

As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby. - 1 Peter 2:2

# THE SINCERE MILK OF GOD'S WORD

The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword... - Hebrews 4:12

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## Attitudes That Hinder Repentance

In **Acts 2**, the apostle Peter preached to Jews who were filled with guilt over what they had done to Jesus. These Jews asked Peter and the other apostles, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" (**verse 37**).

In reponse, "*Peter said unto them, 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*" (**verse 38**).

In this verse, the Holy Spirit through Peter set forth commands that must be followed in order for one to become a Christian and receive forgiveness of sins. Notice that one of the things commanded was "*Repent*."

Later, in **Acts 8**, a man named Simon heard the same message about what was needed to become a Christian. **Verse 13** mentions that he "*believed*," and "*was baptized*." After becoming a Christian though, Simon sinned against God (**verses 18-19**).

When Peter saw that this Christian had sinned, he rebuked him, and said, "*Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*" (**verse 22**).

Once again, "*repent*" was part of God's requirement for receiving forgiveness of a sin.

The point is that whether we are a Christian or a non-Christian, the answer to the question "what must I do to receive forgiveness of my sin(s)?" includes repentance. This isn't *all* of the answer, but it is *part* of the answer.

Repentance is a turn in the opposite direction. This is what we must do with any sin that is in our life.

There are a number of excuses made to avoid repentance. Consider some attitudes that hinder repentance, and the answers to these provided in the Word:

### Ignoring the Seriousness of Sin:

Some fail to repent because they do not recognize how serious sin is. **Romans 6:23** says "*the wages of sin is death*." Sin, if continued in, leads one to eternity in "*everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*" (**Matthew 25:41**). This shows us how serious sin is.

Some take sin lightly because they compare themselves to other people instead of comparing themselves to God's will. The thought is, "Everybody sins and my sin is no worse than anyone else's."

While it is true that many people are living in sin, it is also true that "*many*" are following a broad path that leads to destruction (**Matthew 7:13-14**). If we desire to be among the "*few*" who travel down the path that leads to life, we must stop comparing ourselves to others and start comparing ourselves to God's will. When we do this, we will realize that sin is despicable and must be repented of.

### "Sweeping Sin Under the Rug":

Another pitfall some fall into is the idea that if "nobody finds out" about a sin, it is not a big deal. David learned the foolishness of this mindset.

After David committed adultery with Bathsheba, instead of acknowledging his sin and repenting, David tried to "sweep it under the rug." He told lies and eventually ordered an innocent man to be put to death, all in an attempt to "cover up" sin that could never really be "covered up."

After detailing David's attempts, the end of

**2 Samuel 11** states *“the thing that David had done displeased the Lord”* (**verse 27**).

David had forgotten that the One whose judgment matters most knows everything. **Hebrews 4:13**: *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*

David was punished severely by God for the sins he had committed (**2 Samuel 12:10-14**). He learned that there is no such thing as a sin that nobody knows about.

“Attacking the Messenger”:

Some fail to repent because their focus is on the faults of the messenger who points out their sin, rather than the message he proclaims.

Consider if one went to a doctor and was told by the doctor that he or she had a disease. The doctor said that the disease was dangerous, but they had discovered a cure. The doctor offered the cure to the patient to overcome this disease. Instead of thanking the doctor, imagine if the patient became angry and insisted that he or she did not need this cure. Imagine if the patient began attacking the doctor and critiquing all the ways in which the doctor was wrong for encouraging him or her to accept this cure.

This would seem ridiculous, yet this is how many react when others warn them about sin. Instead of focusing on the message that leads to salvation, many become defensive and turn against the one offering the cure.

Like those who sought to kill Jeremiah for giving them guidance that could lead them to safety (**Jeremiah 38:4-6**), many “attack the messenger” for speaking words that could lead them to eternal life.

This is a surefire way to ensure that we will not allow ourselves to be helped when repentance is needed in our lives.

Fearing Rejection:

Some fail to repent because of rejection they might receive from others. **John 12:42** speaks of some among the chief rulers who believed on Jesus, *“but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue.”* **Verse 43** goes on to point out that *“they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.”*

Anytime we allow fear of how someone else will react come between us and God, we send the message to Him that we love the praise of others more than the praise of God.

Jesus stated *“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me”* (**Matthew 10:37**), implying that being His disciple often involves making choices that angers others. If we fail to repent as needed for fear of what others will think, Jesus says we are not worthy of Him.

Procrastinating:

Still others fail to repent because they do not have the sense of urgency needed to do so. Some believe that repentance is something they can do “later on down the road” when they have more time.

This attitude pretends to know more about the future than God has revealed. None of us know how many more days we have on earth. None of us even know how much longer the earth will exist as it does now.

Speaking of the Day of Judgment, Jesus said *“Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only”* (**Matthew 24:36**).

He warns in **verse 42**: *Watch therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.*

May we avoid these and other attitudes that hinder repentance. When sin is in our lives, may we simply repent as the Lord commands.

**-Michael Hickox**