

## Attachment 10

### Repentance

For restored trust and/or the possibility of reconciliation in any broken relationship, an abuser must clearly exhibit genuine repentance over an extended period of time. The following is a summary list of the signs of repentance. This list is not guaranteed. Abusers, by their very nature, manipulate and control in order to manage their image. Abusers are skillful and adept at what they do. Discernment is advised.

#### **1. Ownership of sin without minimization**

The victim is not responsible for the abuse [see Myths of Abuse in Attachment 7]. The abuser must fully own their sinful actions and choices.

#### **2. Willingness to fully accept the consequences for sin**

Many abusers will be quick to confess sin (minimally) in order to appear repentant. If more is required of them, they tend to protest. Worldly repentance is resistant to accepting consequences. A changed heart will exhibit a willingness to take full responsibility.

#### **3. Patient endurance with the victim's healing**

Genuinely repentant persons allow their victims the necessary time to process what happened and heal.

#### **4. Godly repentance recognizes the difference between being forgiven, being trusted, and/or being restored.**

The repentant person will not expect to be rewarded with a victim's forgiveness, trust, or reconciliation for doing as God commands. Godly behavior is expected and not necessarily rewarded. (See Attachment 9: Forgiveness for further discussion on trust and reconciliation.)

#### **5. Commitment to stop the abuse and recognize the damage it has caused for the family**

A full confession of sin, including specificity regarding the abuse, along with accountability is required. A third party is recommended.

#### ***Exegesis of 2 Corinthians 7 on the nature of repentance***<sup>243</sup>

For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death. For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter (2 Cor. 7:10-11).

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<sup>243</sup> Rev. Vincent Wood, Providence Presbyterian Church (PCA), York, Pennsylvania.

*For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance . . .*

1. *Without regret, leading to salvation,*
  - a. Does the abuser regret losing control?
  - b. Does the abuser regret the consequences he faces for his sin?
  - c. Does the abuser regret the loss of prestige, respect, influence, etc.?
  
2. *For behold what earnestness this very thing,*
  - a. Is the abuser working diligently to see a change?
  - b. Does he faithfully complete all homework?
  - c. Is his attitude serious toward changing his life?
  
3. *This godly sorrow,*
  - a. Does he consistently express sadness for the harm he has done to others?
  - b. When reminded of his sin, does the abuser apologize or complain about his sin being “brought up” again?
  - c. Is his sorrow focused on the harm his actions did to others or on the hardship they brought to him?
  
4. *What vindication of yourselves,*
  - a. Does the abuser so repent as to promote restitution for his actions?
  - b. Does the abuser now oppose control within himself and others with zeal and passion?
  - c. Are the actions of the abuser establishing a new life pattern in which an accusation of abuse would seem impossible? (For restoration of a minister, BCO 34-8 requires that it only be done when the sentiment of the church “demands it.”)
  
5. *What indignation,*
  - a. Does the abuser hate what they have done?
  - b. Is the abuser “beating himself up” for the sins he committed? This indignation will fuel earnest repentance.
  
6. *What fear,*
  - a. Is the abuser terrified that they will abuse again? An alcoholic once told me, “I know that I have another drunk in me. I am terrified that I might not have another sober.” This “fear” kept him sober.
  
7. *What longing,*
  - a. Does the abuser look to the future with hope?
  - b. Does the abuser imagine what it will be like to be trustworthy and safe?

8. *What zeal,*
  - a. Is repentance the driving factor in the abuser's life?
  - b. Is the abuser ever aware of his propensity to control and is he committed to "take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ?"
  
9. *What avenging of wrong!*
  - a. Is the abuser willing to make up for his wrongs to the very people he hurt?
  - b. Does the abuser recognize why his victims do not want to be around him? Does he willingly honor this desire?