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Remorse, Emotions, and Moral Transformation

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Abstract

Despite popular thought, repentance and remorse are not synonyms. Repentance is both affect and action, whereas remorse is always only ever affect, though remorse can lead to repentance. Surprisingly, there is no word that obviously means 'remorse' in the Bible, though people were evidently remorseful, especially towards God for sin. Remorse is different from regret, though it includes elements of regret in its meaning. In 2 Corinthians 7, Paul lays the linguistic and theological foundation for what later became known as 'remorse'. Remorse is an affective disposition, and we consider how the New Testament approaches the way dispositions can be transformed from being sinful to godly.

Keywords

Remorse, Repentance, Affect, Emotions, Ethics, Moral Transformation

Widely understood is the place of repentance in Christian ethics.[1] Luke especially is the theologian of repentance. In Luke 24.47 Jesus says that the scriptures indicate that 'repentance and forgiveness should be proclaimed in the name of the Christ to all nations.' Also widely understood is that repentance involves a settled decision of the will based on a cognitive shift both to do differently and to be different in the future. Repentance often also presupposes some form of reparation and restitution when appropriate.

This approach to repentance is suggested, not only from examples in the New Testament, but also in part from a linguistic analysis of *metanoia* and *metanoeō*, which

[1] Recent studies include Mark J. Boda and Gordon T. Smith, *Repentance in Christian Theology* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 2006) and David Lambert, *How Repentance Became Biblical: Judaism, Christianity, and the Interpretation of Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

etymologically bear the idea of change of mind or will.[2] Two well-known New Testament examples make the point: John the Baptist's preaching on repentance[3] insisted on 'fruits in keeping with repentance' (Matt. 3.8 and Luke 3.8),[4] and Zacchaeus – who chose to give away half of his wealth to the poor and to repay fourfold those whom he had defrauded – is often taken to be a paradigm of a repentant person.[5]

To give a birds'-eye view: *metanoeō* is used 19 times in the New Testament by writers others than Luke; in Luke-Acts, the word is used 14 times. 11 of the uses apart from by Luke are in Revelation, which leaves only 8 others uses outside Revelation and Luke-Acts. *Metanoia* is used 22 times in the New Testament; exactly half are in Luke-Acts. So, Luke is *par excellence* the New Testament theologian of repentance, just as he is also the theologian *par excellence* of forgiveness, as I have shown elsewhere.[6]

We often talk of 'repentance' and 'remorse' as if they go together and are virtually synonymous. But a quick search of *all* the Bible discloses not a single word that we could translate as 'remorse.' To take an example at random, a search of *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* by Richard Hays reveals that there is not a single reference to remorse in it. Obviously, we are not going to fall into the error of saying that, just because a word for an emotion (such as remorse) is not in the Bible, neither is the idea or concept that it represents.[7] For even though there is no word that we translate as 'remorse' in the Bible, it would be naïve to suggest that the people the Bible depicts did not feel remorse towards people they wronged. What I am saying is that there is not an obvious counterpart to the word 'remorse' and in fact there is next to no written evidence to suggest that remorse (as we understand it today) was labelled and described as a discrete category of emotion.[8] People clearly did feel remorse towards God for their sins, as we see clearly exemplified, for example, in Psalm 51.

So rather than initially turning to the Bible to discover what remorse is, since it is not explicitly in evidence, we turn to a dictionary as a starting point both to identify what we are referring to and to help us discover whether what we are referring to is in fact implicit in the text and cultures of the Bible. I have taken as a starting point the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which denotes remorse as being 'deep regret' or 'guilt' about one's own wrongdoing and limits remorse to emotions arising in situations where people have done

[2] See Anthony Bash, *Forgiveness and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 80–83, 87–89 and Anthony Bash, *Remorse: A Christian Perspective* (Eugene: Cascade, 2020), 49–50.
[3] Matt. 3.1–12 and Luke 3.1–14.
[4] These are exemplified in Luke 3.11–14.
[5] Luke 19.2–10.
[6] Anthony Bash, *Just Forgiveness: Exploring the Bible, Weighing the Issues* (London, SPCK, 2011), 83–100.
[7] On emotions (such as remorse) and the Bible, see Françoise Mirguet, 'What is an "Emotion" in the Hebrew Bible?: An Experience that Exceeds Most Contemporary Concepts,' *Biblical Interpretation* 24, no. 4-5 (2016), 464.
[8] Roberts regards contrition (widely regarded as a synonym for remorse) as fitting for grasping central Christian truths. See Robert C. Roberts, *Spiritual Emotions: A Psychology of Christian Values* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2007), 95.

