

Who Turns the Heart – Us or God?

Focus: How God Himself creates repentance and faith through His Word.

Key Verse: *“God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.”* — 2 Timothy 2:25

Text: NAS 2020

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Do you remember what repentance is? **These are some Part 1 highlights:**

- Repentance takes place in the heart!
- Repentance includes contrition: When contrition has been worked, *the result is a turning away from sins!*
- Repentance includes faith: When faith has been worked, *the result is trust in Jesus for forgiveness!*
- When there is **no change**, then there is **no repentance!**

Today’s question: Who turns the heart – us or God?

1. **Shattering a Common Myth:** Since I can **reject Christ**, I can also **choose Christ**. That is logical, *but not Biblical*.
 - a. Mental and Physical: **Mentally** – *we can decide to come to church or stay home. Physically* – *some foods we reject, others we accept (eat).*
 - b. Spiritual: Since *everyone* can choose mentally and physically, it makes sense that *everyone* can also choose spiritually, but – **Biblically** – that is not true. Why? Due to the fall into sin, everyone

who has not yet been converted is ✦spiritually dead and ✦lacking all spiritual abilities. Such people are **unable** to:

- i. Understand the Bible.
- ii. Believe the Bible.
- iii. Have godly sorrow.
- iv. Trust in Jesus for eternal life.

c. Let's Put the Bible Over our Logic:

- i. Spiritual Blindness: **1 Corinthians 2:14** “a natural [worldly-minded] person does **not** accept the things of the Spirit of God, [**WHY NOT?**] for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned [evaluated].” // Spiritual sight is necessary to do a spiritual evaluation.
- ii. Spiritual Death: **Ephesians 2:1** “...you [Corinthians, before GOD converted you] were dead in your offenses and sins...” **Ephesians 2:4-5** “God... made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions...” // Spiritually dead people are spiritually helpless people!
- iii. Spiritual Enemies: **Romans 8:7** “the mind set on the flesh [on the earthly sphere of existence] is hostile [at least unresponsive] toward God; for it does **not** subject itself [**not** voluntarily submit] to the law of God, for it is **not** even able to do so...” // Why is such a mind unable? Because it is spiritually dead!

2. **Who Is the Heart-Turner?** **Logically**, we think we turn our own hearts, but what does the Bible say?
- a. This Is a Gospel Imperative / Command: **Mark 1:15** [Jesus proclaimed:] “...repent and believe in the gospel.”
 - i. Since Jesus gave the command: It makes sense that we – *of our own abilities* – could respond to that command. But remember, *the spiritually dead have no ability to repent and believe!*
 - ii. What is the right understanding? Jesus’ command also includes *the needed power of God* to respond to the command. A person might think he did it, *but the Bible is clear that only God can turn the heart!*
 - b. Jesus was asked: **John 6:28–29** ... “What are we to do...?” Jesus answered..., “**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him** [Jesus] whom He has sent.” // Lenski explained, “believe in Him”: It’s “...**not** ‘commanded by God,’ **but** ‘[created] by God...’ // We trust, **but God kindles** that trust in us.”
 - c. The Beginning of our faith: **Hebrews 12:2** “...**Jesus, the originator** and perfecter of the faith...” // **Originator** (founder) – “one who causes something to begin” (BW, Friberg).
 - d. Peter and the apostles preached: **Acts 5:31** “[Jesus] is the one whom God exalted to His right hand..., [**WHY?**] to grant repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” // For all who are dead

in their sins, they have no ability to repent, so Jesus must grant them repentance!

- e. The Jews – who heard Peter’s explanation about Cornelius and his household – said: Acts 11:18 ... “Well then, God has also granted to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.” // Let us understand: those words clearly identify **God** as the Actor who turns the heart!
- f. Paul wrote to Timothy: 2 Timothy 2:25 “God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth...” // **God must do it – because the spiritually dead have no spiritual abilities!**

3. **How Does Repentance Work?**

- a. Our Part – God’s Part: **We** can eat food, *but God must cause the digestion process to work. We* can read the Bible, *but God must enable us to understand it and believe it.*
- b. The Holy Spirit through the Law and the Gospel:
 - i. He exposes sin and causes sorrow!
 - ii. He causes a turn from sin!
 - iii. He works faith in Christ for forgiveness!

Let Us Pray: Father in heaven, **TYSM for Your word of truth!**
Help us to keep ♦hungering for it, ♦understanding it,
♦believing it, and ♦sharing it with all who are open to receive!

Website: www.BLC7500.com; **YouTube and Podcast:** “Benefit from the Bible”
Facebook: “Bethlehem Parma” / **Pastor:** RevRLGreen@aol.com; 440-292-5915
7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134 / 440-845-2230