**Reporting Not Repenting**

I have a friend who told me about this "religious" young lady who regularly indulges in pre-marital sex. When I asked how she could do this and still claim to be a Christian, he said she told him that she repents every time. My friend called this "reporting" rather than "repenting" and his description is exactly right.

A lot of people who claim to be Christians do a lot of reporting, but little repenting. They know they do many things contrary to God's word, and they're not really trying to stop it. What we need to realize is that just because we recognize something we are doing as sinful, we are not forgiven of it unless we repent of it, that is, stop it.

A little story Jesus tells in Matt 21:28-29 illustrates the meaning of repentance - "But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went." You see, repentance involved the son changing his mind about what he was going to do and then changing his actions to follow suit. I've heard repentance defined this way - "a change of mind leading to a change of action."

Here is the definition for "repent" according to Thayer's Lexicon - "to change one's mind for better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins." Don't you think if we truly develop an abhorrence of our sins, we aren't going to want to commit those sins over and over again as most seem to think is okay?

One thing that is always required for forgiveness of any sin is repentance. Jesus states this in Luke 13:3 - "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." In telling believers what they had to do to be saved, Peter said in Acts 2:38 "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Repenting of a sin means committing to quit the sin, and then following through on that commitment by actually quitting the sin.

Unfortunately many so called Christians acknowledge their sin before God, but have no real intention of stopping their sin. I guess they've been led to think that God's grace allows them to continue to sin and still be saved. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Examples ...

* Believers who cuss. They feel bad about it, but make no real effort to stop it. - Eph 4:29 "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
* Believers who break the traffic laws and think nothing of it. - I Pet 2:13-24 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."
* Believers who watch nudity via R rated movies and etc. - Matt 5:28 "... That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
* Young ladies who wear bikinis to go swimming. - I Tim 2:9-10 "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."
* Believers who stay in adulterous marriages - they think they can repent of divorcing and remarrying without rectifying the situation – Matt 19:9 “... Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”