

Repentance

12/05

“Every principle and ordinance of the gospel of Jesus Christ is significant and important in contributing to the progress, happiness, and eternal life of man; but there is none more essential to the salvation of the human family than the divine and eternally operative principle, repentance. Without it, no one can be saved. Without it, no one can even progress.” (David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals*, pg. 13)

Repentance Defined

(Mosiah 5:2; Mosiah 27:25; D&C 29:17)

01 – “Remember what repentance is: Many times a Bishop will write: ‘I feel he has suffered enough?’ But suffering is not repentance. Suffering comes from lack of complete repentance. A Stake President will write: ‘I feel he has been punished enough!’ But punishment is not repentance. Punishment follows disobedience and precedes repentance. A husband will write: ‘My wife has confessed everything!’ But confession is not repentance. Confession is an admission of guilt that occurs as repentance begins. A wife will write: ‘My husband is filled with remorse!’ But remorse is not repentance. Remorse and sorrow continue because a person has not yet fully repented. But if suffering, punishment, confession, remorse, and sorrow are not repentance, **what is repentance?** The Old Testament was written in Hebrew. The word for repentance is ‘*shube*.’ The New Testament was written in Greek. The word for repentance is ‘*metaneo*.’ ‘Meta’ refers to change, thus ‘*metaneo*’ means a change of mind or thought or thinking so powerful and so strong that it changes our very way of life.” (Theodore M. Burton, *BYU Speeches*, March 26, 1985, pg. 95-101)

02 – “...repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior. Many men and women in the world demonstrate great willpower and self-discipline in overcoming bad habits and the weaknesses of the flesh. Yet at the same time they give no thought to the Master, sometimes even openly rejecting Him. Such changes of behavior, even if in a positive direction, do not constitute true repentance.

Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit. **It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering.** Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ (3 Ne. 9:20; Moro. 6:2; D&C 20:37, 59:8; Ps. 34:18; Ps. 51:17; Isa. 57:15) **Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance.**

“So, my beloved brothers and sisters, as we seek to qualify to be members of Christ’s Church—members in the sense in which He uses the term, members who have repented and come unto Him—let us remember these six principles. First, the gospel is the Lord’s plan of happiness, and repentance is designed to bring us joy. Second, true repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Third, **true repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change of behavior.** Fourth, part of this mighty change of heart is to feel godly sorrow for our sins. This is what is meant by a broken heart and a contrite spirit. Fifth, God’s gifts are sufficient to help us overcome every sin and weakness if we will but turn to Him for help. Finally, we must remember that most repentance does not involve sensational or dramatic changes, but rather is a step-by-step, steady, and consistent movement toward godliness.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, October, 1989, pg. 2, 4-5)

03 – “There is an old saying that states: It is better to prepare and prevent than it is to repair and repent.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *New Era*, January 1988, pg. 6)

The Nature of Sin

(Alma 34:32-34)

04 – “Repentance becomes more difficult as sin is more willful; it is by humility and contrition of the heart that sinners may increase their faith in God, and so obtain from Him the gift of repentance. **As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker; neglect of opportunity in holy things develops inability** (James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, pg. 114)

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05 – “It is true that the great principle of repentance is always available, but for the wicked and rebellious there are serious reservations to this statement. For instance, sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return. Without repentance there can be no forgiveness, and without forgiveness all the blessings of eternity hang in jeopardy. **As the transgressor moves deeper and deeper in his sin, and the error is entrenched more deeply and the will to change is weakened, it becomes increasingly near-hopeless, and he skids down and down until either he does not want to climb back or he has lost the power to do so.**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 117)

06 – “**If I were to ask you what is the heaviest burden one may have to bear in this life, what would you answer? The heaviest burden that one has to bear in this life is the burden of sin.**” (Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, July 1973, pg. 122)

07 – “One of the most serious human defects in all ages is procrastination, and then he defined it: an unwillingness to accept personal responsibility **now**.

God is so loving; surely He won't hold me personally responsible for mistakes which are simply the result of being human.

Well, I may be responsible to repent, but this is not a good time to start. If I wait, later will be better.

But difficult as circumstances may be, they do not relieve us of accountability for our actions and our inactions.

Even the acceptance of personal responsibility may not overcome the temptation to believe that now is not the time to repent. “Now” can seem so difficult, and “later” appear so much easier. The truth is that today is always a better day.” (Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, November 1999, pg. 33)

08 – “**This only underlines the vital importance of repenting in this life, of not dying in one's sins. In an interview with a young man in Mesa, Arizona, I found him only a little sorry he had committed adultery, but not sure that he wanted to cleanse himself. After long deliberations, in which I seemed to make little headway against his rebellious spirit, I finally said, ‘Goodbye, Bill, but I warn you, don't break the speed limit, be careful what you eat, take no chances on your life. Be careful in traffic, for you must not die before this matter is cleared up. Don't you dare die.’** I quoted this scripture from 1 Nephi 15:33-34: ‘Wherefore if they should die in their wickedness, they must be cast off also, as to the things which are spiritual, which are pertaining to righteousness: wherefore they must be brought to stand before God, to be judged of their works. . . . And there cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore there must needs be a place of filthiness prepared for that which is filthy.’” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 179)

09 – “**It is my judgment that any man or woman can do more to conform to the laws of God in one year of this life than they could in ten years when they are dead. The spirit only can repent and change, and then the battle has to go forward with the flesh afterwards. It is much easier to overcome and serve the Lord when both flesh and spirit are combined as one. This is the time when men are more pliable and susceptible. We will find when we are dead every desire, every feeling will be greatly intensified. When clay is pliable it is much easier to change than when it gets hard and sets.**

