

How often do we associate a biblical thing, like repentance, with going back to school?! Never? Well, let's think again.

REPENTANCE: SINCERE REGRET

The English dictionary defines **repentance** as to “feel or express sincere regret or remorse about one’s wrongdoing or sin” [*Oxford American Dictionary*]. How many times have we heard grown adults express such sentiments? “*Oh, if I could just go back to school, I would do everything different!*” As adults, we eventually learn the value of a good education. It is the foundation for the rest of our lives. Our standard of living, our social class, our opportunity for advancement are directly related to a good education, with fundamental skills learned and applied.

Imagine someone who does not have those skills for a moment. Here is a person who cannot read or write, who cannot add, subtract, multiply or divide. How could that person get and keep a job in today’s world? It would be very difficult, if not impossible to do so. Most jobs available would be of the menial task variety, now wouldn’t they? So you see the importance of a good, fundamental education.

Suppose our children actually got this point! Suppose they woke up one day and determined to go to school and take learning seriously. They decided to study hard, concentrate, obey instructions, get their jobs done, and be productive at school. You know what you would call that? **Repentance!** A change of mind that led to a change of action, which is the biblical definition of the word.

NO REGRETS?

Beloved ones, you do not have to live the rest of your lives with regrets. You can do something about it. Yes, perhaps *in the past* you were not the best student, or the best person, or the best worker, etc. But you can **determine** to do better *today*. Life is opportunity, and in this context, opportunity for improvement. Making yourself better in any way puts value on the day God has given you!

Listen to the apostle Paul: “*Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 3:13-14). Life cannot be lived well while looking backwards. Opportunity is only in the present and the future. Live well today.

HARD WORK

Realize also that *true repentance* is hard work. It requires overcoming bad thoughts, bad habits, or idleness. Repentance is the **determination** to do better, the hard work comes from *doing* better. Again, listen to Jesus Christ: “*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock*” (Matt. 7:24). Dear reader, will **you** be one of the penitent ones? The parable of the Sower (Matt. 13) reminds us that *few* do what God demands. The wayside heart hears but does not understand the Word (v. 19). Satan takes it away before he can bother to learn better. The stony heart hears and rejoices over the Word, but he has no depth for endurance (vv. 20-21). The thorny heart is too busy to learn (v. 22). Only the good, honest heart hears the Word, studies it carefully, and then does what God requires. This is true repentance and it leads to a good life lived.