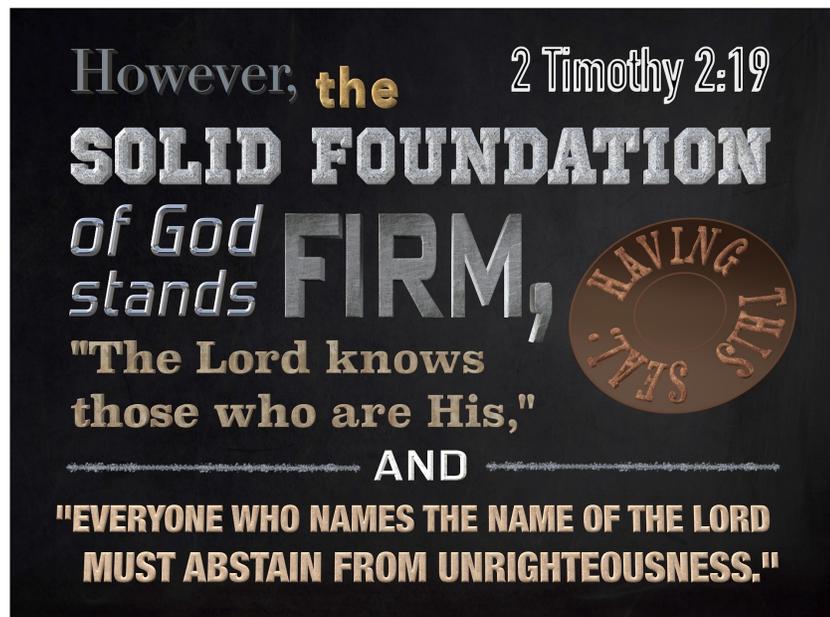


Exhort One Another

Biweekly Newsletter



Courtesy of Μαρία

Food For Thought

Matthew 4:4

"But He answered, "It is written: Man must not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

Today we're going to talk about **Repentance**, continuing with our breakdown of the list given in *Hebrews 5:12-6:3*. One of the reasons I chose to begin this miniseries with *faith* in my last issue, is because repentance is closely related to faith. Repentance comes as a natural *response* to our faith, and is thus a distinct mark of true faith. The neat thing is that, while it is an evidence of faith in itself, it is also the immediate link between faith and the works "which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." (cf. *Ephesians 2:8-10*, ESV). Repentance is for everyone



Pop Quiz

According to *Psalms 121* the sun will...

- (a) Rise with healing in its wings
- (b) Not harm you by day
- (c) Will be dark in its rising
- (d) No longer be your light by day

Answer to last issue's:

(b) Went backwards 10 degrees.

Isaiah 38:7-8, NKJV

"Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down."



Interesting Observation

In *Genesis 25:29-34*, Jacob is described as giving his brother a bowl of red stew, made with lentils or beans (depending on translation). Could Jacob have invented Chili? 🍲



Memory Verse

1 Peter 5:8-9

"Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary the Devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him and be firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world."

(yay!). In fact, standing before the philosophers of Athens, Paul said that God commands *all men* everywhere to *repent*.

Acts 17:30-31

“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead.”

Regardless of age, social status, gender, ethnicity, location, or *anything else*; this applies to everyone in every place, according to the will of God.

So what is repentance? Is it the moment we believe the gospel (*Matthew 1:15*)? Is it when we confess our sins to each other (*James 5:16*), or perhaps when we confess them before God? Answers can vary sometimes. Let’s check out the original words translated as ‘repent’, and see if we can get a better idea of what this is.



The Greek word translated as “repentance” in *Hebrews 6:1* is the word *μετάνοια* (*metanoia*; Strong’s #G3341). *Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries* says this:

“From G3340; (subjectively) compunction (for guilt, including reformation); by implication reversal (of [another’s] decision): - repentance.” —*Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries*, #G3341.

CONVERSATION STARTER

What is the importance of confessing our sins? How does confession of sins relate to repentance? How can we be more diligent in our application of scripture to confess and repent of our sins? Could confession of sins be related to accountability?

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

James 5:16

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The urgent request of a righteous person is very powerful in its effect.”



The Complete Word Study Dictionary has a lengthy article on this word, as well as a lengthy article on the word from which it was derived.

