

January 12: What is True Repentance?

I. Definition of Repentance:

The **repentance** (metanoia) called for throughout the **Bible** is a summons to a personal, absolute and ultimate unconditional surrender to **God** as Sovereign. Though it includes sorrow and regret, it is more than that. ... In repenting, one makes a complete change of direction (180° turn) toward **God**.

II. Relationship between *repenting* and *doing penance*.

Repenting is the internal, spiritual action.

Doing penance is the external, practical action of repair. An act of self-mortification or devotion performed voluntarily to show sorrow for a sin or other wrongdoing.

III. Why do we fear repentance/penance? Is it necessary?

We by nature don't like to admit guilt. Along with guilt is often a host of other feelings imposed upon us by others. Shame is the primary feeling.

Repentance and penance are not necessary if we have done no wrong in our consciences, or if we have not been accused by another. In the latter case it is important to discern whether or not the other is revealing the truth.

IV. What is guilt?

An intellectual and spiritual acknowledgement of wrongdoing.

V. What is toxic shame as opposed to ordinary shame?

Ordinary shame is the acknowledgement of being human, limited, prone to mistakes and even failure. It brings on embarrassment in many cases, prompted primarily by social norms.

Toxic shame is the feeling of being defective as a human being, of being less-than, of having shown up in the world as a failure as a human. Toxic shame is imposed on children and reinforced by elders, peers, and authorities. It is triggered by abuse, emotional trauma, parental dysfunction, bullying, and expectations.

VI. How is repentance tied into conscious living and self-care?