

Repentance: The Key to Our Relationship with God (Go To Meeting)

Eduardo Elizondo—June 25, 2021

We're going to start by talking about one Scripture in the book of Proverbs

Proverbs 16:2: "**All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes**, but the LORD weighs the spirits ..."

We're going to focus on the first part of the verse. We can see here that it may be or may not be that our ways are actually clean. Sometimes we don't have the ability to see those things.

Verse 25: "There is a way that **seems right to a man**, but the end thereof is the way of death."

This is human nature; this is really part of what we are at our core. We do have this propensity to think that our ways are clean, that we're doing good, that we're doing okay, and our ways seem right to us.

But sometimes that's not true. Sometimes our ways seem right to us, but we're not going necessarily the right way. Overall I'm not referring about everything, but it's just this inability sometimes to take a look at ourselves first. We know that in Matt. 7 Jesus talks about being able to see 'the beam in our own eyes' first as opposed to just focusing on the sliver in the eye of our neighbor or brother.

This is one of the things that is very important that we really reflect on; "**All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes**,..." We all have this. It says, "**All the ways** of a man..." We know that not all of our ways are clean. But they are all are *in our own eyes*, otherwise we wouldn't be doing that.

Sometimes we struggle, and know what we're not going in the right path. But it's very interesting because it's inability to see 'the beam in our own eye'—as Jesus Christ described in Matt. 7—is very inherent in our nature. This is part of how God made us. It's not necessarily how God made Adam, but this is the nature that we have inherited from them as far as the 'the law of sin and death' that we have. This inability that we have to really understand all the time whether our ways are good and clean, or not!

There's an antidote to that, there's a very, very important antidote on this, and that is obviously **repentance**, because that is the key:

- the key to our relationship with God
- the key to not fall into this trap of

all our ways seemingly clean in our own eyes!

It's very important that we understand this antidote, which is repentance. That's what we're going to talk about today.

It's interesting and a fact that the word 'repentance,' not the concept of repentance, but just the word *repentance* is zero times in the Old Testament. It's not there! It does talk about people repenting and even God repented in Gen. 6 of having made mankind. Other people repented, obviously. We know that David repented from his sin with Bathsheba, and there are other examples of repentance.

However, the word *repentance* by itself in that state as a concept is not in the Old Testament at all. It is 24 times in the New Testament. It's definitely something that we're going to study: ***the concept of repentance and what this has to do with our relationship with God***, and really being the antidote to this trap of us falling into thinking that all our ways are clean. They are in our own eyes, that's part of how we're wired and part of our nature. ***We obviously acknowledge that that's not true!*** We know that! ***But:***

- How do we understand repentance?
- Do we have a good perspective of everything that it encompasses?
- Do we have a good perspective of everything that it is?
- How that it absolutely is in our walk with God?

Let's start looking at these Scriptures about repentance in the New Testament—as I said 24 times that the word repentance appears—and in Matt. 3 is probably the first one. I didn't do the research to see if it was the very first one, but:

Matthew 3:1: "Now, in those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, '**Repent**... [every first word] ...for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand'" (vs 1-2).

He said that because Jesus Christ was already alive. He was walking on the earth and beginning His ministry.

But John the Baptist said, "...**Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.**"

If we take this saying that John the Baptist started with: the Kingdom of God was at hand, because Jesus Christ was already on the earth. He was the representative of the Kingdom of God and was right there in their midst.

The Kingdom of Heaven was being preached. It hadn't been preached as such until then. There's nothing we can do about the Kingdom of Heaven being at hand. We know that it is, and it's going to happen and it's going to come, but the one thing that is our responsibility is *repent*. John starts with that!

John says that we have to repent! That's the thing that we can have a part in: *repenting!* We're going to talk about what repentance is, and how important repentance is to have

- that contrition
- that sorrow
- that understanding
- that remorse

of what we have done!

To confess our sins and repent from them is absolutely essential for us to understand today. The 'baptism of John' was a baptism of repentance.

Luke 3:2: "In *the time of the* priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, *the* word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness. And he went into all the country around the Jordan, **proclaiming the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins**" (vs 2-3).

So, we can summarize everything that John's ministry was about: *repentance!* He was proclaiming the baptism of repentance, and the center of baptism was of repentance for the remission of sins.

Repentance, as a definition, is *to turn from sin, to feel regret or contrition, but especially to change one's mind!* We know that it means that, to change direction and redirect!