I find the article on the root word μετανοέω (*metanoēō*; Strong's #G3340) interesting, as it also compares the word μετανοέω to the word ἐπιστροφή (*epistrephō*; Strong's #G199), another word translated as “repent.” Quoting the article:

“There are two words in the NT which convey the idea of repentance, metanoēō and epistréphō (G1994), to come back, convert, turn about. These words derive their moral content not from Greek, but from Jewish and Christian thought, since nothing analogous to the biblical concept of repentance and conversion was known to the Greeks. Metanoēō presents repentance in its negative aspect as a change of mind or turning from sin while epistréphō presents it in its positive aspect as turning to God.” —Excerpt from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, #G3340.

Interestingly, according to this source, the concept of repentance was essentially unknown to the Greeks — it's really a Hebrew idea in origin. So let's look at the Hebrew word for repent: שׁוּב (*shûb*; Strong's #7725).

“šûb: A verb meaning to turn, to return, to go back, to do again, to change, to withdraw, to bring back, to reestablish, to be returned, to bring back, to take, to restore, to recompense, to answer, to hinder. The verb is used over one thousand times and has various shades of meaning in its four stems. In the simple stem, it is used to describe divine and human reactions, attitudes, and feelings. The verb describes the possibility that Israel might change (turn) their minds and return to Egypt (Exo 13:17). Josiah the king turned back to the Lord with all his heart, soul, and strength (2Ki 23:25; Jer 34:15). Nevertheless, the Lord did not turn from the anger He held toward Judah (2Ki 23:26; Jer 4:28). Job pleaded with his miserable comforters to relent (i.e., turn away) from him (Job 6:29). God's people will return (repent) and seek Him in the last days (Deu 30:2; Isa 59:20; Hos 3:5) instead of turning away from Him as they are now; to return to Egypt (Isa 6:10; Hos 11:5). God's call was persistently for His people to return to Him (1Ki 8:33; Jer 4:1). Any nation can repent and turn to God for forgiveness (Jer 18:8).

The word is used metaphorically to describe things returning: God's Word will not be revoked (returned) once it has been uttered (Isa 45:23; Isa 55:11); Jacob stayed with Laban until Esau's anger cooled off (turned back) (Gen 27:44-45); blood guilt could return on one's own head (1Ki 2:33; Psa 7:16 [17]). This word also describes the sword of Saul that did not return without success from the battlefield (2Sa 1:22).” —Excerpt from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, #7725.

Repentance is turning away from sin, and turning back to God. It is thus vital to our salvation, being the first response to the gospel in faith. Without repentance —turning to God— there is no such thing as being a follower of Christ. After all, one cannot serve two masters (**Matthew 6:24**)! Either one turns to God (and away from sin), or one remains in sin. One cannot do both.

Furthermore, we know the purpose of Messiah's coming; that He might take away our reproach and, by the kindness of God, lead us to repentance (cf. *Romans 2:4*, *Ephesians 2:7*). As John the Baptist proclaimed: "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (*John 1:29*); and as Paul also said: "He gave Himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for Himself a people for His own possession, eager to do good works" (*Titus 2:14*).

What is this sin we are supposed to repent of? We will hopefully cover that more in-depth in a future issue, but the short answer is that sin is disobedience to God's Law — His instructions.

1 John 3:4

"Everyone who commits sin also breaks the law; sin is the breaking of law."

So, biblically speaking, repentance is turning from *disobedience* (the breaking of the law) *back* to the giver of the instructions which were transgressed. But just how important is this 'repentance' concept anyway?

Psalm 7:12

"If anyone does not repent, God will sharpen His sword; He has strung His bow and made it ready."

The unrepentant will suffer for their sins. Yahuah is a righteous judge, yet He offers **everyone** an opportunity to repent; all are given the chance to turn to Him if they should so desire. He has no pleasure in anyone dying in their sin, and does not want anyone to perish.