This life is the time to repent. That is why I presume it will take a thousand years after the first resurrection until the last group will be prepared to come forth. It will take them a thousand years to do what it would have taken, but three score years and ten to accomplish in this life. **Some folks get the notion that the problems of life will at once clear up and they will know that this is the Gospel of Christ when they die.** I have heard people say they believe when they die they will see Peter and that he will clear it all up. I said, ‘You will never see Peter until you accept the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the hands of the elders of the Church, living or dead.’ They will meet these men to whom this right and authority has been given, for this generation shall receive it at the hands of those who have been honored with the priesthood of this dispensation. Living or dead, they shall not hear it from anyone else.” (Melvin J. Ballard, *Three Degrees of Glory*, Ogden Tabernacle, September 22, 1922)

10 – “**If men would acquire salvation, they have got to be subject, before they leave this world, to certain rules and principles which were fixed by an unalterable decree before the world was....**” (Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, pg. 324)

11 – “Suppose, then, that a man is evil in his heart—wholly given up to wickedness, and in that condition dies, his spirit

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will enter the spirit-world intent upon evil. On the other hand, if we are striving with all the powers and faculties God has given us to improve upon our talents, to prepare ourselves to dwell in eternal life, and the grave receives our bodies while we are thus engaged, with what disposition will our spirits enter their next state? They will be still striving to do the things of God, only in a much greater degree—learning, increasing, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.” (Brigham Young, *JD*, 7:334)

12 – “Procrastination, as it may be applied to gospel principles, is the thief of eternal life, which is life in the presence of the Father and the Son.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *CR*, April 1969, pg. 121)

13 – “With regard to our property, as I have told you many times, the property which we inherit from our Heavenly father is our **time, and the power to choose in the disposition of the same. This is the real capital that is bequeathed unto us by our Heavenly Father; all the rest is what he may be pleased to add unto us.”** (Brigham Young, *JD*, 18:354)

14 – “Is it possible for people to get so far in the dark through rebellion and wickedness that the spirit of repentance leaves them? It is a gift of God, and they can get beyond the power of repentance.” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *DS*, 2:194-195)

Only Teach Repentance

(2 Nephi 9:48; Mosiah 18:20; Mosiah 25:22; D&C 6:9; D&C 11:9; D&C 19:21)

15 – “Those of us whom the Lord has called to leadership have an inescapable responsibility, like that of Jacob and Joseph, to ...[take] upon us the responsibility, answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments.... (Jac. 1:19).

In [speaking] about sin and repentance, no intent is implied that either the writer or any of those quoted, except the Lord himself, is without fault. But we would not have much motivation to righteousness if all speakers and writers postponed discussing and warning until they themselves were perfected! (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. preface)

Daily Acts of Repentance

(D&C 1:31; D&C 82:7; 2 Peter 2:21-22)

16 – “Repentance is a thing that cannot be trifled with every day. Daily transgression and daily repentance is not that which is pleasing in the sight of God.” (Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, pg. 148)

17 – “Repentance is a great blessing, but you should never make yourself sick just so you can try out the remedy.” (M. Russell Ballard, *Ensign*, November 1990, pg. 36)

“True repentance that yields forgiveness requires a discontinuance of all evil practices reformation and deeds, a thorough reformation of life, a vital change from evil to good, from vice to virtue, from darkness to light.” (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, pg. 100)

18 – “Repentance must involve an all-out, total surrender to the program of the Lord. That transgressor is not fully repentant who neglects his tithing, misses his meetings, breaks the Sabbath, fails in his family prayers, does not sustain the authorities of the Church, breaks the Word of Wisdom, does not love the Lord nor his fellowmen. A reforming adulterer who drinks or curses is not repentant. The repenting burglar who has sex play is not ready for forgiveness. God cannot forgive unless the transgressor shows a true repentance which spreads to all areas of his life.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 203)

The Process of Repentance

(Genesis 19:17; Isaiah 1:18)

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as *scarlet*, they shall be as white as snow;

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though they be red like *crimson*, they shall be as **wool**.” (Isaiah 1:18)

19 – “*Come now and let us reason together* is a **invitation to divine tutoring, but only the meek are wise enough to accept.**” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1993, pg. 20)

- Scarlet** - Bright or easily noticed transgressions.
- Crimson** - Dark or concealed or secret sin.
- Wool** - suggest a process: sheared, sorted, carded, cleansed, bleached, combed.
 - is given to be used in ‘covering oneself’ [Hebrew word ‘*Kaphar*’ meaning ‘to cover’].
 - are given from a lamb as sins are given away due to the ‘Lamb of God’ (John 1:29).