It's not just sorrow, contrition or regret, *but it's to change and being willing to change!* This is the baptism that John was proclaiming, *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins!*

Verse 4: "As it is written in *the* book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, saying, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord; **make straight His paths.**"'"

It wasn't only about what John was

preaching, saying and doing in baptizing people and telling them to come to repentance, we can also understand this preparing "...the way of the Lord..." in the spiritual sense and personal sense, as well.

To prepare the way of the Lord, to prepare the way for Christ to come and call us and really come and dwell in us through His Spirit, as He wants to do. The way has to be prepared, and that preparation is repentance! That's what John came to do; he came to prepare the way of the Lord. Not just in a massive scale, but in an individual, personal scale.

He came to prepare the way of the Lord, because *we're going to see that repentance is that key, it's essential and the beginning of our relationship with God!* It's absolutely key, and we're going to see that it's so much more than that.

Verse 5: "Every valley shall be filled, and **every mountain and hill shall be made low**; and the **crooked places shall be made into straight paths**, and **the rough places into smooth ways.**"

We know that this is not only physical that this is going to happen.

Verse 6: "And **all flesh shall see the salvation of God.**"

We are called now, and *in the spiritual sense* this applies to us! That "...**every mountain and hill shall be made low...**" *That the way if flat and straight and clear!*

That's what God wants to do in our lives. To make that path clear, and straight and smooth. Jesus Christ said that 'everything that He said in secret will be screamed from the housetops. There's nothing in secret that will not be revealed.' He said those things, and that is what He's talking about here; those "...**crooked places...**" being made straight paths, *and **our crooked thoughts sometimes and our crooked attitudes and thoughts, to make them straight!***

He wants to make them straight and rough places into smooth ways. How? *Through repentance! That's what Jesus came to do!* That's why John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. It's that important.

In all of these things we can see at the macro level, in the physical way—the physical manifestation that will happen—but also *what God wants to do right now in all of us who seeing already the salvation of God in our lives:*

- as He works with us
- as He molds and shapes us
- as He's making those hills low

- as He's filling up those valleys

He's doing all those things right now!

Verse 7: "For this reason, he... [John the Baptist] ...said to the multitudes who were coming out to be baptized by him, 'You offspring of vipers, **who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?**'"

He called them vipers! In Matthew it says *multitudes of Pharisees and Sadducees*. He was to everybody! Those who would come and repent would flee the coming wrath, and that's what they were trying to do. That's why he asked them that question:

- "...who has forewarned you..." that this is going to happen?
- Who has alerted you that there's an opportunity here for salvation?

"...who has forewarned you to flee from the coming wrath?" *He calls them vipers, and we're going to see why.*

Verse 8: "Therefore, **bring forth fruits worthy of repentance...**"

- What are these fruits?
- What are the fruits of repentance?

Even though it's not necessarily written in that way in the Bible, but it is interesting that we all know how a repentant person acts. *It acts with:*

- humility
- contrition
- being completely honest
- humbly
- doesn't exalt him or her self

Those are the fruits of repentance!

- giving instead of taking
- being happy instead of envious
- doing all the things that show that the person has repented
- understanding all the things that God has done for that person
- understanding that God has given us so many things, so many blessings

Just understanding that and just that gratitude that is one of the fruits of repentance! To know that; no one has to explain that to him.

John warns them, as well; "... and **do not** begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham *for our father*,' **because I tell you that God has the power to raise up children to Abraham from these stones**' (v 8).

John basically told them, *don't do that!*

*Don't say that you have Abraham for your father, because that means nothing! God can do that any time He wants, even with stones. So, don't put all your hopes in that. **You need to bring forth fruits of repentance! And us, as well, in the Body of Christ!***

Not just because we've been called by God, or have been in the Church for many years, or a few years and are seeing all these things. We cannot just rest on that. This is also a warning for us to be bringing fruits "**...worthy of repentance...**"—*continuously, and not rely on:*

- we have the Sabbath
- we have the Holy Days
- we're keeping the commandments of God

They probably could have said the same thing, maybe better than you do. That's not a guarantee. It's all about a relationship. It's all about showing our heart to God, showing that we are repentant, and we are to be repenting every day. We're going to see a lot more of what repentance is all about in what John was telling them.

That's a warning for us, as well; not just for them, because we're also the children of Abraham if we are walking in faith like Abraham did.