Ezekiel 18:21-23

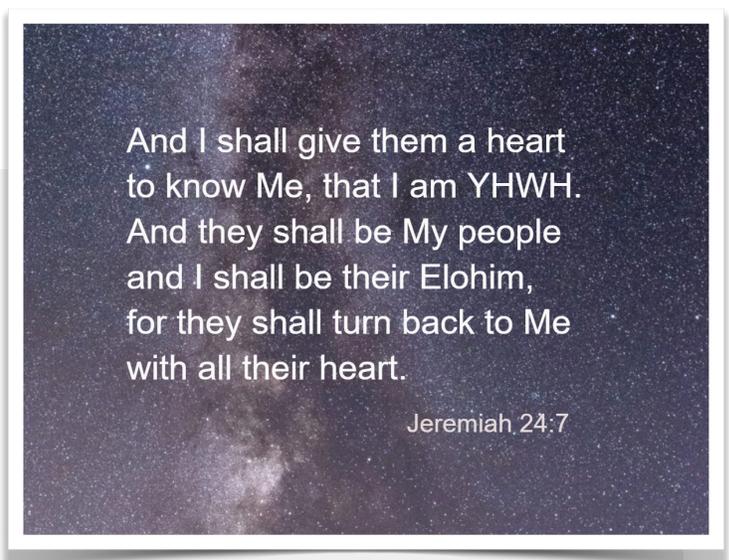
"Now if the wicked person turns from all the sins he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is just and right, he will certainly live; he will not die. None of the transgressions he has committed will be held against him. He will live because of the righteousness he has practiced. Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?"

This is the declaration of the Lord GOD.

"Instead, don't I *take pleasure* when he turns from his ways and lives?"

Lamentations 3:32-33

"Even if He causes suffering, He will show compassion according to His abundant, faithful love. For He does not enjoy bringing affliction or suffering on mankind."



Courtesy of Anaiah L.

 **Ezekiel 33:11**

“Tell them: As I live”—the declaration of the Lord GOD—“I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked person should turn from his way and live. Repent, repent of your evil ways! Why will you die, house of Israel?”

 **2 Peter 3:9**

“The Lord does not delay His promise, as some understand delay, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.”

(Read all of *Ezekiel 18* and *Ezekiel 33* for more information on Yahuah’s regards for the repentant and the unrepentant). Repentance is also emphasized in the book of Job:

 **Job 36:8-12, 15, 21**

“If people are bound with chains and trapped by the cords of affliction, God tells them what they have done and how arrogantly they have transgressed. He opens their ears to correction and insists they repent from iniquity. If they serve Him obediently, they will end their days in prosperity and their years in happiness. But if they do not obey, they will cross the river *of death* and die without knowledge.

[15] God rescues the afflicted by their affliction; He instructs them by their torment.

[21] Be careful that you do not turn to iniquity, for that is why you have been tested by affliction.”

King David knew the power and importance of repentance, having had more than one occasion when he felt the pangs of conscience and the sting of righteous retribution (see *2 Samuel 24*, *2 Samuel 11-12*, *Psalms 51*).

 **Psalm 51:10-13**

“God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not banish me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit. Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You.”

 **Psalms 19:12-14**

“Who perceives his unintentional sins? Cleanse me from my hidden faults. Moreover, keep Your servant from willful sins; do not let them rule over me. Then I will be innocent and cleansed from blatant rebellion. May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to You, LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.”

 **Psalms 16:7**

“I will praise the LORD who counsels me— even at night my conscience instructs me.”

And King Solomon, as well, urged us to turn (repent) from evil:

 **Proverbs 3:7**

“Don't consider yourself to be wise; fear the LORD and turn away from evil.”

 **Proverbs 4:14-15**

“Don't set foot on the path of the wicked; don't proceed in the way of evil ones. Avoid it; don't travel on it. Turn away from it, and pass it by.”

 **Proverbs 14:16**

“A wise man is cautious and turns from evil, but a fool is easily angered and is careless.”

 **Proverbs 16:5-6**

“Everyone with a proud heart is detestable to the LORD; be assured, he will not go unpunished. Wickedness is atoned for by loyalty and faithfulness, and one turns from evil by the fear of the LORD.”

We must turn from evil, and turn back to Yahuah. We are all sinners, as God's law reveals to us, since sin is the breaking of the law (*1 John 3:4*). Paul made this abundantly clear in *Romans 7*.