'something morally wrong.' There are two 'arms' to this definition: one 'arm' refers to feelings (deep regret, guilt) and the other 'arm' to ethics (what is right or wrong).

At this point, we might be tempted to say – as many appear to have done so – that remorse is another way of referring to regret and that we are little more than quibbling over words. It could also be the case (so such people may argue) that we are drawing 'a distinction without a difference' between regret and remorse, as many now argue is the case when Jesus asks Peter whether Peter loves him in two different words in Greek (Jn. 21.15–19). In other words, is remorse no more than a *feeling* of regret?

Remorse *is* a type of regret, with regret as an elastic, wide-ranging word.[9] It can refer to the feeling one has when one forgets (for example) to send a birthday card to a friend. In this sense, regret is a mild emotion. It can also refer to the deep sadness one might feel if one lost one's book that was of great sentimental, personal value. But can one say that one 'regrets' (and mean no more than regrets) accidentally causing the death of a road user in a road traffic accident where one was at fault? Probably not. In English, regret is not elastic enough to encompass all of what we mean by this sort of profound sadness or guilt about one's own wrongdoing. Thus, a convicted and deeply contrite murderer can hardly express remorse to a victim's relative by saying, 'I deeply regret murdering your mother.' To put this in linguistic terms, 'regret' is a hypernym for the variety of ways that people may feel an emotion that includes an element of regret and not necessarily only regret.[10] In practice this will mean that remorse is not only regret and regret is not the same as remorse.

Before we go further, we need to make four important observations that will shape the rest of our discussion. The observations are about 'affect' – which loosely we could call feelings or emotions – and 'cognitions', that is, thoughts. First, both affect and cognitions are part of actions, often interchangeably so, and there can be no affect without antecedent judgment, that is, cognition. So, the pattern is cognition (often intuitive), sometimes then affect, then further cognition with or without affect.[11]

The next observation is that 'repentance,' certainly as understood in English, can be both cognition and affect that result in a change of behaviour. So, repentance is a decision of the will not to do wrong again or not to do again a particular wrong. The decision results from cognition. Repentance is also regret or sorrow about wrongdoing – and this is affect, namely, regret or feelings of guilt about moral wrongdoing. Sadly, in much Christian thinking, repentance is often treated as principally cognition, with little regard for the affective component of repentance.

Third, and on the other hand, remorse is affect – a feeling or emotion – and (importantly for our discussion if remorse is to be remorse and not also something else) affect not

[9] Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 'Agent Regret,' in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. by Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

[10] Philip Shaver et al., 'Emotion Knowledge: Further Explorations of a Prototype Approach,' *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 52, no. 6 (1987), 1061–86.

[11] See especially Magda B. Arnold, *Emotion and Personality*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960).

necessarily leading to a change of behaviour. In this latter respect, remorse is unlike repentance. Remorse *can* lead to a change of behaviour, such as actions associated with repentance. The latter is the 'best' sort of remorse. On the other hand, remorse can sometimes lead to self-pity or morbid introspection that can be destructive for wellbeing.[12]

What I am saying is that being remorseful is an ethical disposition (that is, feeling guilt or being deeply regretful) based on an ethical judgment about wrongdoing. It is about how a person feels after having realized that he or she has done wrong. It is an affective response to wrongdoing without a 'built in' action in response, such as repentant actions. It is *only* an affective disposition. This might explain in part why there is no verb, 'to remorse'. But note: we are not saying that remorse is not based on or not the result of cognition; affective responses are the result of cognition, and this is the case with remorse. Remorse and repentance are therefore not synonyms, and cannot be synonyms, because remorse is affect only.