The Lord’s Process For Repentance- Genesis 19:17

A. Escape for thy life = You have to escape the sin before you can ever repent of it.

(Genesis 39:12; 1 Corinthians 6:18; James 4:7-8)

B. Look not behind thee = You must not look back.

20 – “President Joseph Fielding Smith, a man whom I love—great friend, told of a woman who had repented of immoral conduct and was struggling to find her way. She asked him what she should do now. In turn, he asked her to read to him from the Old Testament the account of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Lot and of Lot’s wife who was turned to a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). Then he asked her what lesson did those verses hold for her. She answered, ‘The Lord will destroy those who are wicked.’ ‘Not so,’ President Smith told this repentant woman, **‘The lesson for you is Don’t look back!’**” (Boyd K. Packer, *BYU Fireside*, March 29, 1992)

21 – “**Full repentance involves a 180 –degree turn, and without turning back!**” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1991, pg. 30)

22 – “**To dig a straight furrow, the plowman needs to keep his eyes on a fixed point ahead of him. That keeps him on a true course. If, however, he happens to look back to see where he has been, his chances of straying are increased. The results are crooked and irregular furrows. We invite those of you who are new members to fix your attention on your new goal and never look back on your earlier problems or transgressions except as a reminder of your growth and your worth and your blessings from God.**” (Howard W. Hunter, *Ensign*, May 1987, pg. 17)

23 – “**If you have your weaknesses, keep them hid from your brethren as much as you can.** You never hear me ask the people to tell their follies. But when we ask the brethren, as we frequently do, to speak in sacrament meetings, we wish them, if they have injured their neighbors, to confess their wrongs; but do not tell about your nonsensical conduct that nobody knows of but yourselves. Tell to the public that which belongs to the public. If you have sinned against the people, confess to them. If you have sinned against a family or a neighborhood, go to them and confess. If you have sinned against your Ward, confess to your Ward. If you have sinned against one individual, take that person by yourselves and make your confession to him. And if you have sinned against your God, or against yourselves, confess to God, and keep the matter to yourselves, for I do not want to know anything about it.” (Brigham Young, *Discourses of Brigham Young*, pg. 158)

23 – **Missionaries should not parade old sins.** As I have met with many groups of missionaries throughout the mission, I find a tendency for missionaries to tell their faults to their companions, their friends, and sometimes in public. There is not place in the mission field to publicize your weaknesses. When you have something that is disturbing you, you should go to your mission president. (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 96)

C. Neither stay thou in all the plain – You must abandon all associations with the sin.

24 – “**He must be certain not only that he has abandoned the sin but that he has changed the situations surrounding the sin. He should avoid the places and conditions and circumstances where the sin occurred, for these could most readily breed it again. He must abandon the people with whom the sin was committed. He may not hate the persons involved but he must avoid them and everything associated with the sin. He must**

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dispose of all letters, trinkets, and things which will remind him of the 'old days' and the 'old times.' He must forget addresses, telephone numbers, people, places and situations from the sinful past, and build a new life. He must eliminate anything which would stir the old memories." (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 171)

25 – "Prayer is important throughout the entire process of repentance, but it is vital now. In the process of abandoning a sin, it is often necessary to abandon persons, places, things, and situations that are associated with the transgression. This is fundamental. Substitution of a good environment for a bad can hedge the way between the repenting person and his past sin." (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, October 1982, pg. 4)

D. Escape to the mountain = Christ (and His house) is the mountain we must escape to. (Helaman 5:12)

26 – "The beginning and completion of repentance leading to forgiveness is faith in Jesus Christ, who is the 'author and the finisher of [our] faith' (Moroni 6:4). Our faith in him as Savior and Redeemer engenders in us godly sorrow for our transgressions, a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and a sense of personal accountability. There follows a change in attitude and a turning toward God." (Ronald E. Poelman, *Ensign*, November 1993, pg. 114)

27 – "Repentance requires both turning away from evil and turning to God (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1991, pg. 30)

E. Lest thou be consumed- Does this mean that the man who has quit smoking or drinking or had sex pollutions finds life empty for a time? The things which engaged him and caught his fancy and occupied his thoughts are gone, and better substitutions have not yet filled the void. The man makes a start but may find the loss of the yesterday's habits so great that he is enticed to return to his evil ways, and his lot (no pun intended) thus becomes infinitely worsened.

Richard G. Scott, 'Finding Forgiveness,' *Ensign*, May 1995, 75-77

- 1. Sorrow for sin.** Study and ponder to determine how serious the Lord defines your transgression to be. That will bring healing sorrow and remorse. It will also bring a sincere desire for change and a willingness to submit to every requirement for forgiveness. Alma taught, 'Justice exerciseth all his demands, and also mercy claimeth all which is her own; and thus, none but the truly penitent are saved.'
- 2. Abandonment of sin.** This is an unyielding, permanent resolve to not repeat the transgression. By keeping this commitment, the bitter aftertaste of that sin need not be experienced again. Remember: 'But unto that soul who sinneth shall the former sins return.'
- 3. Confession of sin.** You always need to confess your sins to the Lord. If they are serious transgressions, such as immorality, they need to be confessed to a bishop or stake president. Please understand that confession is not repentance. It is an essential step, but is not of itself adequate. Partial confession by mentioning lesser mistakes will not help you resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to fully disclose to the Lord and, where necessary, His priesthood judge all that you have done. Remember, 'He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.'
- 4. Restitution for sin.** You must restore as far as possible all that which is stolen, damaged, or defiled. Willing restitution is concrete evidence to the Lord that you are committed to do all you can to repent.
- 5. Obedience to all the commandments.** Full obedience brings the complete power of the gospel into your life with strength to focus on the abandonment of specific sins. It includes things you might not initially consider part of repentance, such as attending meetings, paying tithing, giving service, and forgiving others. The Lord said: 'He that repents and does the commandments of the Lord shall be forgiven.'
- 6. Recognition of the Savior.** Of all the necessary steps to repentance, I testify that the most critically important is for you to have a conviction that forgiveness comes because of the Redeemer. It is essential to know that only on His terms can you be forgiven. Witness Alma's declaration: 'I was ... in the most bitter pain and anguish of soul; and never, until I did cry out unto the Lord Jesus Christ for mercy, did I receive a remission of my sins. But ... I did cry unto him and I did find peace to my soul.'

