

# **DEALING WITH REGRETS**

## **KEY TEXT**

**2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)- Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

**(1) A *WRONG TATTOO-‘NO RAGRETS’*  
INSTEAD OF ‘NO REGRETS’**

**(2) IS ‘NO REGRET’ A GOOD CREDO FOR  
OUR LIFE?**

**(3) TITLE  
‘DEALING WITH REGRETS’.**

## **Outline:**

- **Definition of “Regret”**

- Two Kinds of “Regret”
- Dealing with Regrets
- The Root Cause and Cure

## MAIN POINTS

### (I) DEFINITION OF ‘REGRET’

According to the dictionary, to regret is “to feel **SORROW** or **REMORSE** for an act, fault or disappointment.”

To have **REGRETS** means to have “a sense of loss, disappointment, dissatisfaction; a **FEELING OF SORROW OR REMORSE** for a fault, act, loss or disappointment.”

### (II) TWO KINDS OF REGRET

**THE FEELING OF SORROW OR REMORSE** is a major emotion in our regrets.

Our key text shows us there are two kinds of sorrow = two kinds of regret

When we have made a wrong decision or choice that spirals our life out of the will of God or when our wrong decision has hurt other people, what kind of sorrow will follow us?

- **GODLY SORROW**

**2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV) – Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.....**

There is a kind of sorrow that is according to the will of God.

There is a sorrow that God wants us to experience because the sorrow that is according to the will of God “**produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret**”(ESV).

An essential component of true repentance is genuine sorrow over **HAVING GRIEVED GOD AND BELITTLED HIS HOLINESS.**

Definition of repentance = **A CHANGE OF MIND.**

The Greek word for repentance:

***meta*** – change

***noeo*** – to think

Some take that to mean that repentance is nothing more than an intellectual alteration, an acknowledgement that you have sinned, a

commitment to think differently about it from now on.

But the **MIND** that is changed in repentance refers to the **INNER CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE WHOLE PERSON.**

In the Bible, the **MIND** and the **HEART** are often used interchangeably.

So, repentance begins with an **INTELLECTUAL RECOGNITION AND CONFESSION OF SIN** but it does not end there.

There is also a **‘CHANGE OF HEART’** – an emotional component in which the genuine believer **MOURNS OVER HAVING SINNED AGAINST THE GOD WHOM HE LOVES.**

**Psalm 51:17-“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”**

The person who is truly repentant is **NOT** unmoved by his sin, as if it was just no big deal.

No! If you are truly repentant, you **APPREHEND YOUR OFFENSE OF YOUR SIN TO GOD** – a God so good as to send His only begotten Son to die in your place; a God so patient with you despite the fact, that even after He has saved you, you sin against Him still.

When you understand that you have sinned against that glorious God, the only proper response is **SORROW** – to have a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

**It is that broken spirit and contrite heart that motivates you to change course and return to God in faithfulness.**

***“This is carefully to be observed, for unless the sinner be dissatisfied with himself, detest his manner of life, and be thoroughly grieved from an apprehension of sin, he will never betake himself to the Lord”.***

***“Till sin be bitter, Christ will not be sweet.”***

**Application:** Till you taste the bitter sorrow of your wrong and foolish choice, Christ will not be sweet.

**Because as long as you think you are right in your choice, you do not need the cross.**

**But the minute you see how much your wrong choice has offended God, the bitter taste of your sinful choice through regret and sorrow will push you to the cross to cry for God's mercy and forgiveness.**

**Genuine repentance is a matter of the HEART.**

**This is why Jesus pronounces a blessing upon those who MOURN OVER THEIR SIN: “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4).**

**Because it is only those who feel the shame of their sin, the shame of their wrong choice and decision – who feel the offense it is to the holiness of God and mourn (regret) over it – they will be the ones who will be comforted by the God, who does not despise a broken spirit and a contrite heart.**



- **WORLDLY SORROW**

**2 Corinthians 7:10b -but worldly sorrow brings death.**

While those who are genuinely repentant will experience sorrow over their sin, **SORROW ITSELF** is not repentance.

There is a kind of sorrow over sin that does not produce repentance and therefore does not lead to salvation.

Paul identifies this kind of sorrow as **“the worldly sorrow that brings death”**.

The chief characteristic of worldly sorrow is that it is fundamentally **SELF-CENTERED**.

