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Repent – God is Ready to Forgive

The visions Isaiah the prophet received were messages from God to Judah and Jerusalem. The first chapter reveals that God's people in the south had rebelled against Him. (verse 2) The people were weighed down with sin. (verse 4) They were guilty of forsaking the Lord. (verse 4) and their worship had been corrupted. (verses 10-15).

What does God expect of His people when they are no longer following Him? Repentance! God expects one to change. Change their directions, change their thoughts, change their behavior. Notice how this change and return to God (repentance) is described in verses sixteen and seventeen.

- Wash Yourself, make yourself clean – sin is described as making one unclean so the instruction is to wash it off metaphorically.
- Put Away the Evil – What one is doing wrong must be removed from one's life.
- Cease to do Evil – Stop doing what is wrong.
- Learn to Do Well – Doing what is right is learned. Become accustomed to doing what is right.
- Seek Judgment – Fairness and justice must always be sought after.
- Relieve the Oppressed – God expects His people to stand up for and correct that which is wrong
- Defend the Fatherless – God expects His people to aid or defend those who are helpless
- Plead of the Widow – God expects His people to be the voice for those unable to defend themselves.

Thankfully we serve a loving God who is ready to forgive when we repent. "...Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (verse 18)

STACY

Joshua: An Example for Fathers

Jerry Fite

At the close of his life, Joshua addressed his people for the final time. He summed up his history lesson regarding God's deliverance of Israel, and the blessings shed upon His people with these words, "Now therefore fear Jehovah and serve Him in sincerity and truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye Jehovah. And if it seem evil unto you to serve Jehovah, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah" (Joshua 24:14-15).

Examining the life of Joshua, and his final words, we can see qualities in him that are needed today in fathers everywhere.

A Father's Exhortation

Joshua exhorted his people to "fear Jehovah and serve Him." This was no generic exhortation, leaving people in the dark as to the distinctive demands of such service. They must "put away" the false gods among them. They cannot reverence "gods" and fear the One True "God" at the same time. They cannot serve Jehovah and other gods at the same time.

The goal of a father's exhortation is children "walking worthily of God (I Thessalonians 2:11-12). Joshua's distinctive exhortation lays out clearly the way with all its demands. We need fathers today who do not just exhort their children to "love Jesus," but also distinctively point out that to do so, they must "keep" Jesus' "commandments" (John 14:15).

A Father's Confidence

Joshua exhorted his people to serve God "in sincerity and truth." Sincerity here denotes "completeness" or "wholeness," while truth here conveys the thought of "firmness," "certainty" and "dependability." Joshua exhorts his people to serve Jehovah with all their being, with-out fearing what one writer de-scribes, "the rude shocks of inquiry." God and His Truth is everlasting, enduring forever (Psalm 119:160). We need fathers today who unashamedly exhort their children to serve God, knowing the foundation for their children's faithful service is certain.

A Father's Leadership

Joshua boldly speaks of the direction he and his house will go. "As for me and my house we will serve Jehovah." There was no hesitation in Joshua's heart as to the focus of his family's life. His focus was not being deter-mined by what his children's friends and their fathers were doing or going to do. Even if they serve false gods, Joshua and his house were determined to serve Jehovah, with all its demands.

A Father's Example

Joshua's leadership was strengthened by his example. He manifested confidence in God when most around him lost theirs when contemplating taking the land of promise (Numbers 14:6-9). He spent his life serving God without compromise, following God's distinctive demands(Joshua 6). Fathers, are you leading your family in word and deed? Joshua did. So, can you.

Improve Your Life

- by Frank Himmel

1. Turn off the TV and read your Bible. The Psalmist said of the blessed man, "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night" (Ps. 1:2).
2. Hang up the phone and pray. I never cease to be amazed at how much time some people spend on their cell phones. Is all that talking necessary or profitable? "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th. 5:17). "The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (Jas. 5:16).
3. Get up out of bed an hour earlier and come to Bible study. "As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed" (Prov. 26:14).
4. Cut down your credit card purchases and give. Give to the poor. Increase your contribution at church. "One who is gracious to a poor man lends to the Lord, and He will repay him for his good deed" (Prov. 19:17). "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
5. Change the conversation from sports, weather, and politics to spiritual things. Do that at home. "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:6-7). Do that at work, too. "He who wins souls is wise" (Prov. 11:30).