

Repent

“Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”

Matthew 4:17

Repent—This Greek word (*metanoia*) comes from the Greek word for mind (*nous*). It literally means “to change your mind.” It was rarely used outside the New Testament. The English word is a bit confusing since it might lead us to think that we have to re-pay or do penance. This is not the meaning as Jesus uses the word. For Jesus, *metanoia* was more than a change in opinion. It was a complete change in direction for the whole person. Jesus meant a 180 degree turn around in our obedience and behavior. We must reverse course, stop following the pattern of the world and start following the call of God. It must include moral as well as intellectual aspects of our lives.

Jesus had a lot to say about this idea of turning around. This is what he meant when he said, “seek God’s righteousness first.” His statements about surrender to God, the gift of forgiveness, the only way, the truth and being born again all reflect *metanoia*.

Janet Hagberg’s book *The Critical Journey* talks about stages in personal spiritual growth. One stage is called The Wall. It is the stage of fighting God about turning complete control over to Him. It is characterized by stress, resistance, shame, guilt and discomfort. It is the time in our lives when we know that God wants more and we are just not able to give more to Him. It is the time of struggle. For me, it lasted thirty years. Thirty years of fighting with God about being in charge of my plans. What an unhappy existence it was!

I believe that God engineers crisis in life to bring us to The Wall. We don’t like this stage, so we do everything possible to minimize its impact on our lives. But God knows that we must face the issue of full commitment if we are going to follow Him. So, He navigates us into crisis, over and over until we finally face His reality. We have to turn around by choice. It won’t do any good to go off on a tangent. Only a U turn will do.

God literally tore my life apart in order to get me to open my eyes and see that I was standing at The Wall. U turn time. What a relief to turn around. I have never been more at peace, never been happier, never been closer to Him. Thank God He never gave up on me. At last I can say, “Father, I love you with all my heart.” This is the life I always wanted. Why did I fight so long?