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The second step to freedom

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Rosemont Road winds its way through Oregon hills. A vineyard hugs a hill to the south while grass covers the northerly hills. Three or four times a week for the last sixteen years I've driven down Rosemont Road on my way to meetings. For fourteen of those years I never saw a speed trap.

A Speed Trap on Rosemont Road

That changed two years ago when I spotted a cop with a radar gun hunting for speeders. I immediately got an adrenaline rush, not because I thought I was speeding. I wasn't. I got the adrenaline rush because I knew my wife, Cindy, would soon be flying down Rosemont Road in her shiny red Mazda Miata convertible.

Once past the police officer I pulled to the side of the road and called Cindy. "You'd better repent or something bad will happen to you."

"What do I need to repent of so noting bad will happen to me?" she asked.

"Speeding!" I said. "There's a speed trap on Rosemont Road."

A Change of Mind

The word "repent" comes from the Greek word, *metanoéō*, which means "a change of mind." Once I told Cindy about the speed trap she changed her mind about speeding down Rosemont Road. True repentance results in a change of behavior—Cindy slowed down.

A Line in the Sand

Destroying a spiritual stronghold requires repentance because we must see destructive thoughts and actions differently. We must recognize them as evil and determine to change. We must draw a line in the sand and say, "I'll not entertain that thought again. I'll not act that way again."

Does this mean once we repent those thoughts never enter our mind again? No. But it does mean when they enter our mind we kick them out the moment we recognize them. Of course, repentance doesn't come without resistance. In fact, the more powerful a stronghold the greater the resistance to repent. It's not uncommon for the demon who occupies the stronghold to convince a person that all promises of repentance are meaningless because the person can't change. As long as a man or woman believes that lie, the stronghold will stand.

Jesus Commanded Repentance

The words, “repent,” and “repentance,” are used 25 times in the four Gospels. In Matthew 4:17 Jesus said, “Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.” Jesus condemned the cities of Galilee because they refused to repent in the face of his miracles and teaching (Matthew 11:21). At the same time he praised Nineveh because it repented at the preaching of Jonah. Jesus urged the Jews to, “bear fruit in keeping with repentance” (Luke 3:8).

Jesus commanded repentance.

You may be wondering what repentance looks like in real life. Next week I’ll give you a personal example. In the meantime, ask God to show you the thoughts and actions you need to repent from. And ask him to begin changing your mind about them.