

## Doctrinal Summary of The Heart of Man-Correcting Beliefs through Repentance

In Acts 8:22, Philip identifies that man's heart can be corrected by repenting from wickedness.

"Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you."

Philip's response was to a rich man named Simon who was attempting to receive the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit through payment, as if such authority is for sale. Because the man's purpose was founded in pride and the desire for attention Philip rebukes him, telling him to repent of his wickedness.

The word "repent" is translated from the Koine Greek word μετανόησον ("me-ta-no-ae-son") which literally means, "you are commanded to perform the action in a point in time to change the content of one's heart by rejecting previously accepted information which is presently being relied upon to accomplish something on one's own behalf and replace it with newly accepted information for reliance upon." Philip commands Simon to reject the belief he is operating from that caused him to offer payment in exchange for the ability to bestow the Holy Spirit and to replace it with a righteous belief.

The command to repent is more than just a cease and desist of one's activity; it is a renovation of the belief from which the activity precipitates. The old belief (information being relied upon) must be removed and replaced with a new belief. Repentance is the process which renovates the beliefs in one's heart and upgrades fleshly derived beliefs with the spiritual truths of God's Word. It is for this very purpose that God's Word is profitable according to 2 Timothy 3:16.

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;"

The word "profitable" is translated from the Koine Greek word ὠφέλιμος ("oh-phel-i-mos") which literally means, "advantageous based on usefulness toward accomplishing a specific or desired objective, based on response." God's Word provides the believer an advantage toward the renovation of his heart. The advantage is derived in the reality that it is useful toward accomplishing the goals and objectives for which it has been revealed. Specifically, it is useful toward accomplishing the teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness that is required to correct the corrupt beliefs of man's fleshly heart.

This is true for believers and unbelievers alike, albeit in different areas of information. For the unbeliever, God's Word is advantageous toward correcting false beliefs pertaining to God, His Son, personal sin, judgment for sin, and the afterlife. Thus, the truth of the gospel contained in God's Word is advantageous to the unbeliever for providing alternative information that the unbeliever can then accept in place of his contrary beliefs. For the believer the Bible is entirely advantageous for repentance in all areas of thought.

Correcting beliefs through repentance is critical to the believer's walk with God, for confession of sin without first removing and replacing the belief that led to the sin is no confession at all. Once back in fellowship, the believer can be transformed by the renewal of his mind under the Holy Spirit's teaching ministry (cf. Rom. 12:1-2). This results in spiritual growth and confidence before God (cf. 1 Jn. 3:21).