 **Romans 7:7, 12, 14-16, 21-25**

“What should we say then? Is the law sin? Absolutely not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin if it were not for the law. For example, I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, **Do not covet.**”

 [12] “So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and just and good.”

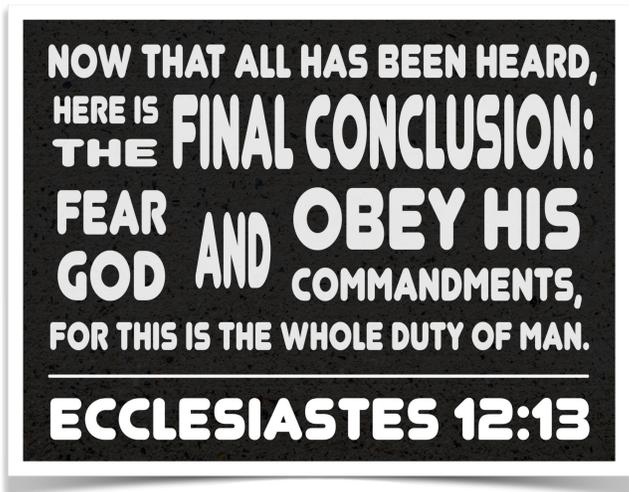
 [14] “For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am made out of flesh, sold into sin's power. For I do not understand what I am doing, because I do not practice what I want to do, but I do what I hate. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree with the law that it is good.”

 [21] “So I discover this principle: When I want to do what is good, evil is with me. For in my inner self I joyfully agree with God's law. But I see a different law in the parts of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and taking me prisoner to the law of sin in the parts of my body. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this dying body? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with my mind I myself am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh, to the law of sin.”

We must turn (repent) from our disobedience, and be brought back to obedience. Without the law, there would be no knowledge of sin; without the knowledge of sin, we could not be held accountable to the truth, and we wouldn't recognize our need for a savior; without such a distinction between sin and righteousness for us to be judged by, Jesus couldn't have died to save us from our sins, because there would *be* no sin!

But because we have transgressed God’s law, it is evident that we *do* need a savior; and because of our need for a savior, Jesus, in His great love for us, gave His life for our sake; so that we can be brought back into covenant with Yahuah, back into obedience.

If we were to ignore the relevance of turning to obey to God’s instructions, we would also be ignoring the purpose of Messiah's sacrifice for us. Something to ponder indeed!



Courtesy of Μαρία

The whole gospel is tied up in the need for repentance. We need to repent, because we transgressed the law (*1 John 3:4, Romans 3:23*). Jesus offered us redemption through His blood (*Ephesians 1:7, Revelation 5:9*), so that we could both repent of our sin (*Luke 15:10, 24:46-47, Romans 2:4*), and be forgiven through His mercy (*Matthew 26:28, Acts 2:38-39, 10:43, 13:38, Colossians 1:14*). Repentance *alone* is just the act of turning away from what has already made us guilty before God; it doesn’t undo our past sins — that is why we are dependent upon God’s grace and mercy in order to be saved. But it *is* what God has called us to do in response to our faith, that He may remove

our former sins from us and blot them out of His book.

“We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way,” (*Isaiah 53:6*). Jesus freely offers us forgiveness of our sins, so we should be more than willing to *turn* from the sins that separated us from God in the first place, and not maintain that separation.

 **Luke 13:3**

“No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish as well!”

 **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**

“When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is: fear God and keep His commands, because this *is for* all humanity. For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil.”

And could we ignore the cry of John the Baptist, Yahusha (Jesus) our Messiah, or His disciples by the Holy Spirit?

John the Baptist:

 **Mark 1:4-5**

“John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were flocking to him, and they were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins.”

 **Matthew 3:1-2, 7-8**

“In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Wilderness of Judea and saying, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!”

[7] When he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to the place of his baptism, he said to them, “Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance.”

Also see *Acts 13:24, 19:4*

Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God:

 **Matthew 4:17**

“From then on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near!”

 **Luke 24:46-47**

He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah would suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

 **Revelation 3:3**

“Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; keep it, and repent. But if you are not alert, I will come like a thief, and you have no idea at what hour I will come against you.”

 **Revelation 3:19**

“As many as I love, I rebuke and discipline. So be committed and repent.”