There are affects that are like remorse (that is, affective dispositions only, the result of cognition and affect), but not like repentance (an affective response that *necessarily* leads to *praxis* if repentance is to be repentance). Such affective dispositions are qualities of mind or character. They are about who we are and what we are like, rather than what we do. From Col. 3.5 and Gal. 5.19–21, we could also include enmity, strife, jealousy, and passion (the latter means strong, uncontained emotions) as examples of affective dispositions. The same is true of impurity and sensuality (also in Col. 3.5 and Gal. 5.19–21). In Eph. 4.1, what we have called 'affective dispositions' include humility, gentleness, patience. Other examples are hate, love, lust, and covetousness.

Importantly, affects (whether dispositional or 'one offs') are ethically neutral until there is an object that is their focus. Affective dispositions are not sinful or virtuous until fixed to an object and realized. They are descriptors of character that may (or may not) lead to ethical or unethical behaviour. I may have a covetous disposition, but until I am covetous *about* something or someone, I will not be able to repent. To put it another way, I may be something of an emotional powder keg, but until my emotions (such as enmity, strife, jealousy, or uncontained emotions) take expression in relation to specific people or situations, they are not yet actualized in sinful *behaviour*. But note, to be clear: what is named are the qualities and attributes themselves (which may lead to specific acts that are necessarily sinful), but not what these qualities and attributes lead to. Affective dispositions *may* lead to sins, in contrast to discrete sins, such as to lie or to steal, which are necessarily only sins. As Paul says, one can be angry and not sin (Eph. 4.26), but five verses later anger – here referring to angry, sinful acts – are to be put far away from us (Eph. 4.31) because they are sin.

Last – and subject to what I say later – the Bible is generally not that interested in exploring the 'inner life,' especially in relation to how people feel towards or about one

[12] See Raimond Gaita, 'Ethical Individuality,' in *Value and Understanding: Essays for Peter Winch*, ed. by Raimond Gaita (London: Routledge, 1990) 118–48.

another. Emotions were known about, labelled, and understood[13] – but emotions are not labelled and understood with the same degree of complexity and sophistication that we now have in the era of psychological theory and practice.[14]

We can go further: we need to be careful to make sure that our starting point, when we read and interpret the Bible, is to recognize that the Bible is set in the pre-psychological era and not in the contemporary period of sophisticated models of psychological theory. It is a truism to say that the worldview of the Bible is not necessarily the same worldview that we hold or within which we seek to interpret the Bible; this is especially true in the ways that emotions are thought about. We place the world articulated in the texts imaginatively within our world as we now understand it to be, and there is not always a one-to-one correspondence.[15] Scholars have not always been very good at thinking critically about the way emotions are thought about in the New Testament, and there has sometimes been an assumption that language for and taxonomic categories about emotions have diachronic validity.[16] They do not, even though in all likelihood the range of human emotions has not changed that much for several thousand years. Instead, what has changed is how human emotions are described and thought about.

Now that we have made these four (lengthy) preliminary observations, we return to our discussion about remorse. As we read the Old Testament, people undoubtedly felt deep regret or guilt for their wrongdoing against God, with people aware that their sins amounted to moral wrongdoing against God. As we said, the regret and guilt were not explicitly called 'remorse,' but we can see that what we now call 'remorse' is implicit. So far so good. But surprisingly, we see little explicit about what we might call 'interpersonal remorse,' that is, remorse that people felt for doing wrong against one another.[17] Such wrongs were seen principally as wrongs against God. Think of David and his adultery with Bathsheba. It is commonly thought that David was remorseful. This is clearly so in relation to God. However, a careful reading of 2 Sam. 12.7–25 does not record that David was also remorseful towards Bathsheba, or her husband, Uriah, whose death he engineered. David's only comment when Nathan confronted him about his adultery is that he had 'sinned against the Lord' (v. 13). Psalm 51 has this superscription: 'A Psalm of David, when the prophet Nathan came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.' The psalm points to David's deep sense of guilt towards God, but not towards Bathsheba or her late husband. He says, 'Against you, you only, have I sinned.' I suspect David *was* remorseful about his sin more than only to God; however, his remorse towards the people he had sinned against

[13] In relation to the Old Testament and to Greek thought, see Bash, *Remorse*, 27–30, 46–48.

[14] This may help explain why remorse is not labelled as a discrete emotion.

[15] Walter Moberly helpfully writes of 'the world behind the text,' 'the world within the text,' and 'the world in front of the text' in R. W. L. Moberly, *Old Testament Theology: Reading the Hebrew Bible as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 17–18 and throughout the book.