**Worldly sorrow revolves around the pain sin causes to oneself rather than the offense and dishonor it is to God.**

***“It is not sorrow because of the heinousness of sin as rebellion against God, but sorrow because of the **PAINFUL AND UNWELCOME CONSEQUENCES OF SIN. SELF IS ITS CENTRAL POINT**”.***

**THIS IS THE SORROW OF SELF-PITY, THE SORROW OF GETTING CAUGHT, THE SORROW OVER THE CONSEQUENCES SIN BRINGS.**

**People who have worldly sorrow are often **defensive** about their sin and attempt to justify it or explain it away; whereas godly sorrow causes you to own your sin and make no excuses.**

**You know you are experiencing worldly sorrow when you are grieving for **YOURSELF** - for the **EMBARASSMENT YOU ARE SUFFERING AND THE PAIN YOU ARE FELLING** – rather than **MOURNING OVER THE GRIEF YOU HAVE BROUGHT TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR DISHONORING THE GRACE OF CHRIST AND BELITTLING THE GLORY OF GOD.****

**E.g. Judas Iscariot.**

**Worldly sorrow produces death.**

**WORLDLY SORROW CAUSES YOU TO FOCUS ON HOW TERRIBLE OF A SINNER YOU ARE RATHER THAN HOW GRACIOUS OF A SAVIOR JESUS IS.**

**The instinct of worldly sorrow is to try **to atone for sin by brooding over it** – by feeling**

so bad for yourself that you are reduced to despair.

But the instinct of godly sorrow is to run to the cross of Christ where the only **atonement** was made.

**Application:** Look at all your regrets now. Are you still mourning over your poor choices and wrong decisions made in the past with godly sorrow or with worldly sorrow?

### **(III) DEALING WITH REGRETS**

Many of us are having GUILT, SHAME AND REMORSE (SORROW AND GRIEF) from previous decisions, words and actions.

How do we deal with such regrets?

#### **1. ENJOY THE FREEDOM OF CONFESSION**

**CONFESSION** is the freedom to say about yourself what both you and God know is true, without fear of rejection, condemnation or punishment.

Confession is more than an obligation; it is one of the beautiful freedoms of our new life in Christ.

Because He lived perfectly, died sufficiently and rose victoriously, we are free to own up to, without fear, the darkest of our thoughts and motives, the ugliest of our words, our most selfish choices, and our most rebellious and unloving actions.

## **2. EMBRACE THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS**

**FORGIVENESS** means that God chooses not to remember the darkest, most shameful and most regrettable parts of you and me.

**E.g. David**

**Psalm 51:3-4-“For I know my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight (Psalm 51:3-4).**

**Psalm 103:10-12-“He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:10-12).**

**God, whose memory is exhaustive and complete, chooses to remove our sins from His memory.**

**“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34).**

**This does not mean that God is weak and forgetful but that He chooses not to think of us in light of all the wrongs of heart and behavior that we have committed.**

**If God turns from these things, we are free to turn from them and move on as well. We do not have to live in the **PARALYSIS OF REMORSE (WORLDLY SORROW)**.**

**We do not have to live looking **BACKWARD**.**

**You can look your regret in the face, call it what it is (sin), identify yourself as who you**

are (a sinner), yet not be overwhelmed or paralyzed.

Through the freedom of confession and the gift of forgiveness, God releases us from our bondage to regret.

### **3. REST IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S TIMING**

**E.g. # 1 – Erik**

**E.g. # 2 – Aaron and Robin**

**E.g. # 3- Olivia**

**E.g. # 4 – Jeremiah**

Each of these people struggled with **REGRET**.



**But perhaps more significantly, they wrestled with something else: **RESTING IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD'S TIMING.****

**The Bible teaches that there is no situation, relationship or circumstance that our Heavenly Father does not control.**

**He has carefully administrated every detail in the story of our lives.**

**Acts 17:26-27- And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us.**

**Ephesians 1:11- In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.**

**It is not by accident that you are born in a certain country at a certain time and place.**

**Your nationality, birth and country and race are all determined by the sovereign will of God.**

**Therefore, it is foolish of us to bemoan our birth or nationality.**

**In these two bible verses, we see God's absolute control exercised in such a way that it never turns us into a robot.**

He accomplishes His sovereignty through the **CHOICES THAT YOU AND I MAKE.**

His sovereignty does not **INVALIDATE OUR CHOICES AND OUR CHOICES DO NOT REMOVE HIS SOVEREIGNTY.**

In the operation of the universe, the issue of the **SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD** and **OUR RESPONSIBILITY** is never an **EITHER-OR**; it is always a **BOTH-AND.**

**Proverbs 16:33- The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.**

Lot casting is actually the flipping of a coin.