Also see *Mark 1:15; Luke 5:31-32, 16:29-31; Revelation 2:5, 2:16*

The disciples also verified this as a major part of the gospel message, and necessary for every believer; whether Jew or Gentile.

 **Acts 2:38-40**

“Repent,” Peter said to them, “and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children, and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” And with many other words he testified and strongly urged them, saying, “Be saved from this corrupt generation!”

 **Acts 5:31-32**

“God exalted this man to His right hand as ruler and Savior, to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.”

 **Acts 11:18**

“When they heard this they became silent. Then they glorified God, saying, “So God has granted repentance resulting in life even to the Gentiles!” ”

Also see *Matthew 6:12, Acts 3:19-20*

Even Paul, the “apostle to the gentiles,” preached repentance to all peoples.

 **Acts 17:30-31**

“Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

 **Acts 20:21**

“I testified to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus.”

 **Acts 26:20**

“Instead, I preached to those in Damascus first, and to those in Jerusalem and in all the region of Judea, and to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works worthy of repentance.”

 **2 Corinthians 7:9-10**

“Now I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because your grief led to repentance. For you were grieved as God willed, so that you didn't experience any loss from us. For godly grief produces a repentance not to be regretted and leading to salvation, but worldly grief produces death.”

Also see *Romans 2:4-6, 2 Timothy 2:24-26*

We ought to live in repentance, purging our lives of ungodly deeds, and “doing works worthy of repentance” in faith. While sanctification will be talked about in another issue, a brief mention is due here: when we repent of our disobedience and return to walk in our Father’s instructions, we enter the process of sanctification from our former ways.

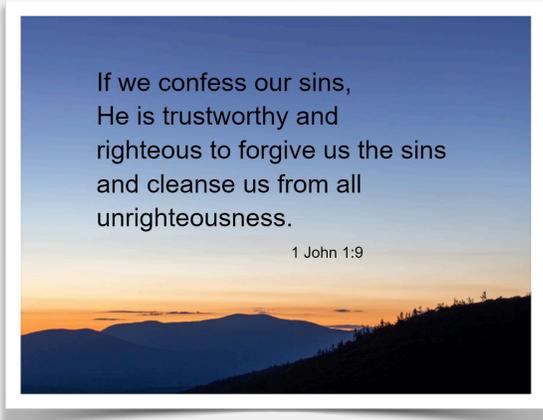
The Holy Spirit enables us to walk in Yahuah’s ways, and purifies our hearts and deeds. This is a tangible process, not merely spiritual. It is when our branches bud, blossom, and begin to bear fruit. Even with a repentant heart, perfection doesn’t come overnight; just as a tree doesn’t bear ripe fruit the day it is planted. Perfection in holiness, and unity with God, is something we aim for continually, dying to our fleshly mindset daily and choosing to live in the light of the righteousness of our God.

 **Romans 8:12-13**

“So then, brothers, we are not obligated to the flesh to live according to the flesh, for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.”

 **Colossians 3:5-10**

“Therefore, put to death what belongs to your worldly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, God’s wrath comes on the disobedient, and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. But now you must also put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.”



Courtesy of Anaiah L.

 **Romans 6:16**

“Don’t you know that if you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of that one you obey—either of sin leading to death or of obedience leading to righteousness?”

Repentance is the first step of sanctification; that turning point when we become slaves to righteousness and accept freedom from slavery to sin (cf. **Romans 6:17-23**) through the blood of Messiah. When we truly believe the gospel —when our faith is genuine— we not only hear it out, but act on what it calls for us to do; we *turn* from our corrupt ways in repentance. We *return* to the Living God.

Repentance is not a one-time deal, it is both the beginning and continuation of an ongoing determination to follow God and leave the former things behind us. This is an important fact to keep in mind: every day we must “test ourselves to see whether we are in the faith,” repenting of whatever shortcomings we find and ridding ourselves of stumbling blocks. “Throwing off everything that hinders,” as the scripture says, so that our service to God may be unhindered, and our walk pleasing in His sight, testifying to the righteousness and self-sacrifice of our Messiah.

 **2 Corinthians 13:5**

“Test yourselves *to see* if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.”

📖 Hebrews 12:1-4

“Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, so that you won't grow weary and lose heart. In struggling against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.”

