



I'm Sorry!

Godly Sorrow Checklist



The Bible tells us of two different kinds of sorrow. God calls one worldly sorrow and the other godly sorrow. When anyone declares sorrow in the Lord, or that God has forgiven them, measure it by the following checklist. If you do not see all of these, then saying, “I’m sorry” is a manipulation and a lie. Of course today in the church it is almost impossible to hear anyone say they are sorry let alone display godly sorrow by power of the Holy Spirit. We rarely find the good fruit of godly sorrow in season in the church today. At best we see a promise of blossoms, but a cold frost blows across the hearts, destroying all good fruit

Godly Sorrow

We must express sorrow in the Holy Spirit (John 6:60), otherwise it is nothing. If godly sorrow is not present in your own life, then read no further, for only the Holy Spirit can destroy sin (Romans 8:13). Follow the Holy Spirit and you will never regret it. Follow a do-it-yourself approach to repentance and you will wish you never tried to repent.

Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

The Holy Spirit floods in when a person surrenders to the cross. And, as we just read, “brings” the following work of repentance to the person repenting. Without this godly sorrow, a person has a hard heart and must first stop and repent, with godly sorrow, before pressing on with the current issues. Allowing

God to work a godly sorrow in us “leads” to salvation. Sadly most will not allow God to lead them into godly sorrow and choose to sin by being sorrowful on their own. Such worldly sorrow brings death.

Checklist for True Sorrow

Repentance leads to salvation as the above scripture revealed. No one can rightly claim forgiveness before he has repented of a particular sin. We can find no true forgiveness without repentance of the sin in question. This is not salvation by works, but humbly letting the Holy Spirit work the fruit of godly sorrow by the grace of God at the time (Titus 2:11).

**Let us now follow a checklist
using 2 Corinthians 7:10-11 as our
measurement.**

See

Do you “see” actions and repentance, humility, and brokenness? You should see actions and a heart that reflects the sorrow of the crucified life. If the world had not seen Jesus crucified, it would not have seen Him resurrected. Likewise, if we cannot see sorrow we have no hope of the resurrected life.

A lot of talk and many words saying “I’m sorry,” does not count in the Lord without a broken heart and rich action to back up those words. Neither does unholy silence when someone should weep and speak words of sorrow. Those who come to repent ought to have clear words, no excuses, and a growing depth of wisdom concerning their sinfulness. You should see and feel amazed at the amount of enlightenment the individual receives from God. Scripture and acts from

a good conscience overflow in a repentant person’s life.

What Earnestness

Godly sorrow manifests a seriousness, reflected by great soberness, concerning the sin. No excuses, whitewash, delaying, or joking to soften the sin occurs. Such repentant people demonstrate, above all, a deep earnestness to get things moving, revealed in how they call sin, “sin.” They do not use words like mistake, didn’t mean to, meant well, error, or fault. A repentant believer lets go of such clarifications as “if” and “maybe,” “please forgive me if...” They call all failings the same thing God calls them—sin.

What Eagerness to Clear

Next, true sorrow displays an impatience to repent. If a delay occurs and repentance cannot happen immediately, they become full of anxiety about the matter. Godly sorrow never waits until it is convenient to repent. Whether midnight or noon, a truly repentant person will eagerly jump out of bed or stop eating lunch so they can repent.

You will see no misusing the name of God with excuses of waiting upon Him to soften the heart. Rather, a truly sorrowful person demonstrates a quickness to repent fully of sins at the moment, never “going back to pray about it.” Using prayer as a cover for prideful speculation and examination for loopholes is the Devil’s playground. Certainly you will not hear excuses like, “I have to go pray about it,” or, “I have to hear that from God.” Those with soft hearts hear God at the moment He speaks and never use the cover of the prayer closet as a means to shut the door to His Light.

The person full of godly sorrow remains keen, focused, clear-minded, and looking for ways to act in repentance. He repents fully of what he knows for the moment, fully aware that grace may reveal more later. Those individuals who stare back at you like they don't understand when you point out sin are not filled with godly sorrow. If such a person sins directly against someone he will not feel satisfied until he repents, and remains far more concerned that the person he offended feels at peace in their relationship (Matthew 5:23-25).