What Solomon is trying to tell us is – every detail or every coin tossing comes down to exactly what God plans.

**The Bible here is not saying that everything is already fixed, so who cares how we live?**

**What the Bible is saying here is – WE ARE ABSOLUTELY FREE BUT ALSO ABSOLUTELY DETERMINED.**

**Proverbs 16:1 – The plans of the mind belong to man but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD.**

**Proverbs 16:3 -Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will succeed.**

**Proverbs 16:9- We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.**

**Verse 1** tells us that to man belongs the plans of his mind but **verse 9** tells us that the Lord determines his plans or his steps.

This means your plans are yours and you are responsible for them.

But what actually happens as a result of our decisions, are in the control of God.

So, under the sovereignty of God.....

- We are 100% free to make the choice or decision or plan
- Our choices and plans are also 100% determined by God.

It is not a 40%-60% proportion or 50%-50% proportion.

**It is a 100%-100% proportion.**

**Look at the FATALISTIC APPROACH in the Greek mythology called OEDIPUS – ALL ARE FIXED AND SO BE INDIFFERENT.**

**This approach puts the decision as 100% on God and 0% on our part. Whatever you decide, is useless- God as the king has already sealed your fate.**

**Another approach is – YOUR FUTURE IS WHATEVER YOU MAKE OF IT NOW.**

**This means your future is not sad.**

**It is what YOU make it to be.**

**Following this line of thought .....what if at the age of 20, you make decisions and 2/3 of**

**them are wrong? Then what is left of your remaining life?**

**What fool knowing how little we know, want to live in a future that is totally fixed by our choice?**

**This approach puts the decision as 0% on God and 100% on our own choice.**

**The Bible never teaches that our choices have no connection to our destiny because in truth, our choices do determine our destiny.**

**But what the Bible is saying is GOD IN HIS SOVEREIGNTY RELATE OUR CHOICE, DECISION AND PLANS PARTIALLY TO OUR DESTINY BUT HE IS THE ONE TO FIX EVERYTHING.**

**Therefore, if everything is still under the control of God, we can rest.**

**EVEN IF OUR DECISION IS WRONG, GOD IS STILL ABLE TO OVERRULE THEM AND WEAVE THE WORST DECISION INTO OUR ULTIMATE GOOD.**

**So, we see 100% human responsibility at work with 100% God's sovereignty.**

**So today, if you are that one person with regrets- your past decision has caused your life today to be far from the ideal, what should you do?**

**Proverbs 16:3- Commit your actions to the Lord, and your plans will be established.**



**This verse does not mean that if you commit your plans to God, then your actions or deeds will succeed.**

**The word “commit” means to “ROLL OVER; TO PUT ALL YOUR WEIGHT ON.”**

**This implies AN UNCONDITIONAL TRUST IN GOD FOR ALL THE THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO YOUR LIFE (THAT INCLUDES ALL YOUR REGRETS AND CONSEQUENCES).**

**It means WE HAVE TO PAY THE PRICE FOR THE GUIDANCE OF GOD.**

**And paying the price here does NOT mean EARNED GUIDANCE.**

**Rather it is paying the price to RECEIVE GUIDANCE.**

**Elisabeth Elliot says, “*The more we pay for advice, the more we will listen well.*”**

**E.g. Free advice vs paid advice**

**So, after all our regrets and if we want to move on now with God in the center, then we need to commit every of our decision or plans to Him and we do it by being willing to pay the price to receive this new guidance from God.**

**God’s advice is costly.**

**The cost on our part is **ABANDONMENT**.**

**It is as we go on like that -not bailing on God but to obey God unconditionally, that we will start to make wise decision that will leave us**

**no regrets for our future. This is our human responsibility.**

**Nobody ever learns about their flaws, their wrong decision; their sinful choice by being told but by being **SHOWN**.**

**Until we see our flaw in our decision, they are going to control us.**

**Nobody ever learns that God loves them by being told.**

**In order to really know, we have to be shown.**

****E.g.** We have to be abandoned in order to be shown the love of God.**

**We have to be humiliated in order to be shown the exaltation of God.**

**We have to fall first before we know what it is to be picked up.**

**We have to make many regretful decisions before we know what is the right one and how good it is to be choosing wisely by the help of God.**

**By paying this price, we will slowly become wiser in making future decisions that leave no regrets.**

**To rest in the sovereignty of God is to trust God unconditionally and He will guide and overrule.**

**But who does that?**

Who will roll everything to God, as the word **“commit”** means?

