

**The Importance of Repentance**

***“When he finally came to his senses, he said to himself, ‘At home even the hired servants have food enough to spare, and here I am dying of hunger! I will go home to my father and say, “Father, I have sinned against both heaven and you, and I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Please take me on as a hired servant.”’ ~Luke 15:17-19***

It’s important to note that after this young man came to his senses, he acknowledges the fact that he had sinned against both his heavenly and his earthly father. How many times have we done something wrong and simply gone about our business without acknowledging that fact? Maybe you’ve snapped at your child, or given the sales clerk a hard time because the store didn’t have your favorite brand of peanut butter, or simply wasted the precious time that God had given you. Or maybe it was something bigger. Whatever it was, did you concede that yes, this thing was wrong, and did you then ask forgiveness? Not only is repentance important for those around us so that they can see that you are taking responsibility for your actions, but it is also important for us as individuals to realize that we have done wrong. It’s not O.K. to be inconsiderate. It’s not O.K. to break promises. It’s not O.K. to treat others with disrespect just because they are family and should understand.

When we read the story of the prodigal son, it’s easy to shake our heads with an indulgent look and chalk it up to growing pains. The old adage, ‘boys will be boys,’ springs to mind. Revelation 2:5 calls upon us to “Look how far you have fallen! Turn back to me and do the works you did at first. If you don’t repent, I will come and remove your lampstand from its place among the churches.” The kind of behavior demonstrated by the prodigal son isn’t something to be expected and excused, it’s something to be admitted to and turned from.

Until we accept the fact that what we did was wrong, we can’t make things right. We become stiff-necked and proud. We stumble along from one failed attempt at living to the next never changing our attitude or ways.

Scripture tells us that we will not prosper if we try to conceal our sins (Proverbs 28:13). This same verse goes on to tell us that if we confess and turn from them (a.k.a. repent) we will receive mercy.

So, what will you do? Will you try to gloss over your wrongdoings as ‘not that bad’ and ignore them, or will you take responsibility for your actions and repent? It’s up to you.