Ezra Taft Benson, Missionary Preparation Student Readings, pg. 138-139

- 1. Flee immediately from any situation you are in that is either causing you to sin or that may cause you to sin.** When Joseph of Egypt was entrapped by Potiphar's wife alone in the house, it would have been easy for Joseph to have rationalized. After all, he had not encouraged her. After all, he was her servant. After all, it would hurt her feelings if he refused. Had Joseph stood there and rationalized, he could easily have fallen. There is a great lesson in how he did respond. The scripture says, "And he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out" (Genesis 39:12; emphasis added). He fled and got him out. My beloved brothers and sisters, if you are currently in a situation where your moral purity is being or could be compromised, follow Joseph's example. Flee from it and get yourself out. You cannot linger in sin and expect to have success in repentance.
- 2. Plead with the Lord for the power to overcome.** One of Satan's most effective strategies with those he has lured into sin is to whisper in their ears that they are not worthy to pray. He will tell you that Heavenly Father is so displeased with you that He will never hear your prayers. This is a lie, and he says it to deceive us. The power of sin is great. If we are to extricate ourselves from it, especially serious sin, we must have a power greater than ourselves. No one is more anxious to help you flee from sin than your Father in Heaven. Go to Him. Acknowledge your sin, confess your shame and your guilt, and then plead with Him for help. He has the power to help you triumph.
- 3. Let your priesthood leaders help you** resolve the transgression and come back into full fellowship with the Lord. Certain sins are of such gravity that they put our standing in the Church in jeopardy. Sexual sins are among those of such seriousness (see D&C 42:24). Full repentance of such sins requires that we not only confess our sins and resolve them with the Lord, but that we also do so with the Church. This is done through appropriate priesthood leaders. The bishops and stake presidents have been appointed by revelation to serve as watchmen over the Church and as judges in Israel. While only the Lord can forgive sins, the priesthood leaders play a critical role in the process of repentance. Even if we are disfellowshipped or excommunicated, it is a beginning step in the process of repentance, and the sooner one begins, the sooner one can find the sweet peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness.
- 4. Drink from the divine fountain and fill your lives with positive sources of power.** It is not enough simply to try to resist evil or empty our lives of sin. We must also fill our lives with righteousness. We must engage in activities that bring spiritual power. I speak of such activities as immersing ourselves in the scriptures. There is a power that flows into our lives when we read and study the scriptures on a daily basis that cannot be found in any other way. Daily prayer is another source of great power. Fasting for specific strength or special blessings can strengthen us beyond our normal ability. Christian service, church attendance, service in the kingdom—all can add to our storehouse of strength and power. We must do more than simply remove the negative influences from our lives. We must replace them with righteous activities that fill us with the strength and determination to live as we should.
- 5. Remember that through proper repentance you can become clean again.** Moroni taught that "despair cometh because of iniquity" (Moroni 10:22). Those who are caught in immorality may be experiencing the devastating effects of despair. But there is an alternative. For those who pay the price required by true repentance, the promise is sure. You can be clean again. The despair can be lifted. The sweet peace of forgiveness will flow into your lives.

**Robert D. Hales, 'The Lord Offers Everyone a Way Back from Sin,'
Ensign, November 1976,pg. 24- 26)**

The steps of repentance have been clearly defined in the scriptures:

- 1. Recognize we have done wrong.**
- 2. Covenant with the Lord that we will never repeat the sin we have committed and are repenting of.** "By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them." (D&C 58:43.)
- 3. Recommit ourselves to living a better life in all phases of the gospel.**
- 4. Make restitution for the wrongs we have committed by—**
 - a. Repenting in prayer to the Lord.

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- b. Confessing to our bishop, an ordained common judge in Israel and the presiding high priest in our ward.
 - c. Apologizing to those we have offended.
5. **The depth of our repentance must be as deep as the sin we have committed.** There is no easy way. It hurts, but it also cleanses.
 6. **Time is the next element of repentance and restitution:**
 - a. Time to prove to ourselves, to our Lord, to our fellowmen that we have committed ourselves to a new way of life.
 - b. Time to study the scriptures and dedicate our lives to the commandments we learn we must live to be happy and have joy.
 7. **Complete forgiveness of ourselves and forgiveness without any feelings of retribution toward those who have offended us.**
 8. **Finally, the greatest of all blessings: the forgiveness of the Lord.** We no longer look back with depression and hurt, but forward to the future with hope and joy and love for God, self, and all mankind.

8 R's of REPENTANCE

<u>God's Plan</u>	<u>Scriptures</u>	<u>Satan's Strategy</u>	<u>Scriptures</u>
1- RECOGNIZE REALIZE	1 JOHN 1:8	1- RATIONALIZE	2 NEPHI 28 7-9
2- REMORSE REGRET	2 COR. 7:10	2- RESENT	2 COR. 7:9
3- RESOLVE RECOMMIT	MORONI 6:3	3- REGRESS RECONSIDER	ALMA 34-30-35
4- RECITE REPORT	D&C 64:7	4- REPRESS	D&C 121:37
5- REFORM RESTART	D&C 58:43	5- REPEAT REDO	D&C 82:7
6- REPAIR RESTORE	MOSIAH 27:35	6- REMEMBER NOT	MORONI 8:25-26
7- RELEASE	D&C 64:9-10	7- RETAIN	D&C 19:4, 16-17
8- RECEIVE	D&C 58:42	8- REMAIN	ISAIAH 53:3-5