[16] David Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks: Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 4.

[17] See Bash, *Remorse*, 32–39.

does not appear to have been regarded as important enough to comment on or note down when it was set against the horror of his sin against the law of God.

The absence of specific language to describe remorse (whether God-ward remorse or interpersonal remorse) is evident in the Gospels. Judas's remorse for betraying Jesus is noted and is probably two-fold: remorse towards God for betraying innocent blood, and remorse towards Jesus for betraying a friend. But Koine Greek lacks a word to express what Judas felt. Matthew uses *metamelomai*, which usually means the rather anodyne 'regret' or 'to change one's mind.' The ESV translates the word as 'changed his mind' and the NRSV as 'repented.' Both may be appropriate translations from a strictly lexical point of view but neither translation reflects Judas's heart-broken realization about what he had done. The NIV rightly (in my view) interprets the word in its context and translates it as 'being seized with remorse,' although this translation goes well beyond what a first-century reader of the Greek would have said were the range of meanings usually ascribed to this word.

Peter's remorse about his failure to stay to the end with Jesus (despite his promise to do so) is palpable in the Gospels, but there is no explicit language to describe how he felt, except that he 'wept bitterly.'[18] Similarly, in the parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15, the younger son does not say he is remorseful about wronging his father for, though he recognizes that he has sinned *before* his father (verses 18, 21), he does not say he has sinned *against* his father. His sin against God is evident *to* his father, as it is to other people, but the younger son does not say he has deep regret about the way he has wronged his father.

Paul is the theologian who lays down a framework for the development of a language and theology of remorse and a framework for beginning to explore interpersonal remorse. He does this in 2 Corinthians. Paul uses an existing noun, *lyp*ē, and a verb, *lypeō*, (meaning 'grief' and 'to grieve' respectively) in 2 Cor. 7 to describe the response of the Corinthians to his letter. He also refers to the Corinthians' 'repentance' (vv. 9, 10). He distinguishes between 'worldly grief [*lypē*, which here is probably remorse] that leads to death' and 'godly grief [*lypē*, which here, again, is probably remorse] that produces repentance leading to salvation and that is without regret' (2 Cor. 7.10). What Paul means by the Corinthians' 'godly grief' is remorse that led not to 'death,' but to life and inner health because they had repented.

2 Corinthians 7.10–11 read in these ways is remorse that leads to repentance and acts of repair and restoration, with the result that wrongdoers move on, forgiven, and in a renewed relationship with the person formerly wronged. In contrast, remorse that 'leads to death' is remorse that does not lead to repentance, acts of repair, forgiveness, and renewed relationships. This could be a description of Judas's remorse in Matt. 27.3–4. The significance of what Paul has done is to lay a framework for describing both God-ward remorse and interpersonal remorse.

Described in these ways, 'godly grief' for wrongdoing against another is a foundational and transformative Christian ethic, and an essential antecedent step of interpersonal

[18] Luke 22.62 and Matt. 26.75.

repentance in its most richly-textured form. It involves a personal judgment about one's wrongdoing against another person, with an appropriate measure of shame and guilt. It is also an emotion that is embedded in the idea of repentance – and so a change of behaviour in the future and putting right what one can in the present. This is a very important development in Christian understanding and practice, and gives a place for articulating wrongs not only against God, but also against our brothers and sisters. As a result, wrongs against other people can be understand not only as wrongs against God, but also as wrongs against other people.

There is, in addition, a surprising, and overlooked, significance to what Paul writes. Paul treats *lypē* as a virtuous response. This is in sharp contrast to prevailing secular (Stoic) thought at the time. *Lypē* is a technical term in Stoic philosophy for one of four, generic negative emotions that contrast with *enkrateia* (self-mastery). Instead of following the Stoic pattern of thought that is sometimes associated with Paul, Paul seems to regard *lypē* as among the 'good emotions' (*eupatheiai*). Paul's approach to *lypē* would be a surprising, and even shocking, reconfiguring of contemporary thought about what were included among, and what were not included among, *eupatheiai*.

