

RIGHT START IN THE RACE



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Repenting before God, forsaking past sins, and surrendering our *self*-will to be His *divine*-will, is making a *right start* in the Christian race. This uncompromising decision to forfeit *our* will, so we can do *God's* will, is first on the agenda. It is critically important to begin correctly, and to make attitude changes along the way, because there is no entering God's kingdom if our heart is not cleansed of the rebellious sin-nature.

We all start life's race with an attitude that does not want to believe, and will not trust God in faith for anything. The mindset of the world is opposite to the mindset of the Lord. Starting this race right, and learning how to meet circumstances of life according to the Word, deals a fatal blow to Satan's control.

Spiritual progress can be halted because of stubbornness or rebellion on *our* part—but we just have to make another start. Hebrews 3:7-9 "As the Holy Spirit says [warns]: 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did.'"

We are not to *test* God but to *believe* God. Hebrews 3:10-12 "That is why I was angry with that generation, and I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my anger, 'They shall never enter my rest.' See to it, brothers, [beware] that none of you has a sinful [evil],

unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.'" Seeing spiritual *growth*, by learning spiritual *lessons* of trust on God, is a *must*—as we continue on the path and head toward the goal of the kingdom.

Most professing Christians have *not* made a right start in the Christian race, so they are *not learning* how to *trust God in faith* for life issues. God's *Truth of trust* on Him, and doing His will in believing faith, is just not part of their thought-process. The opportunity is always *available*, however, for anyone to start again—*this* time making a *right start* with a *real commitment* to *trust* God.

If we stay committed to doing God's will, He will convict us of anything outside His will, which enables us to learn what we need to know. Conviction of something is being shown that some decision we made, some thing we *did*, or some *plan* we followed was not according to God's will. If a device or an appliance is assembled, and it does not turn out right, a change of how we proceeded the first time is in order—if the *second results* are to be different than the *first results*.

Conviction of our heart brings a *change* of our attitude—that correction is vital, because Matthew 18:3 "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." If we are following any plan that is not in the will of God, and He convicts us of heading in the wrong direction, we are to *change* that plan without delay.

Many things may have to be dealt with, and many decisions may have to be made along the path, but they are all part of God's teaching, and all part of our spiritual progress. Hebrews 12:11 "No discipline [chastening] seems pleasant at the time, but painful [grievous]. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it."

Everyone starts the race with a self-willed nature that *has* to be converted. From the start, Satan has control of our attitude, and he wants us to live without trusting God. The devil constantly suggests that God's plan for the Christian life is unworkable, impractical, and just not realistic today. We start life with *that big disadvantage*—convinced that our way is *right*, and God's way is *wrong*. If we will *re-start* by *repenting* of this wrong attitude, and surrender *our* self-will to be *God's* will—our attitude *will* change and we *will* learn how to trust Him in faith.

God's ways are always right, but only a few ever learn that valuable truth. The world's population is almost 6.8 billion people, but only a small fraction realize that a sinful nature is in control of them. 1 Corinthians 2:14 "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Job was self-righteous, but he did not realize that. He was living a right life *outwardly*, but doing so from the self-willed nature *inwardly*. God used drastic measures to convince Job that this self-righteous attitude was *not* right. After many troubles and serious oppressions, Job was finally convinced that *he* was wrong, and *God* was right. Job was *then* willing to take his low position, and give God His exalted position.

This change of attitude brought great change in his life. God was able to give back to him everything Satan took *from* him. Job now knew that God *means* what He says, and that he *had* to follow God's plan by faith on Him alone.

The more willing we are to listen to God, the sooner we will learn how this plan of trust by faith works. If we are open to conviction and willing to change, we will grow in faith and learn lessons of trust. Satan wants us to be *de-*

fiant, but God wants us to be *compliant*. Trials and tests reveal wrong plans and ways, so we ask God to inspire us in faith to be able to make adjustments.

God wants everyone to know that the plans and ways of the world are all wrong, and that those rebellious attitudes will take us to the lake of fire if not corrected. God is *"patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance"* 2 Peter 3:9.

The Tribulation will show the world that living by the control of self and Satan is what *caused* the devastation. The Millennial reign of Christ will prove how powerful God is, and how perfectly His plan works out. A perfect world is what God wanted from the beginning.

If everyone *would repent*, the world *would change* in a moment. Repentance is turning and going in the other direction. When we are willing to forsake our plan of self, and follow God's plan of trust, we are back in the race. Repenting is getting rid of the attitudes of no trust on God for *anything*, and accepting the divine plan of obedient trust on God for *everything*.

Satan will oppose our decision to leave his way, and he will do everything possible to convince us that we made a mistake to get us back. He suggests that we will never have the house, the car, the clothes, the friend, or the fun the world has. All that a person would want, Satan will say, you will not have—unless you follow his plan.

As in *Noah's* day, most are still doing *this* day— Luke 17:27 *"eating and drinking, taking wives and giving wives,"*—just trying to find happiness without God, but just as it happened in *that* time, it will happen *this* time—if there is no repentance, no forsaking of sin, and no submitting to the will of God. The world was following the devil *"up to the very day on which*

Noah entered the Ark, and the Deluge came and destroyed them all."

The world has failed to find happiness, peace, or security—but the *worst* is yet to come. The horrible suffering in hell is the dreadful fate of anyone who will not start right, not grow in faith, and not allow God to deliver them from the sin nature that will not trust in faith for anything. Jesus said His Father *"cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit"* John 15:2.

The foundation *cause* of all sin, is the *control* of the sin nature—an attitude that does not want anything to do with God. When we realize that *root cause* of sin, we will be able to take *corrective measures*. We *must* make a *right* start—by faith in God. From *that* point, it will be easy and natural to meet people right, and to respond as the Word says. Spiritual learning will take place—*"every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."*

We are most fortunate to *have* this information because everyone *must* know the importance of making a right start by confessing and forsaking sins—*then* surrendering our will to God. 1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Making a right start with our sins erased is a great privilege. 1 John 2:1-2 *"If any one sins, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is an atoning sacrifice for our sins."*

No matter how bad our first start was, or how serious our past sins were, God forgives 100% of them. Mark 3:28 *"I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them."* When we confess and forsake our sins, God forgives and cleanses our heart—*that* is making a right start. This *confessing* and *forsaking* sins cannot be omitted.

No matter what situation we are dealing with, or what trial we are facing, if we are willing to repent, God is ready to forgive, and to work with us to remove rebellious attitudes from our heart—so that we *can* trust Him in faith. Wrong *attitudes* lead in the wrong *direction*—and to the wrong *destination*. Matthew 18:3 *"Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."*

Surrendering our will to be God's will is first on the list in making a right start. We *must* begin correctly, and we *must* head in a right direction—by faith and trust on God. He is teaching us along the way, and He wants us to do His will in everything—*that* is how we learn. John 17:3 *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."*

The one requirement is John 6:29 *"that ye believe on him whom he hath sent."* Making a right start and keeping a trusting faith on God—yields eternal rewards.



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