truth about repentance because Jesus had said, “I tell you . . . unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3)

When the apostle Paul walked up Mars Hill in Athens to contend with the philosophers of his day, he was perfectly frank about their need to repent. He courageously declared that God “commands all people everywhere to repent.” (Acts

17:30) If God demands repentance from *all people everywhere* then you and I are also included.

What is repentance?

To repent means to “change the mind.” But this change of mind is not *merely* a new way of thinking about Christ and salvation. It is much more profound, affecting the deepest attitudes and actions.

When a person repents, he comes to God hating what he once loved and loving what he once thought so little of. Such an intense change in thinking about sin and Christ results in believers doing “works befitting repentance.” (Acts 26:20 ) As a person thinks, so he or she acts.

A man came to Jesus who was obviously impressed with Him. He got on his knees to ask Jesus an important question. “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?”

Jesus’ answer was just the reverse of what you would imagine. He said, “You know the commandments: ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not bear false witness,’ ‘Do not defraud,’ ‘Honor your father and mother.’”

And he answered and said to Him, “Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth.”

Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me.”

But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:17-22)

Do you think Christ was also cruel in what he required? Not so. In fact, the passage specifically tells us that Christ loved him. But this man had another god—Money. Jesus knew that no man may come to Him while simultaneously worshipping another god. “You cannot serve God and Mammon (Money).” (Matthew 6:24)

The man wanted eternal life, but not enough to give up his favorite god. Rather, he rejected Christ for his money, even though he was sad he could not have both.

Christ showed the man that even though he perceived of himself as a person who kept God’s laws, he really was a law-breaker. After all, he broke the first command! God had clearly said, “You shall have no other gods before Me.” (Exodus 20:3 )

This story is an illustration of a man who needed to repent, just like the first man described in this article. Unfortunately, both of these men, to my knowledge, refused to give up their cheap god for Christ. Both, therefore, went to hell.

Do you remember what Jesus said? “Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.” (Luke 13:3) He requires repentance from you just as he did from these two who died.

You must reject your gods whatever they are—money, sex, sports, sinful habits, hobbies, relationships, even your own self—anything that contends with God’s rightful place in your life. What may be good and beautiful under the authority of God, becomes a damning god if you love it more than Christ.

Will you repent and come to Christ by faith? Or, will you stubbornly hold on to a god who will drag you to hell forever?

Christ is not cruel in His offer. He gives you abundant life,