

## LOST Part 4: Volte-Face - 02.21.10

**Intro:** Today I want to talk to you about Volte-face - a total change of position, from volta (turn) and faccia (face)

- 1756 - After 7-years war, England allied with Prussia, France w/ Austria
- 1985 - New Coke to Coke Classic
- 2008 - Brett Favre, from retirement to Jets to Vikings

**Volte-face**, a change of mind, a change of position, an about face, u-turn, flip-flop;... The Bible has another word for it... REPENTANCE.

- The Hebrew word for repentance used over one thousand times in OT
- Central to Jesus' message:  
"From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Matt. 4:17
- Paul's message -  
God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance? Rom 2:4
- Peter's message -  
The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise <sup>v</sup>as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

**Two Greek Words for Repentance** - often used interchangeably in NT.

☉ μετανοέω (34x) - meta (change) noéō (understanding, mind).

☉ ἐπιστρέφω (36x) - epí (to) stréphō (turn)

Example Acts 3:19 - "Repent (metanoeo) therefore and turn (epistrepho) again that your sins may be blotted out." (See also Acts 26:20.)

Metanoeo is often the negative impulse of turning away from sin.

Epistrepho is the broader, sometimes including the idea of faith and entire conversion process. Together - "a radical matter, a turning within the human heart; a total, radical alteration within the core of our personal being. Metanoeo went through a change in meaning... meta also means preposition after, so to know after, to perceive after. Regret. Sorrow.

**No place do we see this more clearly than in the story of LOST son.**

### How to R.E.P.E.N.T.

R **REGRET** \_\_\_\_\_ what got me here.

"And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need." Luke 15:14

Sometimes we have to hit bottom before we can repent. Here we have a lesson for loving parents who desire to assist their children. Of course family means we love and help. But sometimes, when a child is prodigal, the greatest, most loving help we can provide is to allow our children to hit bottom. In fact, by preventing them from hitting bottom we are delaying God's work in their life. It was only after the prodigal son had spent everything that he recognized his need. Consider how the story would have gone had verse 14 included, "And Dad came along and provided a low interest loan to bail out the son just until his next paycheck." It was because he spent everything that he then began to think about the ruin he had created for himself. Who is the prodigal in your life that needs tough love?

E **EDUCATE** myself.

“So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.” Luke 15:15-16

Our first effort to turn, to repent, is not always the best choice or our most successful. For this reason many are skeptical about initial efforts at repentance. “*Oh, he’s confessed many times before. Is it real this time around?*” But what we don’t realize is that repentance is a process. It’s education - the school of hard knocks way. What will work. What won’t work?

The prodigal’s first “solution” was not his best. He hired himself out. His loving father is looking daily for him to return, yet the child’s first solution is to stubbornly try to figure this out on his own. Isn’t this how you were taught to respond to tough situations... to do it “MY WAY?”

Frank Sinatra’s famous lyrics:

*Regrets, I’ve had a few...  
But through it all, when there was doubt  
I ate it up and spit it out  
I faced it all and I stood tall and did it my way.*

That intensity of independence that is so admirable to Americans is folly when it comes to the spiritual life. For there is no spiritual life without spiritual rebirth and that is impossible without God.

“You were dead... but God, being rich in mercy... made us alive together with Christ.” Eph. 2:1,4-5

The man who penned these famous words? Paul, who at one time was known as Saul, who attempted to perfect his spiritual life without Christ, and in fact, persecuted Christians! But he had to learn. He had to be educated. **It was in that “longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate” phase that the prodigal began education by...**

P **PONDER** my reality.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger!’” Luke 15:17

True education comes as a result of failure. Often figuring out what works is by first figuring out what doesn’t work. Remember Thomas Edison? “*I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work!*”

The prodigal could only recognize the truth of his situation by figuring out what didn’t work. Even his father’s hired servants, he reasoned, were better off than he was.

It is exactly at this point that the great enemy of our souls, Satan, rushes in. He really cannot stop the inevitable regret that comes from your separation from God. And he cannot stop you from figuring out that doing it YOUR WAY is the WRONG WAY. So he does everything he can to keep you from pondering your reality. He will distract you. Lead you to watch the TV. Check out the Facebook page. Anything but PONDER! **Because if you PONDER, you might also...**

**E** **EXAMINE** \_\_\_\_\_ **my intent.**

“I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.’” Luke 15:18

It's during the pondering times that we are most likely to ask the hard questions in our lives. “What in the world am I doing? Why am I here? Where am I going?” Repentance begins in the heart. It begins with intent.

