

## ■ *DO THE FIRST WORKS*

The fruit of repentance is obedience. What has God shown you to do? What habits are to be renewed? What wrong relationships are to be restored? What private or public confession is to be made? What actions are to be taken? Write down what you are going to do and begin to obey this moment. For accountability, tell a friend what you intend to do.

To continue to love as you should...

***Depend on God.*** The life of faith is the only life that God honors. Without it you cannot please God. Love for God is a fruit of God's Spirit; therefore, in your zeal to love Him through obedience, you must also trust Him for the will and actual ability. It is God who works in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure, yet you are never allowed to blame God for your lack of desire or disobedience. (Phil. 2:12-13; 3:15-16; Heb. 11:6)

***Renew your mind.*** By meditating on Scripture you are transformed into the person God intends you to be. Meditation is a blend of your words to God and His Word to you; it is loving conversation between you and God through the pages of His Word. It is absorption of His words into your mind by prayerful contemplation and concentration. Jesus said, "Sanctify them by Your truth, Your Word is truth." As a man thinks, so is he. (Rom. 12:1-2; Jn. 17:17; Prov. 23:7)

***Keep short accounts.*** Do not let sin reign in your body. You do not have to continue this sin, though all Christians fall out of inbred weakness. When you sin, repent immediately of your disobedience and continue in your affection for God. Don't let sin have one hour of your time. Destroy it by the weapons of repentance and faith. God also intends that all walls of separation between you and others be taken down in so far as you are responsible. To put a wall between you and others is to build a wall between you and God. (Rom. 6:12; Rev. 3:19; Mt. 5:23-24; Mt. 18:15)

***Rejoice in God.*** "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you is not tedious, but for you it is safe." (Phil. 3:2) You can be happy that the love of God has brought you to repentance. In your sorrow there is joy. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Mt. 5:4)

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## *RETURNING TO YOUR FIRST LOVE*

*Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place – unless*

Are you and those who are with you dangerously close to experiencing this judgment? Is the Light of God's presence dim, almost imperceptible? Do you have form without power and activity without fruit? If so, Christ says you must...

### ■ *REMEMBER*

Using a few key words and phrases, indicate what it was like in the time of your purest and most sincere affection for Christ. Think about habits, feelings, attitudes, liberties, and effectiveness.

### ■ *REPENT*

Write out the sins of your life. Carefully consider the listing of sins given on the next page and ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to all areas of disobedience. Pray for the grace to sincerely and deeply change both heart and actions. Do not stop short in your evaluation. And do not be deceived. Anyone can name his sins, but those God uses most determine to stop their sinful activity, right every wrong, and walk in obedience. This God-given determination and true hatred of each sin is biblical repentance.

**Read over this list carefully. Mark items which need further reflection as you are writing out your sins. (If in a group, a leader may read this section out loud slowly while the group contemplates and marks the list.)**

**Are there** sins of pride, preoccupation with appearance or status, always having your own way, drawing attention to yourself in conversation, self-pity, forgetfulness and inconsideration of others due to self-absorption. Do you act as if you know everything? Is there rebellion, willfulness, stubbornness, haughtiness, harshness, pouting, an over-sensitivity, or a despising of the authorities God has placed in your life? Has bitterness, anger, rudeness, or sharpness of speech toward others entered in? Is there lack of love? Have you left relationships unended? Have you been unforgiving?

Are there sins of speech, such as coarse jesting, filthy language, crudeness, slang unbecoming of a child of God, undue pessimism in the light of God's goodness, judging of others? Are you materialistic, always concerned with your money and possessions, lusting for more and more, insistent upon having the latest and the best, discontent with what God has given, ungrateful? Are you dishonest, telling half-truths in order to appear better than you are? Have you stolen goods, time, or information? Have you stolen from God?

Are you immoral in mind or body; do you let impure and worthless things come before your eyes; are you flirtatious; do you dress, speak, or behave sensuously? Do you have a secret love for the impure? Are you jealous or envious of others? Do you worship and serve God halfheartedly? Are you prayerless? Do you neglect His Word? Are you failing to trust God, making Him out to be an unconcerned and unloving Father? Do you worry? Are you involved in any way in the occult, consulting mediums, astrology or witchcraft?

Are there sins of over-indulgence, pleasing the body first and foremost? Are you unconcerned over the plight of others who are impoverished or cannot defend themselves? Are you unloving and uncaring toward others of a different social class or economic level? Are you inconsiderate of the real needs of your family or the needs of other believers?

Are there sins the Holy Spirit brings to your mind? Write carefully and thoroughly what God shows you. Your sins may have been committed years ago but remain unresolved, or they may be current in your experience. Do not fail to deal with every sin unrepented of.

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*Are you repenting of these sins?*