

Summing It All Up

Joe Slater

Being a faithful Christian involves hundreds of specific things, each of which is important. Sometimes, however, it helps to step back and look at the broader picture. Paul summarized it this way: *“that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance”* (Acts 26:20). The first two points pertain to becoming a Christian; the third deals with the way God requires us to live.

REPENT. This word liberally means to “change the mind.” In Scripture, it is generally connected with sin. Since sin originates in the heart (mind), solving our sin problem involves changing the mind about sin.

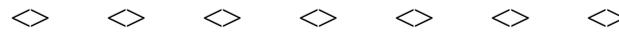
Repentance is not the same as being sorry. *“Godly sorrow produces repentance . . . but the sorrow of the world produces death”* (2 Corinthians 7:10). Just as worldly sorrow is not the same thing as death, so godly sorrow is not the same thing as repentance; rather, it produces repentance.

TURN TO GOD. “Turn” is often given in our New Testaments as “convert.” *“Repent, and be converted”* (Acts 3:19). Actually, Peter said “repent and convert” (it’s active not passive). To convert is to change. Repentance is the change of mind, but the change of spiritual condition occurs at baptism. That’s why, in the previous chapter, Peter said *“Repent and be baptized”* (Acts 2:38). At baptism, a lost person’s condition changes to saved; his location changes from outside of Christ to “in Christ”; his destination changes from eternal destruction to Heaven.

DO WORKS BEFITTING REPENTANCE. One who has changed his mind about sin, and has been washed clean in the blood of Jesus, ought to live in such a way as to demonstrate the change. A Christian must not *“continue*

in sin that grace may abound” (Romans 6:1). *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them”* (Ephesians 2:10). Jesus *“gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works”* (Titus 2:14).

In short, God requires that we change our minds about sin. He stands ready to cleanse us from sin when we obey Him in baptism. And He expects us to live like people who have changed their minds and have been cleansed. Hundreds of specific things are involved in being a faithful Christian, but this brief summary should help us to keep them all in focus.



You Will Never Be Sorry:

For living a pure life

For doing your best

For being kind to the poor

For listening before judging

For thinking before speaking

For harboring clean thoughts

For being generous to an enemy

For stopping your ears to gossip

For standing by your principles

For asking pardon when in error

For being honest in business dealings

--Author Unknown

SECOND PLACE

“Andrew found first his own brother Simon and said to him, ‘We have found the Messiah’. . .” (John 1:41).

The inner circle of the twelve included Peter, James and John. Why not Peter, Andrew, James and John? James and John were brothers, why not include Andrew, Peter's brother? We don't know.

On the mount of transfiguration, Jesus took only Peter, James and John. When He went into the synagogue official's home to raise his daughter from the dead, He took Peter, James and John. When Jesus went deeper into the olive grove at Gethsemane, He took Peter, James and John with Him. Andrew wasn't invited.

Andrew lived in the shadow of his brother, Simon Peter. Yet, we never see him resenting his brother or Jesus for his role among the apostles. Daniel Webster aspired to be President. He was twice sought for the Vice-President position but he declined. Had he served, he would have become President since both men who asked him to run with them died in office. A refusal to accept second place prevented him from rising to first place.

Andrew introduced one to the Lord that accomplished great things for the Lord. We need more Andrews who will not aspire to greatness, but aspire to serve in whatever role the Lord gives them. *“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much”* (Luke 16:10 NASU).

--Rob Redden (Arroyo Grande, CA)