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Change Your Mind

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Change Your Mind

Day 11

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? (Romans 2:4)

“The *goodness* of God leads you to repentance.” Another translation reads: “God’s *kindness* leads you toward repentance” (NIV). God’s nature of lovingkindness makes a way for repentance.

But what is repentance? What is it that knowing God’s goodness and kindness leads us toward?

Repentance does not mean beating yourself up and feeling guilty because you have done something wrong. It is not confessing your sins to a priest or kneeling in guilt-ridden prayer. Repentance may conjure up images of an angry father shouting, “Say you are sorry ... or else,” but this image springs from an incorrect understanding of repentance ... and of God.

The Greek word for repentance is *metanola*. *Metanola* refers to a change of mind from confusion to clarity. Repentance indicates a radical reorientation—a paradigm shift—in the way we think of God. It implies a true change of heart resulting in a wiser view.

John the Baptist bridged the gap between the law-based system of the Old Testament—the “Old Covenant”—and the grace-based system of the New Testament—the “New Covenant.” He came preaching, “a baptism of *repentance* for the remission of sins” (Luke 3:3). God was about to show humanity His stunning goodness, and a completely new mindset was necessary to grasp it.

John announced Jesus’ arrival, “*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:2). He was saying, “Change your mind. God in heaven is drawing near. Get ready to know God as you have not known Him before.”

Seeing God’s kindness in Jesus Christ changes our mind about who God is ... and about who we are. It is the goodness of God that leads us to repentance.

How did we get into the position of seeing God incorrectly in the first place? Why is it so difficult for us to understand God is *agape*?

Our problem is with the “opened” eyes we inherited when Adam and Eve ate from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Before the fall, the first couple had only known God’s goodness, acceptance and care for them. But after eating the forbidden fruit, their diseased eyes saw life through the veil good and evil; they saw that God was good, pure and right ... and they were not. They had done evil and holy God hated evil.

In their darkened minds, the only way back was to try and win God’s acceptance by following rules to make themselves good. But even when God Himself gave His laws to follow (the Ten Commandments), people couldn’t obey; the law-based system didn’t work.

Throughout the ages since the fall, people have used various religions (including Christianity), each with its own set of laws and moral codes, to get us back to the God we see with our “opened” eyes.

But God wants us to see Him as He really is: holy and hating sin, but loving us in spite of it.

And so, we are called to repent—to change our minds about Him—to see the goodness of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

When you know God is good, there is no need to hide from Him. In Christ, you do not need to fear that God will abandon you because of your sins. You do not have to punish yourself or try in your own strength to fix the bad side of yourself. You need not live with the stress and anxiety of trying to be “good” enough to satisfy your mind’s warped view of God.

Truly, “the goodness of God leads you to repentance.” Jesus came to open our eyes to who God really is ... so our minds would be changed and we could live in the freedom of knowing His love.

Ponder for a Moment

Regardless of your religious affiliation or lack thereof, in what ways might you be relying on good works or obedience to laws to make yourself right?

Consider how God may be calling you to repentance, not so much for moral failure or breaking the law, but for a change of mind in the way you think of Him.