

MEN'S RETREAT – MAY 16-18, 2003

TRUE REPENTANCE AND THE VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN LIFE

To act like Jesus we must think like Jesus.

1. **Our calling.** We have an amazing calling.
 - a. We are called to imitate Christ, to love and follow God, to love, care, serve and respect our wives and children and to reach the world for Christ.

These verses describe our calling:

 1. **Matt. 22:37-39** - To love Him with all our heart, soul and mind, to love our neighbor like ourselves.
 2. **Col. 1:10** - To walk worthy of Him, pleasing Him fully, being fruitful in every good work, increasing in our knowledge of Him.
 3. **Gal. 5:22-26** - To be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, kind, good, faithful, gentle and self-controlled.
 4. **Eph. 5:25, Col.3:19** - To love (AGAPE) our wives.
 5. **Col.3:21** - To treat our children correctly.
 6. **Titus 2:2,6** - To be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience - exhorting the younger men.
 7. **Matt 28:18-20** - To fulfill the Great Commission.
 - b. **Jn. 10:10** - The abundant life we so ardently strive for is found in Him – not the 5c's (cash, cars, careers, condos and cuties).
2. **Our condition.** Men in our society are plagued with failure.
 - a. Most men desire to live the victorious Christian life but can't seem to get there.
 1. **Rom. 7** – Paul describes this struggle – and the way out!
 - b. Men who imitate Christ, who love and follow God, who love, care, serve and respect their wives and children are a rarity in our culture.

These verses describe us well:

 1. **Jer.2:13** - We've replaced the Spring with empty cisterns – 5c's.
 2. **Rev. 2:4-5, 3:14-22** – We've forsaken our first love, we've been lukewarm and invested in false riches.
 3. **Is.29:13** and **Mark 7:6-7** - We've honored God with our lips but our hearts have been far from Him.
 4. **Jn. 21:15-17** - Jesus asked Peter, "Do you AGAPE me?" Peter replied, "Lord you know I PHILEO you." (The third time Jesus asked, "Do you PHILEO me?") We are often the same way, God has called us to commitment and we are stuck on selfishness.
 - c. We, as men, have become irresponsible, apathetic and cowardly.
 - ^[1] ~50% of marriages end in divorce.
 - ^[2] 75% of batterers claim to be Christians (compared with 22% secularly).
 - ^[3] 22% of American children grow up in fatherless homes.
 - ^[4] 33% of Christian men admit viewing porn.
 - ^[5] 51% of pastors are tempted to view porn and 40% admit having viewed porn (only 25% use filters).

Stat sources: [1] Barna Research Group, [2] 1986 Hamberger study, [3] Stanford study, [4-5] Focus on the Family.
 - d. We, as men play, a necessary role in the family and society.
 1. Our wives need husbands that will love them, protect them, provide for them giving stability, strength and encouragement.
 - ^[1] 15% of wives report abuse (U. of Cincinnati study) – much goes unreported.
 - a. We must be servants!

b. Wives have to pick up the slack for irresponsible men.

2. Our children need Christ-like fathers and examples.

[1] 63% of youth suicides are from fatherless homes.

[2] 90% of homeless children and runaways come from fatherless homes.

[3] 80% of rapists motivated by displaced anger come from fatherless homes.

[4] 85% of children with behavioral disorders come from fatherless homes.

[5] 85% of youths in prison come from fatherless homes.

[6] Teenage pregnancy is more than twice (111% increase) as likely in single parent homes.

[7] Girls are almost 3 times (164% increase) more likely to become single parents if they grow up in single parent homes.

Stat sources: [1-2] US DHHS Bureau of the census, [3] Criminal and Justice behavior vol.14, pg.403-26, 1973, [4] CDC, [5] Texas department of corrections 1992, [6-7] Atlantic monthly vol.271, no.4, April 1993.

3. Churches desperately need Christ-like men.

4. Society severely needs examples of real men.

[1] 94% of prisoners in the U.S are men (CNN survey).

e. We, as men, are in dire need of revival.

1. Our marriages depend on it.

2. Our children depend on it.

3. Our churches depend on it.

4. Our society depends on it.

3. **Repentance is key to revival.** True repentance has preceded every historical revival.

1. A great example - The First Great Awakening.

2. We desperately need an awakening today.

4. **Repentance is the key to the victorious Christian life.** We have somehow confused the meaning of this word. Descriptivism has lead us astray.

a. Repent has come to mean, "Quit acting such and such a way – and act correctly."

1. Men easily get trapped in a cycle of defeat this way.

2. The process of learning to walk in the Spirit vs. a quick fix.

3. **Heb. 12:1-2** - Focus on Jesus not on your problems.

b. **Mat. 5:21-28** - Actions are the fruit of our thought life (hate is the same as murder; lust is the same as adultery).

1. **James 1:15** - Sin is birthed first in the mind (in our desires).

2. **Prov. 4:23** - Protect your heart – out of it come the issues of life.

c. **Is. 55:8** - Our natural thoughts are different than his – thus our actions are also.

d. To act like Him we must think like Him.

e. The Greek for repent (*METANOEO*) means, "To change one's mind or purpose."

1. **Rom. 12:1-2** - Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

2. **Ps. 119:11** - Hiding Word in your heart keeps you from sinning.

f. **Jer. 15:19** - The promise that repentance yields restoration!

