

The Unrepenting Repenter

By Jim Elliff

The believer in Christ is a lifelong repenter. He begins with repentance and continues in repentance.

- *Rom. 8:12-13* *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors -- not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. ¹³ For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

David sinned giant sins but fell without a stone at the mere finger of the prophet because he was a repenter at heart.

- *II Sam. 12:7-13* *Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! ⁹ Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' " ¹³ So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.*

Peter denied Christ three times but suffered three times the remorse until he repented with bitter tears.

- *Matt. 26:75* *And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." So he went out and wept bitterly.*

Every Christian is called a repenter, but he must be a repenting repenter. The Bible assumes the repentant nature of all true believers in its instruction on church discipline. A man unwilling to repent at the loving rebuke of the church can be considered nothing more than "a heathen and a tax collector."

- *Matt. 18:15-17* *Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' ¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

What is repentance?

Repentance is a change of mind regarding sin and God, an inward turning from sin to God, which is known by its fruit—obedience.

- *Matt. 3:8* *"Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance..."*

- *Acts. 26:20* "but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.
- *Lk. 13:13:5-9* "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish." ⁶ He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. ⁷ "Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' ⁸ "But he answered and said to him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. ⁹ 'And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down.' "

It is hating what you once loved and loving what you once hated, exchanging irresistible sin for an irresistible Christ. The true repenter is cast on God. Faith is his only option. When he fully knows that sin utterly fails him, God takes him up.

- *Matt. 9:13b* For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.

He will have faith or he will have despair; conviction will either deliver him or devour him.

The religious man often deceives himself in his repentance. The believer may sin the worst of sins, it is true; but to remain in the love of sin, or to be comfortable in the atmosphere of sin, is a deadly sign, for only repenters inhabit heaven. The deceived repenter would be a worse sinner if he could, but society holds him back. He can tolerate and even enjoy other worldly professing Christians and pastors well enough, but does not desire holy fellowship or the fervent warmth of holy worship. If he is intolerant of a worship service fifteen minutes "too long," how will he feel after fifteen million years into the eternal worship service of heaven? He aspires to a heaven of lighthearted ease and recreation—an extended vacation; but a heaven of holiness would be hell to such a man. Yet God is holy, and God is in heaven. He cannot be blamed for sending the unholy man to hell despite his most articulate profession.

- *Heb. 12:14* Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

What are the Substitutes for true Repentance?

1. You may reform in the actions without repenting in the heart.

- *Psa. 51:16-17* For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. ¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart -- These, O God, You will not despise.
- *Joel. 2:13* So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

This is a great deception, for the love of sin remains.

- *1 Jn. 2:15-17* Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world -- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life -- is not of the Father but is of the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

- *Acts.8:9-24* But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, ¹⁰ to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." ¹¹ And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. ¹² But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. ¹³ Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done. ¹⁴ Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, ¹⁵ who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. ¹⁶ For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, ¹⁹ saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit." ²⁰ But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! ²¹ "You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. ²² "Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. ²³ "For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity." ²⁴ Then Simon answered and said, "Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me."

At this the Pharisees were experts.

- *Mk. 7:1-23* Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. ² Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³ For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. ⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" ⁶ He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁷ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' ⁸ "For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men -- the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do." ⁹ He said to them, "All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰ "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ¹¹ "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban" -- ' (that is, a gift to God), ¹² "then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³ "making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do." ¹⁴ When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵ "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. ¹⁶ "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" ¹⁷ When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. ¹⁸ So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ "because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" ²⁰ And He said, "What comes out of a man that defiles a man. ²¹ "For from within, out of the heart of

men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,²² "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness."²³ "All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

The heart of a man is his problem. A man may appear perfect in his actions but be damned for his heart. His actions are at best self-serving and hypocritical. What comes from a bad heart is never good. "Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh."

- *Jas. 3:11-12* *Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening?¹² Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.*

2. You may experience the emotion of repentance without the effect of it. Here is a kind of amnesia. You see the awful specter of sin in the mirror and flinch out of horror yet immediately forget what kind of person you saw

- *Jas. 1:23-23* *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.*

It is true; repentance includes sincere emotion, an affection for God and a disaffection for sin. Torrents of sorrow may flood the repenter's heart, and properly so

- *Jas. 4:8-10* *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.⁹ Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.¹⁰ Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

But there is such a thing as a temporary emotion in the mere semblance of repentance; this emotion has very weak legs and cannot carry the behavior in the long walk of obedience. Your sorrow may even be prolonged. Yet if it does not arrive at repentance, it is of the world and is a living death—and maybe more

- *II Cor. 7:10* *For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.*

It is an old deceiver. Judas had such remorse but "went and hanged himself."