We all fail in paying this price. That is why there are so many regrets in our life today.

Who is going to guide us anew after all the regretful decisions we have made in the past?

In **Mark 4:36-41**, Jesus was asleep in the boat when the storm hit them.

The disciples panicked because there was **NO NAVIGATION** in the storm.

The disciples woke him up with this reproaching statement, **“Master, carest thou not that we perish?”**

Jesus answered them sharply, “Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?”

Why was Jesus so sharp and short with them?

Indirectly and prophetically, Jesus was asking his disciples, “Don’t you care I am dying soon? There is going to be a cosmic storm of justice and divine wrath and I am going to go through that storm without any navigation. My Father will abandon me and I will be the only person in the history who commits absolutely and rolls everything over onto the Father. He is going to abandon me. Still, I am going to bow my head and take the storm for you. DON’T YOU SEE THAT I AM GOING TO THE ULTIMATE STORM WITHOUT ANY NAVIGATION SO THAT YOU CAN BE SURE THAT INSPITE OF THE FACT YOU DON’T DESERVE IT, YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE ME AT THE HELM? I AM GOING

**THROUGH THE ULTIMATE STORM AND I WILL NOT ABANDON YOU.”**

**To the degree you know that, to that degree will you then be able to commit everything – all your regrets to Him and become a person who makes wiser decision in the future that will leave no regrets.**

**And you will be able to do so because now you have allowed the Sovereign Jesus to be at the helm of your life, which is your boat.**

**Application:** Have you been at the helm of the boat of your life all this while?

**You are limited and foolish and you have driven your boat up into the storm, leaving so many wreckages now in your life that you are regretting.**

**Roll over all those wreckages, ruins and shame to Christ and let him take over the helm of your boat.**

**He has paid the price for you so that today you can be the wiser person in Christ to navigate your life with Him as your wisdom, Guide and Trust.**

**He is the Sovereign One able to turn things around, turn the tide around, redeem all our mistakes and sin and weave it into ultimate good for Him and for us.**

**So, we are called to believe, trust, choose, follow, worship, love and obey, while at the same time entrusting ourselves and our life to God's sovereign care.**



**We can live responsibly and confidently, knowing that we are accountable for the choices we make while at the same time knowing that God controls the details of our life for our good and His glory.**

**This balance is critical as we look back on our life with regret.**

**Resting in the sovereignty of God's timing goes hand in hand with enjoying the freedom of confession and embracing the gift of forgiveness.**

**Application:** Today, you can confess YOUR RESPONSIBILITY for what you did, knowing that it has been fully paid for by the blood of Christ, all the while RESTING IN GOD'S SOVEREIGN TIMING.

**God is the definition of true wisdom.**

**He is the author of order.**

**His timing is always right.**

**He never does something too early or too late.**

**He always decides what is best and when is best.**

**He always knows when to act, when to speak, when to wait and when to withdraw.**

**And in mercy, He always responds to our cries for help at the right moment.**

**Look back at your regrets with honesty and humility but do not forget that it has all**

**happened under His control. He is always wise, loving, good, righteous and on time.**

**So far, we have seen that in dealing with regrets, we have to:**

- **Enjoy the freedom of confession**
- **Embrace the gift of forgiveness**
- **Rest in the sovereignty of God's timing**

**These are all actions that you can take today, tomorrow and for every day that you experience regret.**

**But what about a **STRATEGY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH** so that you have fewer regrets and don't make the same mistakes repeatedly?**

#### **4. PLANT NEW AND BETTER SEEDS NOW**

**1 John 1:8-9 – If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**Notice that when you come to God with humble and honest **CONFESSION**, He not only promises to **FORGIVE** you but also to **CHANGE** you as well.**

**That is what it means when it says, “**cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**”**

**When you confess, knowing that there is genuine and complete forgiveness for you, you change.**

**Then, the people and situations around you are affected because you now say and do different things.**

**By God's grace, you can participate in a real turn in your story.**

**You can plant a new and better harvest.**

**God invites you to turn from mourning over your previous harvest – REGRET – and NOW PLANT NEW AND BETTER SEEDS.**

**“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap” (Galatians 6:7).**

**E.g. # 1 -parenting**

**E.g. # 2 - career**

**E.g. # 3- study of the Scripture**

**E.g. # 4- selfish living**

**Until we die, NO HARVEST IS THE FINAL HARVEST.**

**Our God is the author of new season.**

**He is the giver of new seeds, new roots and new fruit.**

**He causes fruits and flowers to grow where weeds and thorns once were.**

**There is much of life before you.**

With this promise from **1 John 1:9** in your heart, you are free to embrace the hope for change and plant new and better seeds.

