

Should anyone say sorry if they don't really mean it?



'If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:8-9

My start point for this question is confession to God. Confession is related to humility in that it is to do with being real about who we are in the light of who God would have us be. True confession is therefore an acknowledgment of guilt and weakness and acceptance of our need for forgiveness. Not only are we to be sorry but we are also called to repent. As Barnaby said in the last Tom Tom 'Asking for forgiveness is one thing, then moving forward along Christ's road is quite another.'

So what could our motives be for saying sorry, either to God or to other people, without meaning it? To earn forgiveness cheaply perhaps; or maybe to get out of trouble. I guess that if we are genuinely sorry we have to be prepared to take the consequences of our actions and if appropriate, rectify the situation that we have caused.

I might also consider under this question the times when we say sorry unnecessarily. Apologising for things we don't need to apologise for. Maybe we do this as a way of avoiding confrontation. Perhaps, for a quiet life, we sometimes choose inappropriately to take the blame.

Finally, I refer to the times when we use 'sorry' when requesting something of another person. Whilst the request may be entirely valid and not demanding of an apology, it probably doesn't hurt to recognise the trouble to which the other person may have to go in order to meet that request. Sorry is the word that we seem to choose to meet that function.

Steve