



The journey toward
repentance

Bethany Baptist Church

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Romans 1: God's Wrath Against Mankind

WHY?

1. "suppress the truth"
2. "knew God" but "neither glorified Him nor gave thanks"
3. "their thinking became futile"
4. "their foolish hearts were darkened"
5. "claimed to be wise, they became fools"
6. "exchanged" Glory of God for "images" (idolatry)
7. "God gave them over" to their sinful desires
8. "exchanged the truth of God for a lie"
9. "worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator"
10. "God gave them over to shameful lusts" and a "depraved mind"

Romans 2: God's Righteous Judgment



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Step 1

Openly extend mercy to those outside the church.

"Speak and act as those going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to ANYONE who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!" James 2:12-13

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the same measure you use, it will be measured to you." Jesus, Matthew 7:1-2

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Step 2

Understand that we are ALL prodigals.

“I am the prodigal son every time I search for unconditional love where it cannot be found.” Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

“There is NONE righteous, no not one.” Romans 3:10

Step 3

Totally refuse to play the role of Pharisee.

“You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the SAME things. So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on THEM and yet do the SAME things, do you think you will escape God’s judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of HIS kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God’s kindness leads you toward repentance.” Romans 2:1-4

“Or do you think slightingly of His infinite goodness, forbearance and patience, unaware that God’s goodness gently draws you to repentance?” Weymouth Bible

Step 4

Recognize that the prodigal journey can be a long one. We must patiently wait, passionately pursue and creatively invest in pathways back to Jesus Christ.

“The farther I run away from the place where God dwells, the less I am able to hear the voice that calls me the Beloved, and the less I hear that voice, the more entangled I become in the manipulations and power games of the world.” Nouwen, *The Return of the Prodigal Son*

“Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” King Agrippa to the Apostle Paul Acts 26:28

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Step 5

Encourage repentance in others by modeling safe, authentic and vulnerable repentance in our lives.

“If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.” 2 Chronicles 7:14

“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” Jesus, Matthew 7:5

“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

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Step 6

Affirm the God-given gifts, talents and traits that connect Prodigals to their God-given calling and life purpose.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future...” Jeremiah 29:11

Step 7

Construct “reservoirs” where returning Prodigals can be properly cared for. We will then be confident to labor in our community as “fishers of men.”

“You will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you.” Jeremiah 29:12-14

Step 8

Hold fast to the promise that our sovereign Lord of the Harvest is actively working to call prodigals home.

“Cast your net on the other side. I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.” Jesus, John 21:6, John 4:35

“Come to me ALL you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest for your souls.” Jesus, Matthew 11:28-30