Verse 9: "But the axe is already being laid to the roots of the trees. Therefore, every tree *that* is not producing good fruit... [the fruits of repentance] ...is cut down and is cast into *the* fire."

That was a key for all the Pharisees and the Sadducees; to repent from all the things that they were doing. To repent from their *religion of Judaism* that they were not only doing, but really bringing people into that, into that bondage! That's what it was. *John warned them!*

Verse 10: "And the multitudes asked him, saying, 'What then shall we do?'"

- What are these fruits worthy of repentance? *You're telling us that we should not just rely on our blood heritage and bloodline!*
- What are we supposed to do?

Verse 11: "And he answered *and* said to them, 'The one who has two coats, let him give to the one who has none; and the one who has food, let him do the same.'"

We're going to read more of these things to do and see these fruits worthy of repentance:

- really giving to the other
- taking care of those in need

These are absolutely essential; it's a fruit of repentance. However! We want to make sure that we

do understand repentance, and we repent before God.

Mainstream Christianity teaches just go straight to the works, go do what he says. In essence that what they were saying: ‘What should we do?’ It’s not really *how should we be* **or** *who should we become; it was:*

- What should we do?
- Can we get there now?
- What is the chore, God?
- Can we just do this?

John is telling them the things, but he’s not telling them really the root of it. He already told them that it’s really *repentance!*

We should not fall into the trap of just doing things for the sake of doing them. If they come from the heart, that’s really when it counts; ***when it comes from a repentant heart! A repentant attitude!*** That’s really what God wants above anything.

He wants us to repent every day! He wants to work with us more. To the degree that we repent, He’s going to cleanse us more and He’s going to make that path straight. Not that we’re not going to have any problems. The path that He can show us is more of the work that He’s doing. The path where it leads to Him when He’s making those crooked ways straight.

Verse 12: “Now, the tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, ‘Master, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘**Exact nothing beyond that which is appointed to you**’” (vs 12-13).

Pretty simple stuff! But they were doing that. They were:

- exacting more
- taking bribes
- overcharging

They were doing that! But John told them what it looks like. Just do what “**...is appointed to you**.”

- don’t take bribes
- don’t do all these other things
- don’t fall into covetousness

That’s really what he’s saying! Because if we repent from coveting, we’re not going to do that!

Verse 14: “Then those who were soldiers also asked him, saying, ‘And we, what shall we do?’ And he said to them, ‘**Do not oppress or falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.**’”

They were also taking bribes! They were also oppressing, falsely accusing and maybe doing people favors. We’ve learned in the last year and a half a lot of oppression from the government, from people in positions of authority.

- we know what that is
- we know oppression first hand
- we know false accusations
- we know a lot about this stuff now

This is what John was telling them; ***to do the fruits worthy of repentance!***

Verse 15: “But as the people were *filled* with expectation, and they were all reasoning in their hearts about John, whether or not he might be the Christ.”

The story continues, but this is really what he was calling them to. He was calling them to the *baptism of repentance*, of that contrition, of the change of ways. We’re going to see that ***repentance is really the beginning***—not only the beginning of our calling—***of every day!***

Mark 1:14: “Now, after the imprisonment of John, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time has been fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is near at hand; **repent and believe in the Gospel**’” (vs 14-15).

Once again, John really talks about the time had been fulfilled for the Messiah to arrive. He was there and started His ministry. The Kingdom of God is really there, right in front of them. But as far as the people who were listening, they were to do two things:

1. repent
2. believe the Gospel

I don’t know if we’ve ever seen it this way, but there are two parts here. It really is 50/50, it really is repentance ***and*** believing the Gospel. Believing the Gospel is very important, absolutely critical! But without repentance there’s nothing! ***There is nothing! Nothing even begins without repentance!***

In James it says that ‘even demons believe in God.’ They even know Him, they know Who He is! They identified Him when He was walking the earth.

What good was that? ***Nothing! Belief without repentance is nothing!*** This is how Jesus started His ministry: ***Repentance! It really is half of the whole process of conversion!*** It’s really ***our part!*** If there’s one part that is so super-important that we know that we do, ***it is to repent every day! Every single day!***

John 1 is where John the Baptist is talking about Jesus Christ, and he's declaring Who Jesus is and what He came to do.

John 1:10: "He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him... [everything; nothing was created without Him] ...but the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and **His own did not receive Him**" (vs 10-11).