Remorse and Repentance

(Hebrews 12:16-17; 2 Corinthians 7:9-11; Mormon 2:13-15)

28 – “Godly sorrow is a gift of the spirit.” (Ezra Taft Benson, *TETB*, pg. 72)

29 – “If one is sorry only because someone found out about his sin, his repentance is not complete. Godly sorrow causes one to want to repent, even though he has not been caught by others, and makes him determined to do right no matter what happens. This kind of sorrow brings righteousness and will work toward forgiveness (Spencer W. Kimball, *Repentance Brings Forgiveness*, [Pamphlet, 1984], pg. 8)

30 – “False remorse instead is like ‘fondling our failings.’ In ritual regret, we mourn our mistakes but without mending them.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, November 1991, pg. 31)

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31 – “I have come to know, in interviewing people who have made mistakes in their lives, that a very convincing evidence of repentance is that they are willing to do whatever is required of them. Occasionally, when a bishop is hesitant to issue a temple recommend, a member will resist the bishop and perhaps argue with him. That very attitude is a signal that the bishop may well need to consider very, very carefully whether or not someone with that spirit should be given the privilege of entering the house of the Lord. It indicates that member may not be quite ready.” (Boyd K. Packer, *The Holy Temple*, pg. 54-55)

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(Mosiah 26:29; D&C 13:1; D&C 58:42-43; D&C 59:12; D&C 132:46)

32 – “We must train our spiritual selves with the same care, if we are to be fully developed, as we train our physical bodies. We must have daily exercise by our spirits by prayer, by doing daily good deeds, by sharing with others. We must feed our spirits daily by studying the scriptures every day, by [family home evening], by attendance at meetings, by the partaking of the sacrament. We must avoid harmful poisons which, spiritually speaking, come when we break one of God’s commandments. It is just as poison to our spiritual bodies....

Our spiritual checkups are when we are brought face-to-face with God’s spiritual doctors—our bishops, our stake presidents, and occasionally with General Authorities in interviews which are always done for the purpose of helping to prepare us for spiritual advancement. Sometimes there have to be, as a result of these interviews, some major operations on our spiritual selves.” (Harold B. Lee, *THBL*, pg. 122)

33 – “We are to confess all our sins to the Lord. For transgressions which are wholly personal, affecting none but ourselves and the Lord, confession to ourselves and him would seem to be sufficient...For misconduct which affects another, confessions should also be made to the offended one and his forgiveness sought. Finally, where one’s transgressions are of such a nature as would, unrepented of, put in jeopardy his right to membership or fellowship in the Church of Christ, full and effective confession requires confession by the repentant sinner to his bishop or other proper presiding Church officer.” (Marion G. Romney, *Ensign*, November 1980, pg. 71)

34 – “No one can ever be forgiven of any transgression until there is repentance, and one has not repented until he has bared his soul and admitted his intentions and weaknesses without excuses, or rationalizations. When one admits that his sin is as big as it really is, then he is ready to begin his repentance; and any other elements of repentance are of reduced value, until the conviction is established totally. Then repentance may mature and forgiveness eventually come.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 81)

35 – “Do you know that sins cannot be erased, transgressions cannot be forgiven through evasion and mere forgetfulness?” (Spencer W. Kimball, *New Era*, March 1978, pg. 16)

36 – Bishops Remove Penalties, Not Sins Although there are many ecclesiastical officers in the Church whose positions entitle and require them to be judges, the authority of those positions does not necessarily qualify them to forgive or remit sins. Those who can do that are extremely few in this world. The bishop, and others in comparable positions, can forgive in the sense of waiving the penalties. In our loose connotation we sometimes call this forgiveness, but it is not forgiveness in the sense of "wiping out" or absolution. The waiver means, however, that the individual will not need to be tried again for the same error, and that he may become active and have fellowship with the people of the Church. It is the Lord, however, who forgives sin. There is in the Church... the power to remit sins, but I do not believe it resides in the bishops. That is a power that must be exercised under the proper authority of the priesthood and by those who hold the keys that pertain to that function. Let it be said in emphasis that even the First Presidency and the Apostles do not make a practice of absolving sins. They waive penalties in the course of their ministrations.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, pg. 332)

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(D&C 19:20)

37 – “It is so easy to let our sympathies carry us out of proportion, and when a man has committed sin, he must suffer. It is an absolute requirement—not by the bishop—but it is a requirement by nature and by the very part of a man. This discipline is especially applicable to adults and married people and more especially to those who have been to

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the temple. They must understand that they cannot tamper with the holy laws of God.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1975, pg. 78)

38 – “When a commandment is broken, a commensurate penalty is imposed. This happens automatically...Under the laws of God the consequences and penalties of sin are inherent in the act.” (Dallin H. Oaks, *CES Address, Sins, Crimes and Atonement*, February 7 1992)

39 – “**Why is it necessary for us to suffer on the way to repentance for serious transgressions? We tend to think of the results of repentance as simply cleansing us from sin. But that is an incomplete view of the matter. A person who sins is like a tree that bends easily in the wind. On a windy and rainy day, the tree bends so deeply against the ground that the leaves become soiled with mud, like sin. If we focus only on cleaning the leaves, the weakness in the tree that allowed it to bend and soil its leaves may remain. Similarly, a person who is merely sorry to be soiled by sin will sin again in the next high wind. The susceptibility to repetition continues until the tree has been strengthened.**” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, July 1992, pg. 73)