In closing, I hope you will all be inspired to take a closer look at your own lives under the microscope of scripture, and determine what areas you may need to repent in.

We cannot serve two masters; we must *turn away* from sin, *return* to Yahuah!

QUESTIONS:

- What are some areas of your own life in which you could find a place for repentance?
- How can we strive to live out our faith in repentance, putting “deeds of darkness” (*Romans 13:12, Ephesians 5:11*) behind us and doing “works worthy of repentance” (*Acts 26:20, Luke 3:8-14*)?
- What deeds done in faith might qualify as “works worthy of repentance”, and how can we continue to bear fruit in our lives that is consistent with our initial decision to repent of our sins?

Guess The Context!

“My feet have followed in His tracks; I have kept to His way and not turned aside. I have not departed from the commands of His lips; I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food.”

Guess the context! What book is this from? What is the surrounding passage about?

Last issue's *Guess The Context* was *Jonah 2:7-9*, and the verse immediately following is... *Jonah 2:10*

“Then Yahweh spoke to the fish, and it vomited out Jonah on the dry land.”

Be Separate

Hebrews 12:14

“Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness— without it no one will see the Lord.”

Today’s Topic: **Keeping our Eyes Away From Evil (Part A)**

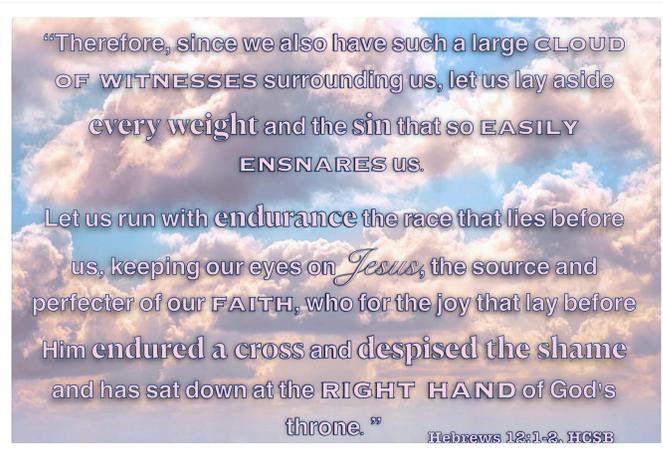
In the last issue we talked about being holy in our speech, this week we’re going to talk about being holy in regard to our eyes (what we look at).

What we look at affects our whole body, very similarly to our tongue (which we discussed previously). Looking at what is evil pollutes our body with darkness (*Matthew 6:22*), just as speaking evil defiles us (*Matthew 15:11*). As our opening passage (*Hebrews 12:14*) states, no one can see the Lord without holiness. This is as much motivation as we need to see the importance of pursuing holiness even in what we choose to look at. *We want to see the Lord, don’t we?* Jesus takes this admonishment a step further, saying, “if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it from you!”

Matthew 18:9, LEB

“And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw *it* from you! It is better for you to enter into life one-eyed than, having two eyes, to be thrown into fiery hell!”

We most certainly do not want this to happen because we allowed ourselves to sin with our eyes!



Clearly, keeping our eyes pure is more than a little important; as neglect in this area can cause us to stumble to the point that our faith dies out through the deceitfulness of sin (cf. *Hebrews 3:13*), and we are cast into the fire! If we are not living with the resolve to keep our eyes from evil, we must question whether we are *truly* set on following Christ; for faith which is dead (*James 2:26*) is not a faith which can result in life. We must tame our eyes, just as with our tongues! In our next issue we are going to continue this topic and cover a few *specific* things we can be mindful of in our lives; but today, let’s consider the importance of what we look at, and what we should and shouldn’t keep our eyes on in *general*.

Isaiah 33:15

“The one who lives righteously and speaks rightly, who refuses gain from extortion, whose hand never takes a bribe, who stops his ears from listening to murderous plots and shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil — he will dwell on the heights; his refuge will be the rocky fortresses, his food provided, his water assured.”