It's not just talking about the Jews. We're all from God! We're all children of God. The genealogies goes all the way back to Adam, and Adam is a son of God. Very few people actually received Him, but He says:

Verse 12: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave authority to become *the* children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name."

As we saw, it's ***repent and believe the Gospel! Repent first, then believe!***

Verse 13: "Who were not begotten by bloodlines, nor by *the* will of *the* flesh, nor by *the* will of man, but **by the will of God.**"

- it is the will of God that we be called right now
- it is the will of God that we come to Him
- it is the will of God that we repent
- it is the will of God that He would make the way plain for us to know Him more

That can only be accomplished through repentance!
That's the beginning, the key that starts the process!

Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), full of grace and truth. John testified concerning Him, and proclaimed, saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, "He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me"' (vs 14-15).

John was declaring that Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. He came in the flesh now.

Verse 16: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."

We know that that grace is that possibility, that access that we have to God, the possibility to have a relationship with God. That we can walk with Him, and have a relationship with Him. That He can work ***with*** us and work ***in*** us, that He can ***dwell in us! That's the grace!*** He has given us grace upon grace:

- calling us
- working with us

- teaching us
- showing us

continuously!

But it all starts with repentance! Those are the first words when He was starting His ministry: ***repent and believe the Gospel!***

Verse 17: "For the Law was given through Moses, **and the grace and the Truth...** [it's not either or; it's not the Law or the grace and the Truth, added to the Law] ...**came through Jesus Christ.**"

- He came to reveal the Father
- He came to reveal Himself
- He came for us to understand what this life is all about

But it starts with repentance! That's the key!

Luke 15 is about repentance! We're going to see *how important and how wonderful repentance really is!* How key!

Luke 15: 1: "Now, all the tax collectors and the sinners were drawing near to hear Him; and the Pharisees and the scribes criticized *Him*, saying, 'This *Man* welcomes sinners and eats with them.' Then He spoke this parable to them, saying" (vs 1-3)

Jesus didn't respond to them straight up! He spoke this parable:

Verse 4: "Which man of you who has a hundred sheep, and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost, *searching* until he finds it?" **Who wouldn't do that?**

Verse 5: "And when he finds *it*, he lays *it* on his shoulders, rejoicing; and after coming to his house, he calls together *his* friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost'" (vs 5-6).

It's very interesting what He says next; very, very insightful!

Verse 7: "I tell you that likewise, **there shall be joy in heaven...** [this is the One Who was in heaven and came down and the Who tabernacles among us] ...**over one sinner who repents...** [more joy in heaven] ...*more* than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance."

So, he has a hundred sheep and he goes after the one that is lost. There is more joy in heaven for one sinner—one of us sinners that repents—"...than over ninety-nine righteous ones who have no need of repentance."

- Who are those 99? *They don't exist!*

- Who is the man who has not sinned?
- Who are the 99 righteous who have no need of repentance?
- Who is that person who has no need of repentance? *It doesn't exist!*

There isn't a person that doesn't have need of repentance! We all do, every day! But there's joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, every day! When we become before God the Father and Jesus Christ, and we ask to be forgiven and we repent from the heart!

Verse 8: "Or what woman who has ten coins, if she should lose one, **does not light a lamp and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds it?**"

Jesus is talking the scribes and Pharisees! These guys hide the cummin and anise like the tiny little grains of everything. Of course, losing one of these coins, he's going to do this: "...**light a lamp and sweep the house, and search diligently until she finds it?**"

Verse 9: "And after finding *it*, she calls together *her* friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I lost.' I tell you *that* in like manner, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (vs 9-10).

This is you and me! This is all of us every day when we come and repent before God! There is joy in heaven when we do that. Why? *Because those are the hearts that God can work in!* Only the ones who repent! ***Repent and believe the Gospel! Nothing else! There's nothing else!***

Jesus continues after telling them this. He already told them that over 99 righteous that don't need repentance; He was telling them a view of all of you who are so good and so pure, so righteous, that you don't need repentance! But there's joy in heaven for one of them than for all of you together, all of you.

God is not interested in numbers! He's interested in the heart of those who are truly seeking Him in sincerity and in Truth! With one He can work as opposed to 99 that think that they are good. It's also a warning for us who are in the Church and know all these things; that God is continuing to work with us, teaching us all these things so that:

- we don't fall
- we don't let go
- we don't despair
- we repent

That's the antidote, the key!