40 – “**Where restitution can be made, repentance is easier. Where the transgression is such that restitution is very difficult or even impossible, then repentance is also very difficult or even impossible.**” (Dallin H. Oaks, *CES Address, Sins, Crimes and Atonement*, February 7 1992)

41 – “But to every forgiveness there is a condition. The plaster must be as wide as the sore. The fasting, the prayers, the humility must be equal to or greater than the sin. There must be a broken heart and a contrite spirit. There must be ‘sackcloth and ashes.’ There must be tears and genuine change of heart. There must be conviction of the sin, abandonment of the evil, confession of the error to properly constituted authorities of the Lord. There must be restitution and a confirmed, determined change of pace, direction and destination. Conditions must be controlled and companionship corrected or changed. There must be a washing of robes to get them white, and there must be a new consecration and devotion to living all of the laws of God. In short, there must be an overcoming of self, of sin, and of the world...” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, March 1982, pg. 2)

42 – “**Alma didn’t promise that Corianton would forget. He taught him how to live with his memories, productively, humbly, continually appreciative for the mercy and long-suffering and forgiveness of God. ‘You’ll remember your sins,’ we can almost hear Alma saying. ‘You probably won’t ever forget. But remember in the right way for the right reasons.’** Don’t let the sorrows that inevitably result from sin disqualify you from your blessings or your contribution. Don’t shrivel inside when you hear the pointed sermon or lesson; don’t turn from the brotherhood of the Saints or the path of the Lord because you’ve made mistakes. Don’t give up and die, spiritually. Christ ‘suffered these things’ that we might not eternally suffer, on condition of our repentance.” (Marion D. Hanks, *Improvement Era*, March 1966, pg. 246)

43 – “...how can we really feel forgiven until we first feel responsible? How can we learn from our own experiences unless these lessons are owned up to? ...

It is when we first feel the consequences of our mistakes and are just turning away from these, but have not yet turned fully to God, that we may have these feelings of being forsaken.” (Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, May 1991, pg. 91)

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(Alma 11:34, 37; Helaman 5:10-11)

44 – “**Another error into which some transgressors fall, because of the availability of God’s forgiveness, is the illusion that they are somehow stronger for having committed sin and then lived through the period of repentance. This simply is not true. That man who resists temptation and lives without sin is far better off than the man who has fallen, no matter how repentant the latter may be. The reformed transgressor, it is true, may be more understanding of one who falls into the same sin, and to that extent perhaps more helpful in the latter’s regeneration. But his sin and repentance have certainly not made him stronger than the consistently righteous person. God will forgive—of that, we are sure. How satisfying it is to be cleansed from filthiness, but how much better it is never to have committed the sin!**” (Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, March 1982, pg. 2)

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45 – “Some Latter-day Saints who wrongly think repentance is easy maintain that a person is better off after he has sinned and repented. ‘Get a little experience with sin,’ one argument goes, ‘and then you will be better able to counsel and sympathize with others. You can always repent.’

I plead with you, my brothers and sisters, my young friends and my older friends, avoid transgression! **The idea that one can deliberately sin and easily repent or that one is better off after sinning and repenting are devilish lies of the adversary. Would anyone seriously contend that it is better to learn firsthand that a certain blow will break a bone or a certain mixture of chemicals will explode and burn off our skin? Are we better off after we have sustained and been scarred from such injuries? It is obviously better to heed the warnings of wise persons who know the effects of certain traumas on our bodies.**

Just as we can benefit from someone else’s experience in matters such as these, we can also benefit from the warnings contained in the commandments of God. We don’t have to have personal experience with the effects of serious transgressions to know that they are injurious to our souls and destructive of our eternal welfare.

Some years ago, one of our sons asked me why it wasn’t a good idea to try alcohol or tobacco to see what they were like. He knew about the Word of Wisdom, and he also knew the health effects of these substances, but he was questioning why he shouldn’t just try them out for himself. I replied that if he wanted to try something out, he ought to go to a barnyard and eat a little manure. He recoiled in horror. ‘Ooh, that’s gross,’ he reacted.

‘I’m glad you think so,’ I said, ‘but why don’t you just try it out so you will know for yourself? While you’re proposing to try one thing that you know is not good for you, why don’t you apply that principle to some others?’ That illustration of the silliness of ‘trying it out for yourself’ proved persuasive for one sixteen-year-old.” (Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, July 1992, 73-74)

Rejoicing and Receiving Repentance

(Mosiah 4:2-3)

46 – “I believe that his juridical concept of his dealings with his children could be expressed in this way: I believe that in his justice and mercy, he will give us the maximum reward for our acts, give us all that he can give, and in the reverse, I believe that he will impose upon us the minimum penalty which it is possible for him to impose.” (J. Reuben Clark Jr., *CR*, October 1953, pg. 84)

47 – “Whenever there is a failure, get on your knees and make new pledges to your Father after having asked his forgiveness. You may feel, “What is the use?” when you may have failed many times and prayed many times, but you will eventually conquer.” (Spencer W. Kimball, *TSWK*, pg. 91)

48 – “I suggest that you read President Spencer W. Kimball’s inspired book *The Miracle of Forgiveness*. It continues to help the faithful avoid the pitfalls of serious transgression. It likewise is an excellent handbook for those who have committed serious errors and want to find their way back. Read the last two chapters first to appreciate the full miracle of forgiveness before reading anything else.

If you have repented from serious transgression and mistakenly believe that you will always be a second-class citizen in the kingdom of God, learn that is not true....