As His child, you have reason to step forward in faith, hope and courage, embracing the new life that is always available to you because of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### **IV. THE ROOT CAUSE AND CURE**

**Psalms 32:5- I acknowledged my SIN to you and did not cover up my INIQUITY. I said, “I will confess my TRANSGRESSIONS to the LORD.”**

#### **THE ROOT CAUSE**

- **SIN**

Sin is defined as to **“miss the mark of God.”**

It refers to doing something against God – in our case, deciding or choosing something against God or against a person.

Sin means doing the opposite of what is right, doing something that will have negative result and failing to do something you know is right.

JJ Parker defines sin as **“a universally deformity of human nature that is found at every point in every person. Sin is a spirit of fighting God in order to play God.”**

The very first sin, in the world was a result of wanting **“to be like God.”**

Sin can be further defined as **“any thought or word or action that conveys or displays something or someone to be more valuable”**



than Jesus, because all sin is generated from three desires- the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life.

Sin is the most general term used for anything that **“falls short of the glory of God.”**

- **TRESPASS**

The sin nature leads to trespassing.

A trespasser is **SOMEONE WHO CROSSES A LINE OR CLIMBS A FENCE THAT HE SHOULD NOT CROSS OR CLIMB.**

A trespass may be **intentional or unintentional.**

Trespass can also mean **“to fall away after being close beside.”**

We all **“cross the line”** in thought, word or attitude many times a day.

- **TRANSGRESSION**

Transgression refers to **PRESUMPTUOUS SINS**.

To transgress is to **choose to intentionally disobey; transgression is willful trespassing.**

Transgression against God is **MAKING A CHOICE TO DO SOMETHING OF WHICH GOD HAS ESTABLISHED CLEAR BOUNDARIES AND WILFULLY DOING SO.**

It is proceeding without caring.

- **INIQUITY**

Iniquity refers to a **premeditated choice.**

To commit iniquity is to continue without repentance.

## CURE

Isaiah 53: Surely, he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed.

It is our **sin** that causes us to miss the mark of God.

It is our sin that causes us to **fight against God** by playing God in our own life.

It is the **wrong desires** that generated our sin – the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and

**the pride of life that cause us to make that wrong choice.**

**Sin has also caused us to **TRESPASS** - to cross the line – a boundary drawn by God.**

**Sin has caused us to **transgress-** to intentionally disobey and worse is to continue in our iniquity – to continue to sin without repentance.**

**Today, we may have missed the mark of God by the sinful choices and decisions we've made in the past.**

**Maybe today, we are still grieving and in sorrow over all our regrettable decisions.**

**We are living as the wounded one because of that one wrong decision.**

We feel bruised, stricken, smitten, afflicted and chastised by our sin, iniquity, trespass and transgressions and we could never undo what we have done.

But 2000 years ago, Jesus came and bore all the grief and sorrows of our regrets.

He was stricken and smitten and afflicted for you ultimately so that the current chastisement as a result of your sinful and foolish choices will **NOT BE FATAL**, since He has borne the **ULTIMATE FATALITY** for you.

We may be bruising today because of that regret but our Christ who has risen, has the power to overrule all our wrong choices and consequences and even heal the whole situation.

**And He can overturn and overrule everything for His glory and for your ultimate good.**

**If our Heavenly Father, could overturn the death of Jesus into resurrection; if He could overrule the evil decision of the Jews and the Roman authority to crucify His Son into the most glorious good news for the world, wouldn't He do much more for all your regrets?**

**He can turn your mourning into dancing; your ashes into garment of praise.**

## **CONCLUSION**

**So do not grieve like those who have no hope with all our regrets.**

**The consequences of our sinful choices are bitter but that is to drive us to taste the sweetness of Christ's forgiveness and healing and restoration from the cross.**

**We can mourn in sorrow over that one regret but look up to God. Don't be self-absorbed.**

**What Christ wants now is we confess humbly, embrace his forgiveness, rest in His Sovereign timing.**

**May you from today onwards, roll over your life and plans to him so He can take over the helm of your life and help you to be a wiser Christian and may you start to plant new and better seed.**

**After all, within you is that One Ultimate and Glorious Seed – Christ.**

**Let Him grow out of you in wisdom and love.**

**Above all, rejoice that Jesus has already died to pay the penalty for all our sins and a new beginning awaits us because of the resurrection power of the Holy Spirit.**

**End**