I discovered this passage recently, and found it interesting. The one who is counted righteous in the end (the context of this passage is the end times) is the one who, among other things, “shuts his eyes to avoid endorsing evil.” Isn’t that something we all struggle with? There is a reason the prince of this world surrounds us with evil to look at. From the brand-names of merchandise at the store, to the billboards driving through town, and even in our own homes with our phones and computers! We are tempted to sin with our eyes constantly. Obviously, we don’t *want* to endorse evil with our eyes. Scripture offers a simple solution here: we can shut our eyes to avoid endorsing evil.

 **Psalm 18:27**

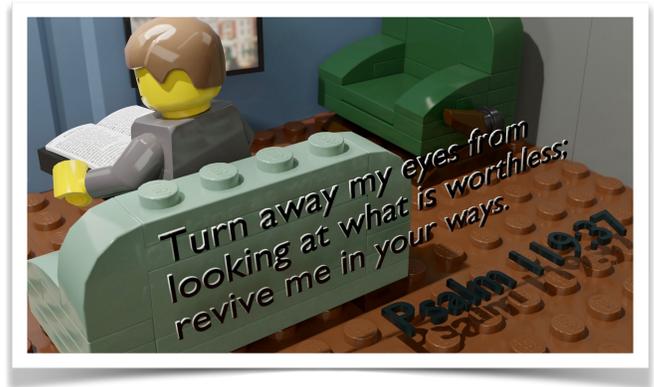
“For You rescue an afflicted people, but You humble those with haughty eyes.”

 **Psalm 73:6-7**

“Therefore, pride is their necklace, and violence covers them like a garment. Their eyes bulge out from fatness; the imaginations of their hearts run wild.”

This first passage is pretty clear, but why did I include the other? This passage is part of a description of the wicked, when Asaph said he had narrowly escaped the temptation to follow their ways. I’ve included it because much of the evil set before our eyes is prideful, violent, and causes our imaginations to run wild. Many movies, for instance, feed the godless craving for violence that is part of our sinful nature (**Proverbs 13:2**, **Romans 6-8**). They cause us to imagine doing evil to another person, forcing us to endorse evil by tricking us into enjoying it in the form of “harmless” entertainment. Movies can either be used for God’s purposes, or for His enemy’s! Sadly, the world is evil

(**John 7:7**), and it’s easier to find a movie that glorifies sin than it is to find one that glorifies our Creator. Books can be the same.



Courtesy of “Maḗias”

 **Psalm 101-3-4**

“I will not set anything worthless before my eyes. I hate the practice of transgression; it will not cling to me. A devious heart will be far from me; I will not be involved with evil.”

 **Psalm 119:36-37**

“Turn my heart to Your decrees and not to material gain. Turn my eyes from looking at what is worthless; give me life in Your ways.”

May Yahuah give us all the fortitude to “*turn our eyes from looking at what is worthless*”, and “*shut our eyes to avoid endorsing evil*”!

Having looked over some scriptures regarding the *importance* of what we behold with our eyes, and some of the things that we should avoid, what are some things that scripture *does* encourage us to set our eyes on?

Hebrews gives us a great answer to that question!

 **Hebrews 12:1-3**

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the source and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that lay before Him endured a cross and despised the shame and has sat down at the right hand of God's throne. For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, so that you won't grow weary and lose heart."

We are supposed to keep our eyes fixed on *Jesus* (Yahusha); who is also our example of endurance in our faith, and persistence in our resistance to sin! This concept of looking to God and looking into His Word is all throughout scripture — the Psalms, especially, repeating it frequently.

 **Psalms 25:15**

"My eyes are always on the LORD, for He will pull my feet out of the net."

 **Psalms 26:3**

"For Your faithful love is before my eyes, and I live by Your truth."

 **Psalms 121:1-2**

"I lift my eyes toward the mountains. Where will my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth."

Also see *Psalms 19:8, 34:5, 69:3, 119:18, 123:1-2, 131:1, 141:8.*

And we'll close for today with the words of James, telling us to look intently into the word of God and continue in it.

 **James 1:22-25**

"But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror. For he looks at himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but one who does *good works*—this person will be blessed in what he does."

In conclusion for today, may we all grow strong in the Lord, and fix our eyes on Jesus. May we look intently into God's word and continue in it, and shut our eyes when necessary to keep from endorsing evil. May God give us the strength and wisdom to not set anything worthless in front of our eyes!

