

Must Adulterers Separate? #1

Last week I received a call related to an article entitled "Divorce And Remarriage" which ran in this space three weeks ago. The discussion revealed the fact that more teaching is needed regarding what must one do when in an adulterous relationship. The caller made a very emotional argument by stating that his first wife was bad but now he was married to a godly woman and God could not possibly want him to leave her to correct an adulterous relationship.

The real point in question is what repentance demands. Forgiveness of sin is conditioned upon repentance. It is required for the sinner (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31) and the erring child of God (Acts 8:22). A very simplistic definition of repentance is a change of mind. However, repentance involves (or at least produces) a change in life: ceasing the past sin! The Greek word translated "repentance" means "to change one's mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." John preached, "*Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance*" (Matthew 3:8). Repentance has fruits. Compare Matthew 12:41 and Jonah 3:10. What Matthew 12:41 calls *repentance*, Jonah 3:10 describes as *turning from evil*. Though it uses a different Greek word, Matthew 21:28-29 demonstrates that repentance involves a change of mind and a change of action; for the son, whose refused to work, repented and "went."

The point is that the act of sin must cease! This is true of any sin, whether it be the sin of idolatry or the sin of adultery. If one does not stop or cease the sin, then there has been no repentance (Revelation 9:20-21; 2 Corinthians 12:20-21).

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