Note that the prodigal came to the realization that NOT ONLY had he offended against his own father BUT HE ALSO sinned against heaven. This is the where repentance begins to gain real traction, when I connect the earthly and heavenly, the temporal and the eternal. What I do now WILL HAVE eternal consequences.

We have another word we use sometimes when we examine our intentions. That word is conviction. We can probably learn something here about why this only works in our own lives and why we can't make this work in someone else's life. Jesus told us that...

“When he (Holy Spirit) comes, he will convict (ἐλέγχο) the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” John 16:8 ESV

ἐλέγχο **elégchō**; means to convict, rebuke, bring to repentance. Two things to know here. (1) We cannot do this (though we try) in someone else's life. (2) HS does not stop this once we become Christ follower.

Have you forgotten the encouraging words which God speaks to you as his sons and daughters? “My child, pay attention when the Lord corrects you, and do not be discouraged when he rebukes you.” Hebrews 12:5 GNT

Repentance is a normal, expected part of the Christian's life. It's a good sign, that you are indeed a child of God. **Not just cerebral...**

**N** **NAVIGATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **through my emotions.**

“I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.” Luke 15:19

Repentance is an emotional experience. Anyone who reads the words of the prodigal when he finally comes to the end of himself and thinks there is no emotion involved should think again!

- 🕒 **REMORSE** - contrition, deep regret, guilt, penitence are all normal experiences for someone repenting. “I wish I hadn't have gone here, done this in my life.”
- 🕒 **SORROW** - Beyond remorse, I experience sorrow, sadness, heartache. A recognition of my sins to God.
- 🕒 **HUMILITY** - a true humility. I see myself in relation to God. I lose pride, a view of myself as god in center of universe.

**Healthy and Unhealthy** - These are all normal, natural responses. But the key is that I NAVIGATE my way **through** these emotions. I do not stay here (unhealthy). It's healthy to remind myself occasionally of my repentance (Ash Wednesday) or to repent of sins as growth.

But ultimately, this should lead me to a healthy, positive, safe, secure relationship with God as my loving Abba Father. **Should lead me to...**

**T** **TURN** \_\_\_\_\_ **from myself and towards God.**

*“And he arose and came to his father.” Luke 15:20*

Good intentions alone does not make for true repentance. The intentions of the heart must be translated into actions. “And he arose.” When I’ve gone through all 5 of the previous stages, I’m ready to turn. I can’t wait to turn. I’m disgusted with myself and with my own failures. There’s both a turning away (from me) and a turning towards (to God).

**Conclusion:** Where are you at tonight? Are you celebrating your own repentance this evening, knowing that you have fully turned toward God and now are relying fully upon Him and His grace and mercy for your life? Or are you in the midst of this struggle? Can you look at this R.E.P.E.N.T. acrostic and see where you’ve stopped? Regret alone won’t do it. Education and Pondering are valuable but not the whole story. Maybe you’re stuck at good intentions, but with no follow through, always thinking that eventually you’ll make the real turn. Or maybe you’ve never navigated all the way through the emotions of remorse and sorrow. Maybe tonight is the night that with “pockets empty” you turn fully to your heavenly Father who loves you so much.

**Christy sings “This is Love.”**

**Prayer:** Pray (1) those who have long ago repented and become Christ followers that they may celebrate their loving relationship with their Father God, that they might be faithful and over coming 40 days might more fully appreciate how much God loves them; (2) for those that have fallen in their faithfulness, that right now are thinking of that one thing, that one sin that separates them from fully enjoying God’s presence in their life - that they might completely repent and turn; and finally (3) those that have never truly repented. That might be stuck somewhere on the spectrum **Regret** without change, **Education** without God, **Pondering** that leads only to distraction, **Examination** without admission, **Navigating** emotional responses without any certainty. **Pray sinner’s prayer -**

*“Father, I know that I haven’t lived the way you intended and that my sins have separated me from you. I am truly sorry (regret), and now I want to turn away from my way and toward your way.*

*I believe that your son, Jesus Christ died for my sins, was resurrected from the dead, is alive, and hears my prayer. I invite Jesus to become the CEO of my life. I’m changing seats from pilot to co-pilot.*

*Please forgive me, and help me avoid sinning again. Even as I pray this I know I can’t do it on my own power. Please send your Holy Spirit to help me obey You, and to do Your will for the rest of my life. In Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.”*