To you who have sincerely repented yet continue to feel the burden of guilt, realize that to continue to suffer for sins when there has been proper repentance and forgiveness of the Lord is prompted by the master of deceit. Lucifer will encourage you to continue to relive the details of past mistakes, knowing that such thoughts can hamper your progress. Thus he attempts to tie strings to the mind and body so that he can manipulate you like a puppet to discourage personal achievement.” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 2000, pg. 26)

Releasing and Repentance

(Mosiah 26:30; Moroni 6:8; D&C 88:33)

49 – “I repeat, save for the exception of the very few who defect to perdition, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no apostasy, no crime exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. That is the promise of the atonement of Christ. How all can be repaired, we do not know. It may not all be accomplished in

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this life.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign*, November 1995, pg. 18)

50 – “What of you who have already made mistakes or have lost yourselves to an immoral lifestyle? What hope do you have? Are you cast off and lost forever?

These are not unforgivable sins. However unworthy or unnatural or immoral these transgressions may be, they are not unforgivable (D&C 42:25). **When completely forsaken and fully repented of, there can open the purifying gift of forgiveness, and the burden of guilt will be erased. There is a way back-long, perhaps; hard, certainly; possible, of course!** (Acts 5:31; Eph. 1:7; Mosiah 4:2; 26:29; D&C 1:31-32; 58:42; 61:2).

You need not, you cannot find your way alone. You have a Redeemer. The Lord will lift your burden if you choose to repent and turn from your sins and do them no more. That is what the Atonement of Christ was for.” (Boyd K. Packer, *Ensign* November 2000, pg. 74)

51 – “**On that very night, the night of the greatest suffering that has ever taken place in the world or that ever will take place, the Savior said, ‘Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you,...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid’ (John 14:27).**

I submit to you, that may be one of the Savior’s commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed; ... I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when he finds that his people do not feel confident in his care or secure in his hands or trust in his commandments.” (Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, April 1998, pg. 19)

52 – “**How difficult it must be for Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, to see so many needlessly suffer, because His gift of repentance is ignored. It must pain Him deeply to see the pointless agony both in this life and beyond the veil that accompany the unrepentant sinner after all He did so that we need not suffer.**” (Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, November 2000, pg. 26)

Resolve and Repentance

53 – “**I once wondered if those who refuse to repent but who then satisfy the law of justice by paying for their own sins are then worthy to enter the celestial kingdom. The answer is no. The entrance requirements for celestial life are simply higher than merely satisfying the law of justice. For that reason, paying for our sins will not bear the same fruit as repenting of our sins. Justice is a law of balance and order and it must be satisfied, either through our payment or his. But if we decline the Savior's invitation to let him carry our sins, and then satisfy justice by ourselves, we will not yet have experienced the complete rehabilitation that can occur through a combination of divine assistance and genuine repentance. Working together, those forces have the power permanently to change our hearts and our lives, preparing us for celestial life.**” (Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life's Experiences*, pg. 7)

54 – “**The greatest miracles I see today are not necessarily the healing of sick bodies, but the greatest miracles I see are the healing of sick souls, those who are sick in soul and spirit and are downhearted and distraught**” (Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, July 1973, pg. 123)

55 – “**...we must be cautious as we discuss [the examples of Paul, Alma the Younger, King Lamoni, and Enos]. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said, ‘were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and they knew it not’ (3 Nephi 9:20).**” (Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, October 1989, pg. 2-5)

Classic Stories of Repentance

56 – “One young man resisted the counsel given by me on one occasion saying, when I assured him that a certain action was a wrong and sinful one, ‘That’s your opinion and this is mine.’ And I rejoined, ‘Yes, if that were true, I would agree with you. Your mind may be brighter than mine, your gray matter thicker and grayer, your logic and thinking processes

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might be far more alert than my own, but you have forgotten one thing. Your opinion, no matter how erudite, is matched not by mine but by the composite of the inspiration of all the ancient prophets of at least six millennia and of the creator himself. Your logic is hardly an equal to the inspiration and revelation from the Lord which I am representing to you. Your deliberations look rather puny when compared to the knowledge and wisdom of the God who made your little mind and gave it function. **God said that act is a sin.** Numerous prophets claimed that act as a sin. **That act is a sin.** Yes, my friend, if it were your mind against mine—your logic against mine—your perception against my limited abilities, then I would agree and leave you to your deliberations and conclusions. But I'm expressing not my own opinion but the word of the Lord of Heaven, and I am telling you God's truth—**that act is a sin.** To compare your opinion with the Lord's proven truths might be like a grain of sand compared to the bulk and height of Mount Everest." (Spencer W. Kimball, *CES Address, What I Hope You will Teach My Grandchildren*, July 11, 1966)