**"Open my eyes so that I
may contemplate
wonderful things from
Your instruction."
Psalms 119:18**

Next time we are going to continue this topic, and focus on some of the ways we can keep ourselves blameless in what we choose to observe with our eyes, and how it relates to a heart decision to be blameless before our Maker (check out *Job 31:1* for a sneak peek!)

May Yahuah our God bless you all this week!

Reader's Comments

On Taming The Tongue...

"On the topic of Taming the Tongue I've been reconsidering oath-taking and oath-breaking. **James 5:12** tells us not to swear, and to let our yes be yes, and our no be no. Jesus said the same thing several times. Think of how many promises we make in a day ('I will do this,' 'I won't do that,' etc.), that we don't keep. Why not avoid making these flippant and futile oaths that we don't intend to keep?" –*Adelaide*

"The Bible says to treat others as you would have them treat you (**Matthew 7:12**). So it just makes sense that if we would not want someone to insult us, we should NOT insult them. Neither should we encourage our friends (by laughing with them) when they put others down. Rather, we should exhort one another to do good to others as well." –*Shiree*

On Repentance...

"Repentance is like peeling an onion: there's always another layer underneath, always something else to repent of." –*Posy*

To Wrap It All Up

So, I'm finally finished with this edition! It took me a lot longer than I planned, and I still only stuffed in about half the scripture passages I was planning on including. Oh well, hopefully I can broaden some of these concepts out in future editions, and pull in more scriptures that talk about them!

Repentance is one thing that I have had on my mind, and it really ties the two main sections together.

Repenting of our sin and turning back to God is why we want to be holy; why we want to be separate from the world and walk in the light of righteousness, serving the Lord with our whole hearts.

Keeping our eyes from evil can be a very deep subject, and it is in fact one that I am taking more seriously. The bible talks a lot about how we use our eyes, and there are a few specific things that I feel led to mention; but I will save those for next time!

I pray this blesses you all, and encourages you to follow God in every aspect in your life, becoming conformed to the image of Christ Jesus (**Romans 8:29**).



LIVE IT!

This week, let's challenge ourselves to live out **Colossians 3:2**. How can this apply to our lives as we seek to live as set-apart from the world?

Colossians 3:2
"Set your minds on what is above, not on what is on the earth."



Song of the Week

"Prodigal"

by *Teshuva*

[YouTube](#) • [Apple Music](#)

Notes from the Editor

Whew! That was long. Longer to put together than to read perhaps, but hopefully there was enough to think about that you will all pardon me for being so late! As you probably know, the original goal was to send this out every Wednesday; and then Friday when I got behind... but now I realize that every *other* Friday will work so much better! Perhaps in the future, I will be able to make this weekly again, but for now we will stick to biweekly! I hope to release the next issue by December 24th, but if I'm early... hey! Better early than never (...or at least, *late*)!

One thing I have gotten some feedback on is the length... I will try to shorten up the newsletter in the future! If there are any particularly intricate topics, I will do my best to break them up and divide them between multiple issues.

I pray that this blesses you all and gives you something to think about, something to pray about, and a starting place for future bible study if you are interested in these topics! As always, I am grateful for feedback, and hope to include your thoughts on the newsletter in future issues if you can find time to send me something! I know we all lead busy lives, but I hope this newsletter gives you a minute out of the busyness of life for you to think about scripture, and gives you a few ideas of how you can apply it to your life!

– *The Editor*

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Always Remember:

1 Thessalonians 5:14-25 (NKJV):

“Now we **exhort** you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all.

See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is **good** both for yourselves and for all.

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in **everything** give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Do not quench the Spirit.

Do not despise prophecies.

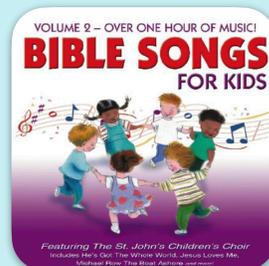
Test all things; **hold fast** what is good.

Abstain from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify** you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is **faithful**, who also will do it.

Brethren, pray for us.”

May our Lord Yahuah bless you all. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.



Bonus Song

“Be Careful Little Eyes
What You See”

by *The St. John's Children's Choir*

[YouTube](#) • [Apple Music](#)