

second chances

"and the angel of the Lord came back the second time, and touched him, and said, 'arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you.'" 1 kings 19:7

we all are on a long journey, and if we do not nourish ourselves with the Word of God continually, we are prone to stumble or even cease our journey altogether. it is times like that we need a second chance. the God we love and serve is a God of second chances; second and even up to seventy times seven (essentially, unending).

do you ever feel like you've completely blown it with God? as if He's thinking "I've had it. I've given you enough chances. I'm done with you." you don't have to feel that way any longer. scripture makes it very clear that we serve a God of a second chance, because He knew we'd never get it right the first time... and maybe not the third or fourth time, either.

a God of a second chance means the Almighty doesn't give us just one shot at impressing Him or earning His love or getting it right. do you need some examples?

when adam and eve chose their way over God's, Jesus came so all humanity would have a second chance. and us, all being born of their sin nature, continually need those second chances - repentance followed by a cleansing and revival.

scripture tells us of God's mercy and the second chance He gave king david, who knew better than to commit

adultery with a married woman, then murder her husband (who happened to be one of his best soldiers) to cover up his sin.

how about the woman caught in adultery? Jesus showed compassion on her. He knew all about the sin details in her life, but He gave her a second chance when He faced down her accusers with the words: "he who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first." john 8:7

and how could we forget peter? the Lord he had walked with, watched with and witnessed to His deity, now denied Him three times. he had even gone so far as to declare he'd never deny Jesus, even if it meant dying with Him. for all that false bravado, the apostle failed exactly as Jesus said he would. no wonder he sobbed bitterly. yet Jesus, in His mercy and compassion, gave him another chance to testify of Him.

how could we overlook the account of saul of damascus who hated Jesus so much he persecuted christians. he thought he was being zealous for his faith by turning in Christians to be stoned to death by the jewish religious leaders. yet, God got in his face, literally, blinded him with a light (literally), and asked Him straight out "why are you persecuting me?"

i don't think any of us can imagine the anguish and sorrow that grips the souls of these. it is only because they found the recipe for second chances - repentance!

the rich young ruler in luke 18:23 went away sorrowful,

but he didn't repent. repentance is not regret, or merely wishing the deed hadn't happened.

pontius pilate washed his hands in regret over turning over Christ to the crowds. repentance is not resolve. it is not like a new year's resolution where we resolve to take on new moral standards, and repentance is not reform.

judas iscariot took his thirty pieces of silver and flung them down the corridors of the temple. judas reformed but he did not repent.

repentance calls for a change of behavior, not just a change of thought or attitude. "let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it." 1 pet 3:11 yes, that is the recipe for second chance.

regret, resolve, reformation and even true repentance has to be initiated by the Holy Spirit. but He will only convict. He will not decide for you... not for any of us.