- *Matt. 27:3-5* *Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,⁴ saying, "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood." And they said, "What is that to us? You see to it!"⁵ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself.*

3. You may confess the words of a true repenter and never repent.

- *Matt. 21:28-32* *" But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.'²⁹ "He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went.³⁰ "Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go.³¹ "Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to*

Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you."³² "For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

- *1 Jn. 2:4* He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him
- *1 Jn. 4:20* If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?

Confession by itself is not repentance. Confession moves the lips; repentance moves the heart. Naming an act as evil before God is not the same as leaving it. Though your confession may be honest and emotional, it is not enough unless it expresses a true change of heart. There are those who confess only for the show of it, whose so-called repentance may be theatrical but not actual. If you express repentance to appear successful, you will not be successful at repenting. You will speak humbly but sin arrogantly. Saul gave the model confession and later went to hell. Repentance "from the teeth out" is no repentance.

- *1 Sam. 15:24-26* Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice."²⁵ "Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."²⁶ But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel."

4. You may repent for the fear of reprisal alone and not for the hatred of sin. Any man will stop sinning when caught or relatively sure he will be, unless there is insufficient punishment or shame attached

- *1 Tim. 1:8-11* But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully,⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.

When there are losses great enough to get his attention, he will reform. If this is the entire motive of his repentance, he has not repented at all. It is the work of law, but not grace. Men can be controlled by fear, but what is required is a change of heart. Achan admitted his sin after being caught but would not have otherwise. Find his bones in the valley of Achor; his soul, most likely, in hell.

- *Josh. 7:16-26* So Joshua rose early in the morning and brought Israel by their tribes, and the tribe of Judah was taken.¹⁷ He brought the clan of Judah, and he took the family of the Zarahites; and he brought the family of the Zarahites man by man, and Zabdi was taken.¹⁸ Then he brought his household man by man, and Achan the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerach, of the tribe of Judah, was taken.¹⁹ Now Joshua said to Achan, "My son, I beg you, give glory to the LORD God of Israel, and make confession to Him, and tell me now what you have done; do not hide it from me."²⁰ And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done:²¹ "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in

the midst of my tent, with the silver under it." ²² So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent; and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver under it. ²³ And they took them from the midst of the tent, brought them to Joshua and to all the children of Israel, and laid them out before the LORD. ²⁴ Then Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, the silver, the garment, the wedge of gold, his sons, his daughters, his oxen, his donkeys, his sheep, his tent, and all that he had, and they brought them to the Valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. ²⁶ Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

5. You may talk against sin in public like a true repenter but never repent in private.

- *Matt. 23:1-3* Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. ³ "Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do.

The exercise of the mouth cannot change the heart. Your sin is like a prostitute. You are speaking against your lover in public but embracing her in the bedroom. She is not particular about being run down in public if she can have your full attention in private. "Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?"

- *Jas. 4:4* Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

6. You may repent primarily for temporal gains rather than the glory of God. There are gains for the repenter, but the final motivation for repenting cannot be selfish. Self is a dead, stinking carcass to be discarded. We are to repent because God is worthy and is our respected authority, even if we gain nothing. Indeed, our repenting may appear to lose us more than our sin had gained. And this is a test of true repentance.

- *Matt. 16:24-26* Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ²⁵ "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. ²⁶ "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- *Phil. 3:7-8* But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸ Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

7. You may repent of lesser sins for the purpose of avoiding the greater sins.

- *Lk. 11:42* "But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

We try to salve our nagging conscience by some minor exercise of repentance, which is really no repentance at all. The whole heart is changed in the believer. The half repenter is a divided man: part against sin and part for it; part against Christ, part for Him. But one or the other must win out, for man cannot serve God and mammon (or any other idol); he must love the one and hate the other.

- *Matt. 6:24* " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

8. You may repent so generally that you never repent of any specific sin at all. The man who repents in too great a generality is likely covering his sins.

- *Prov. 28:13* *He who covers his sins will not prosper, But whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.*

If there are no particular changes, there is no repenting. Sin has many heads, like the mythological Hydra. It cannot be dealt with in general, but its heads must be cut off one by one.