It is also surprising that biblical thinking took so long to develop language to recognize, articulate, and describe interpersonal remorse. The most likely explanation is that wrongs against other people were seen primarily as wrongs against God and subsumed under this rubric. Also surprising is that in the post-New Testament period, the early church developed sophisticated ways of thinking about remorse towards God (with doctrines about penance and contrition, and even indulgences), but almost none for explicitly articulating remorse for wrongs done to other people. The period of the Reformation did away with much Catholic language and tradition about Godward remorse, but still did not develop a theology of interpersonal remorse.[19] It has been secular thinkers, probably in response to the Enlightenment emphasis on personal autonomy, who have principally developed thinking about remorse, and the Christian church is now 'playing catch up.'[20]

This brings us to an important point about all wrongdoing. Our response to wrongdoing is not just cognitive; feeling repentant or remorseful about wrongdoing is also *necessarily* affective. Affect is what makes us *feel* we want to do differently and be different in the future. For example, and very obviously, we do not just believe 'in' Christ, in the way we might believe in the importance of eating fresh fruit and vegetables for a balanced diet: rather, we believe 'into' Christ. The word 'into' points to the fact that, for the Christian, believing is an existential, transformative relationship that brings about moral and behavioural change. This is why 'faith without works is dead' (James 2.26). (The point is powerfully illustrated in Hebrews 11: on the whole, the men and women who are referred to are marked out as having faith because of what they did *because* they held certain cognitive convictions, rather than only because they held those convictions.) The

[19] See Bash, *Remorse*, 82–95.
[20] Ibid., 95–98.

importance of such an approach has only been widely appreciated and explored in the last century or so. Despite this, within many Christian traditions, cognition is more emphasised and celebrated than affect.

Richard Hays's approach to ethics in *The Moral Framework of the New Testament* suggests that doing ethics is a descriptive task, a synthetic task of placing the text in canonical context, a hermeneutical task of relating the text to our situation, and then finally a pragmatic task of living out the text. Useful though this approach is, it does not appear to leave room for those ethical behaviours where the pragmatic task involves an existential element that requires treating affect as part of the ethic. Of course, we must be cautious when it comes to affect and the shape of our ethics, and many suggest (as does Hays) that love is not a secure basis for New Testament ethics. Even if this is right, we still seem to be heirs of the view about passions (*pathē*) in Greek philosophy (from Plato and Aristotle to the Stoics), namely, that they cause perturbation and imbalance and so are to be regarded with suspicion.[21] There is not a one-to-one correspondence between *pathē* and emotions, and to assume that there is has (often unwittingly) led to an understated place for emotions in the way some Christians think and talk about faith and discipleship.

To be clear: in the case of some categories of ethical conduct, there is necessarily an affective element to them, and we cannot have them without the affective element. I listed examples above. Remorse is *sui generis* because it is *only* an affective disposition. One cannot 'to remorse.' Remorse needs something else, such as repentance or regret, if it is to lead to an action.

The pragmatic task of living out the text also involves recognizing and engaging with the affective elements that are constitutive of some ethical descriptors, such as remorse, love, covetousness, and lust, for example. I agree that there may be no such affective elements with many other categories of ethical conduct: lying, stealing, and so can be expressed in deontological categories. But being loving or angry, for example, are affective responses that lead to behaviours that are either ethical or unethical according to the nature of the behaviour. Other affective responses lead *only* to unwelcome ethical behaviour. Think of lust as an example. There can be no ethic about lust without the element of sinful wanting. The same is true of covetousness. We need to make a place to listen to and respond to the affective components of such ethical behaviours and give those affective components their due place in the analysis of the ethic itself.

The question arises whether it is possible to modify or shape one's affective responses? One can choose not to steal, but can one choose to feel love, or not to feel anger, for example? Cognitive behaviour theorists suppose that human behaviour is made up of thoughts, behaviours, and feelings, and that to change thoughts and behaviours – which we can do through making choices – can lead to a change in feelings. The change comes

[21] I personally remain unconvinced. John's Gospel grounds love as the basis of moral behaviour (Jn. 13.34) and in the Synoptic Gospels, the twin command to love God and people appears to be the organizing principle – the *Grundnorm* – of ethical behaviour (Matt. 22.35–40, Mark 12.28–34, Luke 10.27).

about through a process, and implicit in the theory is that we do not change feelings by no-more-than-occasional decisions of the will.

