**Prove Your Sincerity**

Sometimes a person says he is “sorry”, and we want to trust his words are sincere. But the Old Testament procedure provides proof of his sincerity. “Speak to the sons of Israel, ‘ When a man or woman commits any of the sins of mankind, acting unfaithfully against the LORD, and that person is guilty, then he shall confess his sins which he has committed, and he shall make restitution in full for his wrong and add to it one-fifth of it, and give it to him whom he has wronged.” (Num. 5:6-7). First off, he doesn’t just say he is “sorry”, he “confesses his sins”. He states what he has done wrong.

Secondly, he “makes restitution in full”. Whatever he has taken, stolen, damaged on purpose, he fully replaces. I remember an older man who became a christian late in life. But prior to becoming a Christian, he talked about stealing from Walmart, Target, etc in. his younger days. Then about 6 months after that conversation he talks to me that he has come into some money. He wanted to know what he should do with it. I suggested that he give it to the stores he has stolen from. Needless to say, it didn’t go over very well. He didn’t like the idea. At this point, most of us would doubt his sincerity. But we are not done yet!

Thirdly, he is to “add to it one-fifth of it”. If a person is willing to take this step, very few people would doubt their sincerity. So if you had stolen $1000 from Walmart, then you give back $1200! I sometimes wonder what our civil laws in America would be like if we enacted this principle as law. Would not the result be if we enacted such a law that our society would tend to be more loving our neighbor as ourselves?

But we are not done yet. After he gets this far, in his heartfelt repentance, he is to offer the “ram of atonement” v.8. A quick search on the internet tells me, “ Rams will also cost more – from $400 to $500 and potentially more.” (https://faunafacts.com/sheep/average-sheep-price/). I think at this point, no one would doubt his sincerity. 1). Confesses sin. 2) Restores “in full” 3). adds 20% to it. 4). offers an expensive ram. Likewise, In the New Testament, “Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.”And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.” (Luke 19:8-9). Jesus didn’t doubt his sincerity. Zaccheus proved it. So the next time we become aware that we have wronged someone, a store, a company, whoever, let us consider how we might go about proving our sincerity. Dan Peters