

NOTES

~ *Intent Matters!* ~

Introduction: We seldom do anything particularly good or bad unless we mean to. This is *intent*, and it comes from the mind – heart, as it’s referred to in the Bible. Jesus had a lot to say about this!

Intent Matters!!!

- Our ‘heart’ defines our *intent* since it’s at the core of everything we do or say (i.e. Genesis 6:5; **Matthew 15:18-19**; Acts 8:22).
- We must intend to do the right things in our bodies and not practice sinful behavior – this is how we prove we’re God’s and what we’ll be judged by (i.e. Matthew 22:35-40; **Matthew 25:31-46**; **Galatians 5:19-21**; **John 14:15 & 23**).
- If we intend to sin, it’s as good as done (i.e. **Matthew 5:27-28**). This is upheld by our own courts (i.e. punished for the *intent* to murder . . .).

How can we change our **heart**/intent and repent once we know how we should behave (repentance is a *change of behavior that comes about as a change of heart*)? This enables forgiveness and salvation (Luke 24:47; Acts 11:15-18)

Preparing the ‘heart’ – *intent* – for righteousness:

- **Winning** the battle through dealing with temptation (i.e. stop thoughts before they become sin – **James 1:14-15** – and walk by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16-17)).
- **Forgive** others and let go of bitterness (Matthew 6:14-15).
- **Value** what’s *truly* important (**Matthew 6:19-21**).
- **Worship:** Obedience to God is the greatest form of worship and requires self-control of the body (**Romans 12:1**).

Guarding the ‘heart’ for *continued* righteousness:

- ‘Clothe’ ourselves with Christ by continually reading, praying, meditating, etc. (**2Timothy 3:16**; Romans 13:13-14).
- Consistently act according to what we learn as we ‘clothe ourselves with Christ’ (2Peter 2:21-22; **James 1:22-25**).

Using our New Heart: Care for others, spread the good news of salvation from God’s judgment, and mentor others as you grow in faith (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

Summary: We must always be aware of our intentions and how what we’re going to say or do will affect God and others. Having a good understanding of God’s ways will help us to know whether something we intend to do or say can result in sinful behavior.

~ *Intent Matters!* ~

Introduction:

intent=heart

Heart/intent represent direction & priorities

Heart defines intent

Must intend right and **not practice** sin

Intent = sin

Overcoming temptation to **intend** sinful actions

Introduction: We seldom do anything particularly good or bad unless we mean to. This is *intent*, and comes from the mind – heart, as it’s referred to in the Bible. Jesus had a lot to say about this!

For instance, he said that out of the heart comes all kinds of wicked things as we’ll see in a moment. And, as we’ll also discuss in a moment, the heart and intent are related and represent our direction and priorities.

Our ‘heart’ defines our *intent* since it’s at the core of everything we do or say (i.e. Genesis 6:5; **Matthew 15:18-19**; Acts 8:22).

[**Matthew 15:18-19**]

[**Give, and Ask for, Examples**]

We must intend to do the right things in our bodies and not practice sinful behavior – this is how we prove we’re God’s and what we’ll be judged by (i.e. Matthew 22:35-40; **Matthew 25:31-46**; **Galatians 5:19-21**; **John 14:15 & 23**).

[**Matthew 25:31-46**]

[**Galatians 5:19-21**]

[**John 14:15 & 23**]

If we intend to sin, it’s as good as done (i.e. **Matthew 5:27-28**). This is upheld by our own courts (i.e. punished for the *intent* to murder . . .).

[**Matthew 5:27-28**]

We can overcome temptation and keep sinful thoughts from becoming sinful desires. How? By taking control of those thoughts and intending to only do those things that are pleasing to God and our Christ. More on this ‘winning the battle’ in a moment, but let’s have some fun first by coming up with examples of things that are pleasing to God and Jesus.

[**Give, and Ask for, Examples**]

Reminder of what repentance is

How can we change our **heart**/intent and repent once we know how we should behave (repentance is a *change of behavior that comes about as a change of heart*)? This enables forgiveness and salvation (Luke 24:47; Acts 11:15-18)

How to repent – preparing the heart

Since we now know that action out sorrow can produce repentance, we should talk about what those actions can look like. So, let's discuss preparing the 'heart' – *intent* – for righteousness and keeping that repentant state.

Dealing with temptation so we don't sin in the first place

Winning the battle through dealing with temptation (i.e. stop thoughts before they become sin – **James 1:14-15** – and walk by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16-17)).

[**James 1:14-15**]

Forgive, and be forgiven

Forgive others and let go of bitterness (Matthew 6:14-15). In fact, we're told that God the *Father of Spirits* won't forgive us if we're unwilling to do the same for others.

Value what's important!

Value what's *truly* important (**Matthew 6:19-21**). What's *really* important? Where should our priorities be? Those who *follow* are told to seek God and His priorities first . . .

[**Matthew 6:19-21**]

[**Give, and ask for, Examples**]

Worship through obedience

Worship: Obedience to God is the greatest form of worship and requires self-control of the body (**Romans 12:1**). What is worship? It's 'assigning worth' to what we value. We can do this in many ways, but it requires outward-bound action – obedience to our God and Christ, for instance. We certainly wouldn't obey what we don't value and, therefore, worship!

[**Romans 12:1**]

Repenting = 1st step to righteousness

Righteousness defined

How do we stay righteous?

Clothe ourselves with Christ by **learning**

Act on what we learn

Use our new heart to care, preach, mentor, and grow . . .

Summary

OK – we’ve talked about stopping bad intent in its tracks and repenting of it when it happens. This is the first step toward righteousness. But, how do we stay righteous? First, we need to define ‘righteousness’ . . .

By Strong’s definition, righteousness is ‘*equity of character or action; by implication innocent and holy – just and right; right – justice and its execution*’.

Essentially, we’re righteous if we’re living right and are just in our actions. This is the opposite of sinful behavior. So – how do we stay righteous after repenting of sinful behavior?

Guarding the ‘heart’ for *continued* righteousness:

First, we ‘clothe’ ourselves with Christ by continually reading, praying, meditating, etc. (**2Timothy 3:16**; Romans 13:13-14). This allows us to understand the mind of God, discovering what pleases Him and what doesn’t – what’s sinful and what isn’t. Becoming wise about God’s ways also helps us to stay firmly grounded when people try to convince us of ungodly things.

[2Timothy 3:16]

Second, we consistently act according to what we learn as we ‘clothe ourselves with Christ’ (2Peter 2:21-22; **James 1:22-25**). This allows us to put into action what we learn. As a result, our obedience will keep us living ‘right’ while also allowing us to be perfected as we put God’s ways to work.

[James 1:22-25]

Using our New Heart: Care for others, spread the good news of salvation from God’s judgment, and mentor others as you grow in faith (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

[Matthew 28:19-20]

Summary: We must always be aware of our intentions and how what we’re going to say or do will affect God and others. Having a good understanding of God’s ways will help us to know whether something we intend to do or say can result in sinful behavior. Repent of sinful intentions and actions, and live!

But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. —Matthew 15:18-19.

But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, then He will sit on His glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before Him; and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right, 'Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 'For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.' . . . Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry, and you gave Me nothing to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave Me nothing to drink; I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.' . . . These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. —Matthew 25:31-46.

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. —Galatians 5:19-21.

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” . . . Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.” —John 14:15 & 23.

You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. —Matthew 5:27-28.

But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. —James 1:14-15.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —Matthew 6:19-21.

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. —Romans 12:1.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness —2Timothy 3:16.

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does. —James 1:22-25.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. —Matthew 28:19-20.