☐ What Indignation

Here you will see the anger at oneself for sinning. People with godly sorrow feel nauseated at their slow hearts and at what they did and know they are without excuse, even if someone else urged them to sin. They will feel contemptuous of their heart and behavior. The person filled with godly sorrow goes beyond logic and emotions that spring from a wounded soul. Those who do not have indignation seek to qualify and codify, hoping such verbal gymnastics (God knows I have a good heart) will allow them escape from repenting and hell. Such efforts are completely in vain and make a person twice as fit for hell. On the other hand, many seek to conclude the matter as quickly as possible, mocking the correct words or saying as little as possible, hoping the sufferings of the cross will shortly pass them by. Both types miss the narrow road and the salvation that comes from repenting with godly sorrow. Those indignant with sin eagerly anticipate the suffering of the cross so they can put sin to death (1 Peter 4:1).

☐ What Alarm

The dictionary describes alarm as “frightened anticipation of danger.” Those alarmed by the bell of godly sorrow look afraid because sin is deadly serious. They know that if they trample on the blood of Jesus, God will throw them away from His mercy (Hebrews 10:26). Godly sorrow produces heightened fear beyond the normal Christian walk with God that works out salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). Indeed, it is a fresh experience of growing in the fear of the Lord (Acts 9:31). When those with noble hearts hear this bell ring, they react faster than any fireman responding to an alarm. Is this what you see? If not, don't check this box.

☐ What Longing

Longing is akin to earnestness except it has the added fruit of a panting soul. It reaches beyond emotion and actions, striking at the soul. Longing in godly sorrow produces a soulful sorrow (Psalm 119:28). It touches on the sorrow Jesus felt in the garden when His soul felt overwhelmed unto death. This is one very small way we can experience being crucified with Christ. As Jesus leads us into godly sorrow and we grow closer to the cross, we too will feel the death pains of crucifixion because of sin in our souls

☐ What Concern

Here you see very practical actions and regard for others; small steps of repentance that benefit the other person and God. This concern considers the sin, seeks out basic things to do, then steps beyond the sin to bless man and God. This is so true that many times others will have to say, by the Holy Spirit, “That is enough, please stop repenting.”

☐ What Readiness to See Justice Done

Those filled with godly sorrow never feel satisfied with their own plans of repentance. As they move forward in repentance and stand ready to humbly accept new suggestions given by the Holy Spirit, either directly or through others. As the Oxford Dictionary defines readiness “a thing ready for use,” those with godly sorrow remain ready, eager, and anxious to make every small and big wrong right. They want justice. They want God’s perfect will performed and completed not only in repenting of the sin, but in any missed situation where they stepped out of God’s will

☐ At Every Point

We see in heart and action the good fruit of godly sorrow without a single element missing. No worm crawls in the apple of godly sorrow. Every aspect of the sin, from soul, spirit, heart, and physical actions have been covered and washed clean by the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 22:14). Most people try to fool others by mocking one or a few other aspects of godly sorrow, forgetting that God cannot be mocked. Many others sincerely repent but do not prove innocent at every point and therefore suffer by sinning again in the future. Their spiritual walk remains hindered and many times these people simply never grow up in Jesus. You can often predict which person will repeat his sin again because he did not prove innocent at every point.

☐ Proved Yourself Innocent

When you prove something it means you have tested it and found no fault. Godly sorrow allows itself to be tested by others. Just as applying acid tests gold, repenting people allow the offense of the cross to test them (1 Thessalonians 5:21, Galatians 5:11, 2 Timothy 3:10). This humility and walking in the Light means not feeling satisfied with simply repenting (2 Corinthians 10:12). Such repentant people never say, “God knows my heart. He has forgiven me” and leave it at that. Godly sorrow always proves repentance true, and everyday picks up the cross and follows Jesus. From God, to angels to men, all can see the proof of such repentance. Return to the basics of the gospel call and prove your repentance by your deeds (Acts 26:20).

Mercy

If someone tells you they have asked God to forgive them but you do not see godly sorrow—they lied to you. Godly sorrow keeps us in God’s love and allows mercy to bring us unto eternal life. Only those who repent daily with godly sorrow remain in God’s love and are thus granted the joy of mercy.

Keep yourselves in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life. (Jude 1:21)

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