We can get discouraged when we fall again unto the same sin, the same habits, the same thing that seems to come with our DNA and rips us apart and others, too. But there's one thing we can do and that's ***repent! That's what God expects, and that's what He wants! That's where there's joy in heaven when we do that; every single day!***

Verse 11: "Then He said, 'A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me.' And he divided to them *his* living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And **there he wasted all his substance, living in debauchery**'" (vs 11-13).

I can only imagine what he was using that money for, his inheritance!

Verse 14: "But after he had spent everything... [touched rock-bottom] ...there arose a severe famine throughout that country... [Doesn't that happen, 'when it rains, it pours?'] ...and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (vs 14-15).

Jesus was talking the scribes and Pharisees. To feed swine was absolutely the bottom of the bottom of the bottom; the worst thing you could ever do, feeding swine!

Verse 16: "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him."

This is amazing! These are cornhusks that pigs eat and no one would give him anything. Even the pigs were better than this man. No one gave him anything.

Verse 17: "And when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have *an* abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger?'"

He realized what he had! It's very interesting, because we're going to see how repentance comes about, true repentance from the heart.

Verse 18: "I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you... [this is how we know that this is true repentance]: ...and I am no longer worthy to be called your son; **make me as one of your hired servants**'" (vs 18-19).

Begging! Begging at the bottom of the bottom, because his servants had a better life than he had. "...**make me as one of your hired servants.**"

Begging! Really understanding where he was and what he had done! He was really thinking about that! Thinking about begging!

Verse 20: “And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, **his father saw him and was moved with compassion**, and ran *and* embraced him, and ardently kissed him.”

We know the story; we’ve studied this many times from the side of the father and what the father does. But let’s put ourselves in the shoes of the son for a moment; **from the perspective of repentance!**

Verse 21: “And his son said to him...”—*because he truly repented!*

When he saw his father who was moved with compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him because he was back, regardless of the smell that he had for he was feeding pigs.

He could have said easily, if this was not true repentance, if all he wanted was to fill his belly... He could have thought ‘he hasn’t sent me away, he feeds me, he loves me, he’s showing me his love.’ If he would have stopped there, he would have been fine. But it’s written this way because this is exactly what God expects: *true repentance!*

Verse 21: “And his son said to him ‘Father, I have **sinned against heaven and before you**...’”

He first recognized what it was: *sin against heaven! Sin against God!* He put himself in this place.

“...and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servant, ‘Bring out a robe, **the best robe**... [Why? *Because he repented!*] ...and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet” (vs 21-22).

This is how much joy there is in heaven. This is how good looks at us as a Father, **IF** we do what the son did.

Verse 23: “And bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry.” *I love him! I want to make a feast for my son!*

Verse 24: “For this my son was dead... [before repentance] ...but is alive again...”—**because he repented from the heart, and I know it and can see it!**

We can deceive a lot of people, **but we cannot deceive God!** Sometimes we can even deceive ourselves, **but God knows when it’s from the heart and it’s sincere, when it’s deep!** This is what He thinks of us, *that we were lost and now we’re found!*

“...and he was lost, but is found.’ And they began to be merry.... [true repentance] ...But his elder son was in a field; and when he was coming *back, and* approached the house, he heard music and dancing” (vs 24-25).

Maybe the elder son is us! We’ve been called before maybe the great innumerable multitude and others. **This is a warning!**

Verse 26: And after calling one of the servants nearby, he inquired what these things might be. And he said to him, ‘Your brother has come *home*, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him safe and well” (vs 26-27)—*and well because of what he did!*

He repented, because he acknowledged what he had done. The father was ecstatic, but so was the reaction of the older brother.

Verse 28: “Then he was angry and would not go in.” *He let envy set in, anger and envy!*

As a result, his father came out and pleaded with him. Sometimes that happens to us. Sometimes we get set in our ways and it’s not until God shows us somehow, He shows us something through His Word and points out what it is that we did wrong. Then we repent, and then we get it!

Verse 29: “But he answered *and* said to *his* father, ‘Behold, I have served you so many years, and never did I transgress your commandment; yet, you never gave me a kid, so that I might make merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him” (vs 29-30).

This is for all of us; beware that we don’t become like that with the great innumerable multitude if that happens in our lifetime. We know that that’s going to happen, but if it happens in our lifetime, we can see this. They lived in debauchery and did what they wanted and just repented at the last hour.