9. You may repent for the love of friends and religious leaders and not repent for the love of God.

- *Isa. 1:10-17* *Hear the word of the LORD, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the law of our God, You people of Gomorrah: ¹¹ "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the LORD. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. ¹² "When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? ¹³ Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies -- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. ¹⁴ Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. ¹⁵ When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. ¹⁶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, ¹⁷ Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow.*

A man talked into repentance may reform for the love of friends or the respect of the spiritually minded, yet do nothing substantial. If a man turns from sin without turning to God, he will find his sin has only changed its name and is hidden behind his pride. Now it will be harder to rout for its subterfuge. You have loved others but not God. And you have loved yourself most of all. Lot's wife left the city of sin at the insistence of an angel and for the love of her family, but turned back. She had left her heart. "Remember Lot's wife."

- *Gen. 19:12-26* *Then the men said to Lot, "Have you anyone else here? Son-in-law, your sons, your daughters, and whomever you have in the city -- take them out of this place! ¹³ "For we will destroy this place, because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the LORD, and the LORD has sent us to destroy it." ¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who had married his daughters, and said, "Get up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city!" But to his sons-in-law he seemed to be joking. ¹⁵ When the morning dawned, the angels urged Lot to hurry, saying, "Arise, take your wife and your two daughters who are here, lest you be consumed in the punishment of the city." ¹⁶ And while he lingered, the men took hold of his hand, his wife's hand, and the hands of his two daughters, the LORD being merciful to him, and they brought him out and set him outside the city. ¹⁷ So it came to*

pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "Escape for your life! Do not look behind you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed." ¹⁸ Then Lot said to them, "Please, no, my lords! ¹⁹ "Indeed now, your servant has found favor in your sight, and you have increased your mercy which you have shown me by saving my life; but I cannot escape to the mountains, lest some evil overtake me and I die. ²⁰ "See now, this city is near enough to flee to, and it is a little one; please let me escape there (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." ²¹ And he said to him, "See, I have favored you concerning this thing also, in that I will not overthrow this city for which you have spoken. ²² "Hurry, escape there. For I cannot do anything until you arrive there." Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. ²³ The sun had risen upon the earth when Lot entered Zoar. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ So He overthrew those cities, all the plain, all the inhabitants of the cities, and what grew on the ground. ²⁶ But his wife looked back behind him, and she became a pillar of salt.

- *Lk. 17:32 "Remember Lot's wife."*

10. 'You may confess the finished action of sin and not repent from the continuing habit of sin. If a man is honest, he is a good man in human terms; but he is not a repenting man until the sin is stabbed to death. He must be a murderer if he would be God's: "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."

- *Rom. 8:13 "For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live."*

God knows what you have done; what He wants is obedience.

- *Lk. 6:46 "But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?"*

11. You may attempt repentance of your sin while consciously leaving open the door of its opportunity. A man who says "I repent" but will not leave the source or environment of that sin is suspect. Though some situations which invite temptation cannot be changed, most can. A man who will not flee the setting of his temptation when he is able still loves his sin. A mouse is foolish to build his nest under the cat's bed. "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

- *Rom. 13:14 "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*

12. You may make an effort to repent of some sins without repenting of all the sin you know. The businessman learns to show concern for the needs of his clients, yet he batters his wife through neglect. Another gives his money in the offering plate weekly but steals time from his employer daily. Every man boasts of some sins conquered, but true repentance is a repulsion of sin as a whole. The repenter hates all sin, though he fails more readily in some than in others. He may not know all his sins, but what he knows he spurns. Repentance is universal in the believer; the spirit is willing even when the flesh is weak

- *Matt. 26:41 "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."*

Repentance and faith are bound together. A repenting man has no hope for obedience without faith in the source of all holiness, God Himself. In repenting of sins, he loses his self-sufficiency. God is his sanctifier.

- *Jude. 24-25* Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, ²⁵ To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.
- *I Thess. 5:23-24* 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. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.
- *I Pet. 1:5* who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Repentance is a gift of God

- *Acts. 11:18* When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.
- *II Tim. 2:25-26* in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and that they may come to their senses and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will.

and a duty of man

- *Acts. 17:30* Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent,
- *Lk. 13:3* "I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

You will know if it has been granted by the exercise of it.

- *Phil. 2:12-13* Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; ¹³ for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Do not wait for it; run toward it. "Be zealous and repent."

- *Rev. 3:19* As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

Pursue it and you will find it; forget it and perish.

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