



Scripture nugget – Self-knowledge is the key to repentance

Why do you notice the splinter in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove that splinter from your eye,' while the wooden beam is in your eye? (Matthew 7:3-4).

Self-knowledge is the key to repentance. *From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17).* The main message of the preaching of Christ during His time on earth was true repentance. True repentance is an act of the will in cooperation with the grace from the Holy Spirit. Many souls do not see the vital need for repentance because they do not believe in the existence or gravity of sins or they do not have an interior knowledge of their own sins. A properly formed and informed conscience is a great help for true repentance. A good conscience is one that understands the truth of the difference between good and evil as seen not from the human perspective but in the eyes of God Who will be our final judge when we pass from this earth. A wrong doing which is considered by God to be a sin will remain a sin in His eyes even if condoned by society and legalized. Such examples are abortion, euthanasia, same sex unions, etc. Thus, to have a good conscience, we need to know the doctrine of our Christian faith especially God's commandments and His precepts. *My people are ruined for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6).* Besides ignorance, a conscience can also be dulled and inactivated if that soul is inured to sin. If a soul is habitualized to sin and loses all horror and detestation of sin, his conscience will not do a proper job of alerting him to sin and reminding him of his guilt. Thus, for a conscience to be active and working well, it has to be properly formed and informed, and enhanced by the soul's hatred of sin due to love of God.

Humility is needed for repentance. Pride blinds us to our sins and we tend to see the faults of others clearly but are blind to our own failings and vices. *Sin directs the heart of the wicked man; his eyes are closed to the fear of God (Psalm 36:2).* When we have no holy reverence for God, we are not afraid to offend Him. Thus, our sins may not bother us much if we fail to understand their nature, their cost and their effects which extend into eternity. A powerful antidote to the natural inclination to sin is an ardent, genuine love for the Lord. If we truly love the Lord, we would love what He loves including His commandments, and detest what He hates including sin. The only thing that separates us from God is our unrepented sins. As the Lord has taken on our sins on His own Body on the Cross, all sins will cause pain and suffering to the Lord. Jesus tells us that everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin (cf. John 8:34). Every sin we committed and not repented of gives Satan a bigger influence over our life and weakens us spiritually.

Conversation with Jesus: Sweetest Lord, thank You for Your Precious Blood shed on Calvary in atonement for my sins. Mightily increase my love for You and all that You stand for. Help me detest sins which cause You pain and suffering. Give me the grace of humility and a good conscience which truly knows the difference between good and evil. Through the Holy Spirit Who dwells in me, reveal to me my unrepented sins so that I can sincerely seek forgiveness from You in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Your mercy is reserved for those who sincerely seek forgiveness. Mary, Mother of Salvation, pray for me. Thank You, Jesus. Praise You, Jesus.