The generally held contemporary view is that affective responses are constitutive of identity and personhood and do not change. We see this illustrated in Paul's life: before his conversion he was passionate, combative, single-minded, and even ruthless. We see these qualities still evident in his letters.[22] The difference is that the qualities had become redirected Godward, for the sake of the kingdom of God.

What makes it possible for Christians to change, so that their affective responses are reshaped away from sin and towards grace? In Christ, Christians are made new (2 Cor. 5.20, Gal. 6.15) and through the Spirit freed to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6.4). The regenerative power of God can transform Christians to live out the renewed minds that God has given them (Rom. 12.2). So, Christians face a choice in their renewed state: either to be 'conformed to this world,' that is, to continue in their former unregenerate ways, or to be 'transformed[23] by the renewal[24] of their minds,' to discover the 'good, acceptable, and perfect 'will of God and to practise it in their daily lives (Rom. 12.2). This is not a passive process (despite what 2 Cor. 3.18 could be regarded as suggesting); rather, it involves 'putting to death' some disreputable behaviours and dispositional tendencies by 'putting on' what is new and different (Col. 3.5, 12) through the regenerative work of the Spirit of Christ. Those who 'walk by the Spirit' (Gal. 5.16) make choices both about what to put aside and what to seek to develop. It is a case of working on and so 'working out' one's new status in Christ. True, God is at work in us, but that is to change us to 'work and to will for his good pleasure' (Phil. 2.12–13).[25]

To some extent, the New Testament reflects an important change in the Bible in the way moral conduct and ethics were thought about. Broadly speaking, the focus of the Old Testament was on deontological ethics ('Thou shalt …' or 'Thou shalt not …') often expressed apodictically ('If you do this, then …'). The New Testament reflects much more of the Greek, secular approach to ethics, with its emphasis on the development and training of behaviour to be virtuous. According to the secular Greek way of thought, moral advancement and both virtue and virtuous living came through the good management of one's passions (approximately what we mean by 'emotions').[26] The New Testament suggests a different way through yielding to the Holy Spirit's transformative power.

So, what does this mean when it comes to affective dispositions that are marked out as ungodly in the New Testament? The person with an angry disposition, for example, is alerted to such a disposition by the Spirit of God, and by the grace and Spirit of God can

[22] E.g., Gal. 1.13, Phil. 3.6; 1 Cor. 15.9; Eph. 3.8; 1 Tim. 1.13–15

[23] The Greek word translated 'transformed' is from *metaphoroō* and (besides in Matt. 17.2 and Mark 9.12 in the accounts of the Transfiguration) occurs only in Rom. 12.2 and 2 Cor. 3.18.

[24] The word translated 'renewal' here is *anakainōsis* (see also Titus 3.5); the same idea is expressed elsewhere by the verb *anakainoō* in 2 Cor. 4.16 and Col. 3.10.

[25] None of this contradicts the modern bases of cognitive behaviour therapy referred to above.

[26] See Bash, *Remorse*, 23–30, 52–61.

choose patterns of behaviour and responses that accord with living by the Spirit. The anger does not go away as if 'by magic,' but it can be mitigated by conscious choices to live differently. The anger is not fed or indulged, but confronted, and sometimes redirected. Its place in the life of a believer will decrease with room in its place for what is godly.

Living this sort of way alerts the human conscience to the extent to which we remain under 'the power of sin.' People touched by the Spirit will have 'the eyes of their hearts enlightened' (Eph. 1.18) and come to recognize not only do they need to *do* differently in the future (that is, to repent), but also that they need to *be* different, because they are not the sort of people God would have them be. Some may no more than regret that this is so; others, deeply touched by the Spirit, will be remorseful, and their remorse will coalesce into repentance. We see this in the case of Paul as he looked back on his former persecution of Christians.[27]

So, in summary, some ethical behaviours are incomplete in their description without taking account of affect. Feeling remorseful or repentant are examples. The affect is a *response* to prior behaviour. The affect drives change and motivates change. Other ethical behaviours are tied to affect and are *preceded* by affect, as in the case of lust or covetousness, for example. In the case of such behaviours, there can be no unethical behaviour without the preceding affect. And when it comes to repentance, affect does have an important part to play. The way affective dispositions are expressed in behaviours can be reshaped and redirected from godless ways through the choices people make as a result of the transformative enabling of the Holy Spirit.

[27] See footnote 22, above.

