

Family by Choice

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I. Family by Choice

a. God chooses us.

- i. God chose to create.
- ii. God chose to make a path to redemption.
- iii. God chooses to forgive.

b. We choose God.

- i. We choose repentance.
- ii. We acknowledge the path.

c. We choose where to fellowship.

- i. God commands us to fellowship.
- ii. God equips the ministers to in turn equip the body.

II. Family because of Repentance

a. Birth is the unifier.

- i. Physical birth – the choice was made to give life.
- ii. Spiritual birth – the choice was made to receive life.

b. Repentance is:

- i. Repentance is more than I'm sorry.**

1. Repentance is not simply regret, sorrow, or remorse. According to Matt 27:3, Judas had sorrow but not repentance.
 2. Regret, sorrow, or remorse can lead people to an alter but it is not the same as full repentance.
- ii. Repentance is a journey.**
1. **Remorse** – This is where repentance begins.
 2. **Repent**
 - a. This is the make it or break phase. Without a full understanding many will either not make the ultimate turn, or they will struggle to sustain the turn.
 - b. The biblical meaning of repentance from sin, is NOT referring to a simple decision, or choice. Biblical repentance - a change of mind - is the result of revelation.
 - c. Since the Fall we humans have needed revelation - “a lifting of the veil” - in order to see and understand truth.
 3. **Turn** –the final step in the process. The end result of repentance, not equivocal to repentance.

iii. 2 Chronicles pattern for repentance

2 Chronicles 7:14 (Living Bible) ¹² One night the Lord appeared to Solomon and told him, “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this Temple as the place where I want you to sacrifice to me. ¹³ If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust swarms to eat up all of your crops, or if I send an epidemic among you, ¹⁴ then if my people will humble themselves and pray, and search for me, and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear them from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land. ¹⁵ I will listen, wide awake, to every prayer made in this place. ¹⁶ For I have chosen this Temple and sanctified it to be my home forever; my eyes and my heart shall always be here.

¹⁷ “As for yourself, if you follow me as your father David did, ¹⁸ then I will see to it that you and your descendants will always be the kings of Israel; ¹⁹ but if you don’t follow me, if you refuse the laws I have given you and worship idols, ²⁰ then I will destroy my people from this land of mine that I have given them, and this Temple shall be destroyed even though I have sanctified it for myself. Instead, I will make it a public horror and disgrace.

1. Solomon receives the pattern.
2. Hezekiah rediscovers the pattern.
3. Manasseh was humbled to repentance.

2Chronicles 33:9-14:⁹ But Manasseh encouraged the people of Judah and Jerusalem to do even more evil than the nations the Lord destroyed when Israel entered the land. ¹⁰ Warnings from the Lord were ignored by both Manasseh and his people. ¹¹ So God sent the Assyrian armies, and they

seized him with hooks and bound him with bronze chains and carted him away to Babylon. ¹² Then at last he came to his senses and cried out humbly to God for help. ¹³ And the Lord listened and answered his plea by returning him to Jerusalem and to his kingdom! At that point Manasseh finally realized that the Lord was really God!

4. Josiah repents in humility.

- a. Josiah's Repentance -Josiah was ignorant of the law. God's word had been misplaced. Once he became aware of the law, Josiah immediately repented.

2 Chronicles 34:21-32 (TLB) ²¹“Go to the Temple and plead with the Lord for me!” the king told them. “Pray for all the remnant of Israel and Judah! For this scroll says that the reason the Lord's great anger has been poured out upon us is that our ancestors have not obeyed these laws that are written here.”

²² So the men went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum (son of Tokhath, son of Hasrah). (Shallum was the king's tailor, living in the second ward.) When they told her of the king's trouble, ²³ she replied, “The Lord God of Israel says, Tell the man who sent you,

²⁴ “Yes, the Lord will destroy this city and its people. All the curses written in the scroll will come true.²⁵ For my people have forsaken me and have worshiped heathen gods, and I am very angry with them for their deeds. Therefore, my unquenchable wrath is poured out upon this place.’

²⁶ “But the Lord also says this to the king of Judah who sent you to ask me about this: Tell him, the Lord God of Israel says, ²⁷ ‘Because you are sorry

and have humbled yourself before God when you heard my words against this city and its people, and have ripped your clothing in despair and wept before me—I have heard you, says the Lord, ²⁸ and I will not send the promised evil upon this city and its people until after your death.” So they brought back to the king this word from the Lord. ²⁹ Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, ³⁰ and the priests and Levites and all the people great and small, to accompany him to the Temple. There the king read the scroll to them—the covenant of God that was found in the Temple. ³¹ As the king stood before them, he made a pledge to the Lord to follow his commandments with all his heart and soul and to do what was written in the scroll. ³² And he required everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin to subscribe to this pact with God, and all of them did.

III. Family Forgives

- a. He who has been forgiven much should also forgive much.
- b. The Bible is clear concerning this topic...the heart condition of unforgiveness is unacceptable to the LORD.
- c. “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you” (Eph 4:31-32).
- d. Forgiveness is not given to others because it is deserved; it is given because it is required.

- e. Ultimately, our condition before Christ will define and dictate our relational condition with our spouses, children, extended family, etc. If we retain anger and bitterness in the absence of repentance, it becomes our defilement, sabotaging our peace, and dishonoring God.

The biblical process for change: Remorse, revelation, and repentance, turn back to God.

Too many churches are afraid to address biblical repentance. Too many believe that once I turn from sin I no longer need to repent. The Bible clearly states in Romans, a letter by Paul to believers, **“Therefore you have no excuse, every one of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that **the kindness of God leads you to repentance?** (Rom. 2:1-4).**

Paul clearly believed that repentance was a journey and that our first confession of sin and acceptance of God’s grace would be the first step of many along the journey. If we are still present on this earth, we have not arrived we are still in need of the grace extended by God through our act of repentance and we must still extend that grace to others.