REPENTANCE GETS AT THE ROOT OF THE PROBLEM – OUR THOUGHTS. IF YOU DON'T THINK DIFFERENTLY YOU WON'T ACT DIFFERENTLY.

5. **How to repent.**

a. **Heb. 12:1-2** - Focus on Jesus not on your problems.

1. **Phil.1:6 and Heb. 12:2** - Victory is His responsibility.

b. **Read the Word! Rom. 12:1-2** - Present body to God, don't conform to world, be transformed by renewing of mind. Prerequisites: Commitment and unconformity with the world.

c. **James 1:22** – Practice What you get out of the word.

- d. **Keep Christ on the throne. Eph. 5:18** - Be filled with the Holy Spirit (accept, believe, confess and desire).
 - 1. **1Cor. 2:6-16** - As we walk in the Spirit the Spirit reveals God's thoughts to us.
- e. **Daily Q.T's. Jer. 30:21** - Will you devote yourself to be close to Him?
 - 1. **Rev. 5:12** - He is worthy of your devotion.
- f. **2 Cor. 10:5** - Take every thought captive, make it obedient to Christ.
 - 1. Throne checks, accountability.
- g. **Col. 3:1-17** - Set your hearts and minds on things above (look what follows that).
 - 1. Daily quiet time, reading the Word, fellowship.
- h. **1Jn. 2:15-17** - Don't love the world or anything of the world.
- i. **Jer. 4:3-4, Hos. 10:12** - Break up the unploughed ground, circumcise hearts to God, sow righteousness and reap unfailing love.
- j. **Rom. 2:4** - God's kindness draws us to repentance.
- k. **2Cor. 7:10** - Godly sorrow draws us to repentance.

Question: What influences your thought life the most (**Matt.5:29-30** - Jesus states the principal that we are to remove the things which cause us to stumble)? Is there something that is hindering your walk with Christ? Don't be legalistic but evaluate what will help and what won't.

"Christians aren't influencing the world because the world is influencing them." - ?
It's like racing cars. Imagine \$50,000 and 100's of hours go into a beautiful 1970 Corvette and a couple of spare parts and fewer hours go into a similar car. Which will win?

The Christian who spends daily time with God and does not conform to the world always wins!

6. Repentance - a change of mind from complacency to devotion to our first love - Jesus.

God calls 5 of the 7 churches in Rev. 2&3 to repent.

- a. **Jer. 31:3** - Respond to His everlasting love.
 - b. **Rev. 2:4-5** - (to Ephesus) You've forsaken your first love – repent.
 - c. **Rev. 3:2-3** - (to Sardis) Wake up, obey and repent.
 - d. **Rev. 3:14-22** - (to Laodicea) Be hot or cold, be earnest and repent.
 - e. **Phil. 3:7-11** - Knowing Christ must be our utmost purpose.
- 7. Effects of true repentance. Jn.10:10** – The abundant life Christ offers.
- a. **Victory is a reality** – you may still struggle but the outcome will be different.
 - b. The fruit of the Spirit is cultivated in your life.
 - c. A great marriage and family life.
 - d. An eternally meaningful and fruitful life.

Summary: God says that His thoughts and ways are not our thoughts and ways (Isa.55:8). Jesus showed that action is birthed first in thought (Mat.5:21-30, 12:34, also described in James 1:15 and Prov.4:23). To act like Him we must think like Him. That is why Rom.12:2 says "be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Repentance actually means, "to change one's mind or purpose" (Vines dictionary of Bible words). True repentance is choosing to quit living life on our terms and choosing to be devoted to being close to Him. The development of God's character in our life (Gal.5:22-23) requires that we change our old way of thinking and begin to think the way God thinks, focussing on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2), through the Holy Spirit's power and illumination as we grow in knowledge of the Word. The more you know the Word, the more you'll think like Him and the more you think like Him the more you'll act like Him. This process is one to which the Christian must be committed but fundamentally it is the work of His Holy Spirit who shows us God's thoughts by illuminating His Word (1Cor.2:6-16). Victorious Christian life (Jn.10:10) is founded and built on God's Word. **The victorious Christian life is found in complete surrender and devotion to Jesus and spending time with Him daily.**

Jer.30:21 – will you devote yourself to be close to Him?

Discussion group questions.

Repentance is a change of thought that produces a change of action. Jesus must become the center of our thought life.

1. What things in your thought life negatively effect how you act (greed, anger, pride, lust, bitterness, envy, desire for pleasure, materialism)?
2. What strengthens these parts of your thought life (T.V, magazines, bad company)?
3. Is victory in your own strength common to you?
4. How will focussing on Jesus instead of your problems yield victory (Heb.12:1-2)?
5. How can you think more like Him (read and memorize the Word, practice what you read –Rom.12:1-2)?
6. How does/will knowing that your focus should be on Jesus rather than your problems effect you?
7. Discuss these verses:
 - a. Heb. 12:1-2 – Keep eyes on Jesus the author and finisher of your faith.
 - Keep eyes on Him not the problem.
 - How much of a book is the author involved in? How much of your walk with Him is he involved in? Can you trust Him?
 - b. Phil. 1:6 – He will complete the work He started in you.
 - c. 2Cor.10:5 – take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ.
 - d. Jer. 30:21 – Who is he who will devote himself to be close to Me?
 - Will you?

The victorious Christian life is possible. Devotion to being close to Jesus and increasing knowledge of the Word will cause you to think like He does. The more you think like Him the more you'll act like Him. Victory is found in intimacy with Jesus.