

Godly Sorrow

2 Corinthians 7:8–10; Alma 42:29-30

Hearing that one of his epistles had “made [the Corinthians] sorry,” Paul rejoiced because it was the kind of sorrow that leads to repentance. (2 Cor. 7:8–10)

Alma taught the same thing to his son when he said: “let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.” (Alma 42:29-30)

Spencer W. Kimball explained:

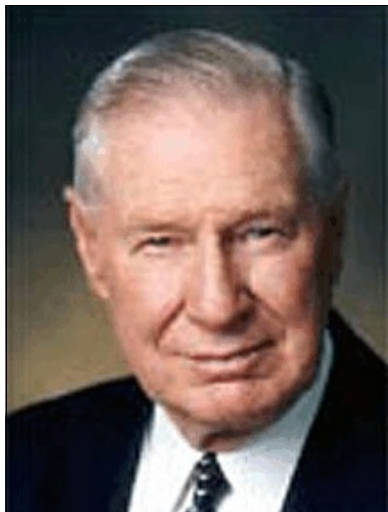
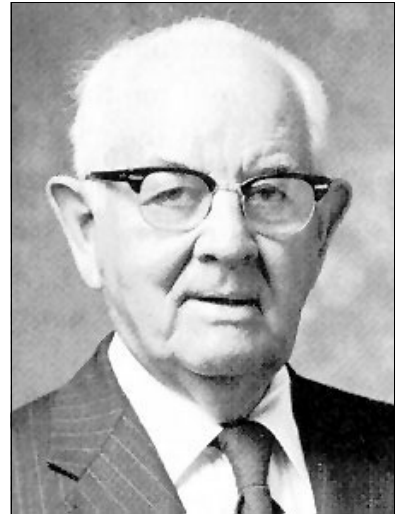
“If one is sorry only because someone found out about his sin, his repentance is not complete. Godly sorrow causes one to want to repent, even though he has not been caught by others, and makes him determined to do right no matter what happens. This kind of sorrow brings righteousness and will work toward forgiveness.”

—*Repentance Brings Forgiveness, Latter-day Tracts [Pamphlets], 1984, 8*

“Often people indicate that they have repented when all they have done is to express regret for a wrong act. But true repentance is marked by that godly sorrow that changes, transforms, and saves. To be sorry is not enough. Perhaps the felon in the penitentiary, coming to realize the high price he must pay for his folly, may wish he had not committed the crime. That is not repentance. The vicious man who is serving a stiff sentence for rape may be very sorry he did the deed, but he is not repentant if his heavy sentence is the only reason for his sorrow. That is the sorrow of the world.

“The truly repentant man is sorry before he is apprehended. He is sorry even if his secret is never known. . . . Repentance of the godly type means that one comes to recognize the sin and voluntarily and without pressure from outside sources begins his transformation.”

—*The Miracle of Forgiveness, 153*



James E. Faust said:

“The price of discipleship is to forsake evil transgression and enjoy what President Kimball has called “the miracle of forgiveness.” It is never too late. But there can be no remission of sin without a godly sorrow being abundantly manifested in the mind, in the heart, and in the actions of the offender. A major step toward purging oneself of wrongdoing is for the transgressor to confess the transgression to the common judge in Israel, who is the inspired bishop or branch president of the offender. While forgiveness comes only from the Lord, confession is necessary, among other reasons, to eliminate the deceit inherent in wrongdoing.”

—*To Reach Even unto You, 115*