

Pursuing God—A Seeker's Guide

Chapter Nine *The Change of Mind*

1. Please read the introduction to chapter nine on p. 44.
2. This chapter is extremely important for helping you understand the proper response to Christ. It will also have the benefit of helping authentic believers think through these foundational truths more precisely. It is well-known that there is a proper way to present yourself to a great person such as a king or queen. God is greater than all. Nobody will be allowed to present himself to Him in just any way. Please read p. 45 aloud. We'll read the rest of the chapter in a moment.
3. The story I told about the young man who died was more moving and difficult than I was able to convey in such a short space. I certainly did not want to tell him the wrong thing. I'll admit that I *wanted* to tell him that he could come to Christ with his affection for his sin anyway and Christ would change his desires *after* he was converted. I did not, however. I still believe I gave him the right answer. Can you put into your own words my answer to this man? Why did I say that coming to Christ while simultaneously cherishing sin is like trying to fly an airplane in two directions?
4. Now read the rest of the chapter.
5. It is important to distinguish between repentance itself and works of repentance. Repentance is a change of mind, a profound change of heart and attitude about sin, but the *works* of repentance are those actions coming from a truly repentant person—the fruit of true repentance. Sometimes people do not emphasize repentance because they think those who do are describing repentance as some sort of work that earns salvation. In other words, they think we are saying that a person becomes a Christian by changing his *behavior* and acting differently, rather than by changing his *mind* about his behavior, and putting his entire trust in Christ. What's the difference between these two, in your own words?
6. The story of the young man who came to Jesus (pages 46-47) shows why repentance is so necessary. Restate for the group just why Christ did not accept him.
7. In John 2:23-25 we find these words:

Now when He [Jesus] was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

This passage is instructive. Please answer these questions about it.

- Were Jesus' signs done in order for people to see and believe in Him?
- Are people supposed to believe in Christ, and isn't this what the crowd did?
- The word "believe" in the phrase, "Many believed in His name," and the word "commit" in the phrase "Jesus did not commit Himself to them," is the same Greek word. Why did Jesus not commit Himself to these people who believed?
- The passage says that Jesus "knew all men." What is the significance of that phrase?

8. It appears that the people of John 2:23-25 were *unrepenting* "believers." Do you think there are many unrepenting "believers" in the professing church today? And if so, how did that happen?

9. Repentance is not a dutiful discipline. When a person is properly convicted by the Holy Spirit, he is *thrilled* to repent. He loves leaving his sin. Paul puts it this way:

For godly sorrow [conviction] produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.
(2 Corinthians 7:10)

Can you explain this verse? And what is the sorrow of the world that leads to death? How can you tell the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow? Why is true repentance not to be regretted?

10. *[If you are in an intimate group, you may discuss these final questions openly. In some cases the leader may decide to ask for quiet reflection only.]*
Here are the final questions:

- Are you a true repenter?
- Is your mind changed about sin?
- Do you despise your sin and want to leave it?
- If you do not repent, what will happen?

For next week: Please read chapter ten.