Do you not agree with me on the price, like the parable of the hired workers? This is a warning for us that we don’t take this attitude. That when someone truly repents that we forgive them, and we receive that joy, like the joy in heaven and the joy of the Father.

Verse 31: “Then he said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that *is* mine is yours. But it was fitting to make merry and rejoice because your brother was dead, **and is alive again**... [he wasn’t physically dead] ...**and was lost, but is found**” (vs 31-32).

He ties it with the other two parables, with the coin and the sheep. This is exactly what God wants; **He wants us to come back to our senses and repent every day!**

Psalm 85:4: “Restore us, O God of our salvation, and cause Your anger toward us to cease.”
Sometimes we feel like this:

Verse 5: “Will You be angry with us forever? Will You draw out Your anger to all generations? Will You not give us life again, so that Your people may rejoice in You” (vs 5-6).

*Pleading with God, v 7: “**Show us Your mercy, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation....** [this is like the father pleading] ...I will hear what God the LORD will speak; for He will speak peace to His people, and to His saints... [a key aspect of repentance] ...but let them not turn again to folly” (vs 7-8).*

This is very, very important that we don’t go back in our ways again, because if Jesus instructed His disciples, if somebody sins again, again and again—70 times 70, to forgive him every time, He will do the same if we repent from the heart.

It’s obviously important that we’re not playing games with God and this is truly sincere, because we’re going to see the other aspect of this. We’re going to go back to where we began, that **every way of man is clean in his own eyes!**

Romans 2:1: “Therefore, you are without excuse, O man, everyone who judges *another*; for in that in which you judge the other, **you are condemning your own self; for you who judge another are doing the same things.**”

It’s so interesting that it says that, because it might not be the exact same thing. Sometimes we’re judging another and we see the speck in the other’s eye, or the sliver, and we don’t see our beam. We might not be doing the exact same things, but we’re doing the same because in our conduct we have our own things that we have to work on and repent from.

How many times conflict arises because we just focus on the behavior of the other person. But we’re doing the same things because sin *is sin!* Human nature *is human nature!* It expresses itself differently because we’re different people. But we’re doing the same thing.

Verse 2: “But we know that the judgment of God is according to Truth upon those who commit such things. Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?” (vs 2-3).

Another warning for us. We are to lead by example; lead with repentance! It’s really difficult, especially when there’s hurt. It’s really difficult to really forgive and really repent.

- repent of those emotions
- repent of those things

There is human nature, but that doesn’t make them right, and that doesn’t excuse them. We don’t want to fall into this.

Prov. 26—this is exactly what the Apostle Paul is talking about:

Proverbs 26:12 “Do you see a man wise in his own conceit? *There is* more hope for a fool than for him.”

That’s exactly what Paul is talking about in Rom. 2; that we’re judging others in their things, instead of letting Christ judge, Who said that ‘all judgment has been given to Me.’ Put things in God’s hands.

Do not fall into the trap of our own ways, or fall into the trap of the errors of others, and the mistakes of others.

Romans 2:4: “Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?”

It’s like you’re looking at others, but don’t you know that it’s really how God loves you? How He shows you patience? Kindness? Mercy? That He’s forbearing! And that leads you to repentance!

We know, we felt it, when we repented and God started to show us all the things that we were learning. It does make our heart tender. It does make us

- thankful
- contrite
- really in a state of mind where God can work
- in the state of the heart where God can really do His work
- where He can really show us

He knows that we’re actually going to think about it and accept the things that had been pointed out to us, whether:

- by others
- or by the results of what we do
- or by the Word of God in the things that we read

It is His graciousness that leads us to repentance!

Repentance:
The Key to Our Relationship with God
(Go To Meeting)

Verse 5: “But you, according to your own hardness and unrepentant heart, are storing up wrath for yourself against *the* day of wrath and revelation of God’s righteous judgment.”

The way to stop this is through repentance, to stop the storing of wrath for ourselves. There’s nothing that we have not received. There is nothing that is not going to be out in the open. You might as well repent now. Might as well ring in before God now, confessing our sins to God, so that we don’t store up wrath for ourselves.

Verse 6: “Who will render to each one according to his own works: on the one hand, to those who with patient endurance in good works are seeking glory and honor and immortality—eternal life” (vs 6-7).

