

A Familiar Word Few Understand

Written by Bill Perkins

On a cold December night in 2011, I stood on the edge of a black vortex. I knew if I stepped into the spinning mass it would take years to climb out. And I knew my family and I would suffer long-term damage.

A Four-Word Lie

You may wonder how I ended up in such a threatening place. I didn't, in a moment of curiosity, approach the vortex. It began with a four word lie: "You will lose everything."

Once I believed the lie, I tried to figure out how to prevent it from happening. Day and night I obsessed over various solutions. Eventually, I concluded I couldn't solve the problem. It was beyond my capabilities. That's when my obsession shifted from trying to find a solution to imagining the pain of my losses. For weeks I imagined living in a box under a bridge in Portland. Each time I reviewed this certain future, despair tightened its grip.

I Changed My Mind

On that night in December, as I looked at the vortex and considered stepping into it, I changed my mind.

I Repented

To Think Differently After

The word "repent" has a different meaning that most people suppose. It comes from the Greek word "metanoia." This two-part word includes the preposition "meta," which means, "after" or "with," and the verb "noeo," which means to "think" or "perceive." And so the word means "to think differently after." In the Bible repentance is often followed by a change in behavior. When we repent, we think differently than we did before we repented. Something happened that caused a change of mind and heart which resulted in a change of behavior.

Kick It Out

In a moment of insight, I realized I had been believing a lie. When I repented, I decided to no longer believe the lie. I furthermore determined I would not allow it to remain in my consciousness. I decided that the moment I was aware of its presence, I would kick it out of my mind. Amazingly, from that day until this, I have not let that lie remain in my thoughts.

This was the beginning of a spiritual revival in my life that has not abated.

How important is repentance? The words “repent” and “repentance” are used 24 times in the Gospels. Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 4:17).

We will not be free until we change our mind about the lie we have believed. We must repent. And we must follow that change of mind with a change of behavior.

Forgiveness and repentance are the first two steps toward freedom. In fact, without them, we can’t take the third step—evicting evil. Next week, I’ll talk about demons and how we get rid of them.