57 – “Shortly after I had been called to the Presiding Bishopric, an Arizona stake president told me he had a young missionary candidate who needed to be interviewed for worthiness....As I invited the young man into my office....I said to him: ‘Apparently there has been a major transgression in your life....Would you mind being frank and open and telling me what that transgression was?’ With head held high and in a haughty manner he responded: ‘There isn’t anything I haven’t done.’ I responded: ‘Well, then, let’s be more specific. Have you been involved in fornication?’ Very sarcastically, he said: ‘I told you I’ve done everything’ I said: ‘I would to God your transgression was not so serious.’ ‘Well, it is,’ he replied. ‘How about drugs?’ ‘I told you I’ve done everything.’ Then I said, ‘What makes you think you’re going on a mission?’ ‘Because I have repented,’ he replied. ‘I haven’t done any of those things for a year. I know I’m going on a mission because my patriarchal blessing says I’m going on a mission. I’ve been ordained an elder. I’ve lived the way I should this past year, and I know that I’m going on a mission.’ I looked at the young man sitting across the desk; twenty-one years old laughing, sarcastic, haughty, with an attitude far removed from sincere repentance. And I said: ‘My dear young friend. I’m sorry to tell you this, but you are not going on a mission. Do you suppose we could send you out with this bragging attitude about this past life of yours, boasting of your escapades. Do you think we could send you out with the fine, clean young men who have never violated the moral code, who have kept their lives clean and pure and worthy so that they might go on missions?’ ...What you have committed is a series of monumental transgressions’, I continued. ‘You haven’t repented, you’ve just stopped doing something. **Someday, after you have been to Gethsemane and back, you’ll understand what true repentance is.**’ At this the young man started to cry. He cried for about five minutes and during that time I didn’t say a word....I just sat there and waited as this young man cried. Finally he looked up and said: ‘I guess I haven’t cried like that since I was five years old.’ I told him: ‘If you had cried like that the first time you were tempted to violate the moral code, you may well have been going on a mission today. Now, I’m sorry. I hate to be the one keeping you from realizing your goal. I know it will be hard to go back to your friends and tell them you are not going on a mission. **After you’ve been to Gethsemane,**’ I continued, ‘you’ll understand what I mean when I say that every person who commits a major transgression must also go to Gethsemane and back before he is forgiven.’ The young man left the office and I’m sure he wasn’t very pleased; I had stood in his way and kept him from going on a mission.

“About six months later, I was down in Arizona speaking at the institute. After my talk many of the institute members came down the aisles to shake hands. As I looked up I saw this young man—the non-repentant transgressor—coming down the aisle toward me....I reached down to shake hands with him, and as he looked up at me I could see that something wonderful had taken place in his life. Tears streamed down his cheeks. An almost holy glow came from his countenance. I said to him: ‘You’ve been there, haven’t you?’ and through the tears he said: ‘Yes, Bishop Featherstone, **I’ve been to Gethsemane and back.**’ ‘I know’, I said, ‘it shows in your face. I believe now that the Lord has forgiven you.’ He responded: ‘I’m more grateful to you than you’ll ever know for not letting me go on a mission. It would have been a great disservice to me. Thanks for helping me.’” (Vaughn J. Featherstone, *A Generation of Excellence*, pg. 156-159)

58 – “**Be certain you clean thoroughly in the corners and along the mopboards. If you are going to miss anything, let it be in the center of the room.**’

(My mother) knew very well if we cleaned the corners, she would never have a problem with what was left in the center of the room. That which is visible to the eye would never be left unclean.

Over the years, my mother’s counsel has had enormous application to me in many different ways. It is especially applicable to the task of spiritual housecleaning. The aspects of our lives that are on public display usually take care of themselves because we want to leave the best impression possible. But it is in the hidden corners of our lives, where there are things that only we know about, that we must be particularly thorough to ensure that we are clean (L. Tom Perry, *Ensign*, November 2000, pg. 60)

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59 – “I did have a dream one time. To me it was a literal thing; it was a reality. I was very much oppressed, once, on a mission. I was almost naked and entirely friendless, except the friendship of a poor, benighted, degraded people. I felt as if I was so debased in my condition of poverty, lack of intelligence and knowledge, just a boy, that I hardly dared look a white man in the face. While in that condition I dreamed that I was on a journey, and I was impressed that I ought to hurry-hurry with all my might, for fear I might be too late. I rushed on my way as fast as I possibly could, and I was only conscious of having just a little bundle, a handkerchief with a small bundle wrapped in it. I did not realize just what it was, when I was hurrying as fast as I could; but finally I came to a wonderful mansion, if it could be called a mansion. It seemed too large, too great to have been made by hand, but I thought I knew that was my destination. As I passed towards it, as fast as I could, I saw a notice, ‘Bath.’ I turned aside quickly and went into the bath and washed myself clean. I opened up this little bundle that I had, and there was a pair of white, clean garments, a thing I had not seen for a long time, because the people I was with did not think very much of making things exceedingly clean. But my garments were clean, and I put them on. Then I rushed to what appeared to be a great opening, or door. I knocked and the door opened, and the man who stood there was the Prophet Joseph Smith. He looked at me a little reprovingly, and the first words he said: **‘Joseph, you are late.’ Yet I took confidence and said: ‘Yes, but I am clean—I am clean!’** (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, pg. 542)

60 – “Some years ago, President Romney and I were sitting in my office. The door opened and a fine young man came in with a troubled look on his face, and he said, ‘Brethren, I am going to the temple for the first time tomorrow. I have made some mistakes in the past, and I have gone to my bishop and my stake president, and I have made a clean disclosure of it all; and after a period of repentance and assurance that I have not returned again to those mistakes, they have now adjudged me ready to go to the temple. But, brethren, that is not enough. I want to know, and how can I know, that the Lord has forgiven me, also.’

What would you answer one who would come to you asking that question? As we pondered for a moment, we remembered King Benjamin’s address contained in the book of Mosiah (Mosiah 4:2-3).

“There was the answer.

“If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins, whoever you are, wherever you are, and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability; if it be something that will affect your standing in the Church and you have gone to the proper authorities, then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods. The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more, because the Lord has said in a revelation to us in our day: ‘... go your ways and sin no more;’” (Harold B. Lee, *Ensign*, July 1973, pg. 122-23)