One of the good works here is *repentance!* Probably the first one. The good work is repentance so that God can do the other works in our heart. **That’s the key to that relationship with God! Come in true repentance, laying it all before Him, verbalizing is good!** It’s good to verbalize things in prayer to God, openly and meaning the things that we are carrying. That’s what burdens us. It’s normal and natural. We have this human nature, this carnality. There’s no denying it, and we’re going to fall again into some of those things. Hopefully less and less every time.

Hopefully a quicker repentance. That’s exactly what happened to King David. He committed many, many errors and sins before God, but what he had is that he was quick to repent. When God showed him, he was quick to repent. That’s why he was a man after God’s own heart. He was very quick.

Matthew 9:9: “And passing from there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ And he arose and followed Him. Then it came to pass when Jesus sat down to eat in the house that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And after seeing *this*, the Pharisees said to His disciples, ‘Why does your Master eat with tax collectors and sinners?’” (vs 9-11). ***Why? Why is He doing this?***

Verse 12: “But when Jesus heard *it*, He said to them, ‘Those who are strong do not have need of a physician, but those who are sick.’”

We know that the entire world is sick, including us! God has called us to change us and transform us, cleanse us and heal us from that sickness, *that spiritual sickness!*

Verse 13: “Now, go and learn what this

means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’...”

What they were doing was a sacrifice. The sacrifices of their laws and commandments that they made, but what God desires is mercy, and this is the reason why:

“...For I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance” (v 13).

- Who is the one who is in this world that is not a sinner?

- Who is the one who does not sin?

We don’t practice sin anymore, as John says; but:

- Who is the one who does not sin?

He came to call sinners to repentance! The entire world to very same key, the same thing that opens everything! *Every single day!*

It’s just before baptism; that’s very important. This is how we know, from the Word of God:

Matthew 6:6: “But you, when you pray, enter into a private room; and after shutting the door, pray to your Father Who *is* in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret shall reward you openly.”

We know this outline; this is a skeleton of a prayer. We’re supposed to put all the flesh on these bones.

Verse 11: “Give us this day our daily bread”—*which means it’s a daily prayer!* Repentance comes right next to it:

Verse 12: “And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors.”

It’s expected! Everyday we come and ask God for forgiveness. The Proverb that we read in the beginning in chapter 16 is over here in chapter 21, but it says more of the perspective of what repentance is all about:

Proverbs 21:2: “**Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD ponders the hearts.**”

The Lord ponders whether we have a repentant attitude or not. He knows and we can ask him every day:

Please give me true repentance, please lead me to repentance, give me that, give me a repentant attitude, a contrite heart.

That’s the heart that God can work in! That’s the one whom He wants. He came to call sinners to repentance. There’s joy in heaven every day when you and I go before God on our knees to ask for forgiveness. Every day when we ask, if we ask

sincerely.

Sometimes first thing in the morning we really haven't done much, but we can ask Him to forgive us from the things that we are from our nature. Not just from what we do, but from the root, and ask Him to change that; change who we are in the heart.

Psalm 84:5: "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You; Your ways are in their hearts."

That's what God wants, He wants His ways in our heart. He wants us to repent every single day, so that He can continue to work deeper and deeper.

Verse 12: "O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You."

Blessed is that one that was lost, but is found! That one that the Good Shepherd goes and searches for him. He has come and He has searched for each and every one of us. He does that daily, because He wants us to repent every day, because He's working deeper and deeper in our heart and mind.

He's showing us more things! So, don't get discouraged when something comes up, something rears its ugly head again. Don't get discouraged! **Repent!**

- it's an opportunity to bring joy to our Father in heaven
- it's an opportunity for Him to cleanse our heart even more; even deeper, in those hidden places, and to scrape it

Sometimes we have some plaque in there, like really deep in. He wants to scrape it! We just have to ask Him to do that; He will do that when we repent from the heart.

When we do those things we won't be of the 99, **but we be that one because we're precious in His sight when we repent!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Proverbs 16:2
- 2) Matthew 3:1-2
- 3) Luke 3:2-15
- 4) Mark 1:14-15
- 5) John 1:10-17
- 6) Luke 15:11-32
- 7) Psalm 85:4-8
- 8) Romans 2:1
- 9) Proverbs 26:12
- 10) Romans 2:4-7
- 11) Matthew 9:9-13
- 12) Matthew 6:6, 11-12

- 13) Proverbs 21:2
- 14) Psalm 84:5, 12

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 7
- Genesis 6

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