

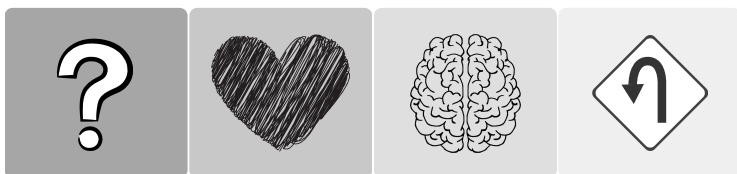
LOVE *of* Alpha & Omega

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Bro. Elvis Shawn Peters

(www.soul2win.com)

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Repent

God points out through the Scriptures that our thoughts and our actions are often disconnected. Though we may draw near to Him outwardly, in reality, our hearts and deeds are far from Him. If we truly desire to reveal Jesus in our lives, God expects a transformation within our hearts. In this chapter, we will learn the true meaning of the word “Repent”—the very call of God inviting us to turn to Him.

Repent

So far, we know the preparation which God did through Moses to meet with Israel. We have meditated on those verses in the previous chapter. Now, this time, let us meditate on the words which Jesus spoke when He came to meet us. Although He gave us many words, the word He spoke for us to be prepared was: *“Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.”*

After Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness, He came and dwelt in Capernaum. (Matthew 4:17). From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”*

Notice the difference here:

The word given to the people of the Old Testament was: **“Be holy.”**

But to the people of the New Testament, it was: **“Repent.”**

Repent : Be Holy

The things which the Israelites had to do in order to become holy were: to put away foreign gods, to wash their clothes and to abstain from sexual relations. But till now, we have not fully understood this act of preparation.

It is not the body and the clothes, but the heart that God desires to be cleansed. The prophet Joel, having understood this, has spoken in his words as follows.

“Rend your heart and not your garments, and return to the Lord your God.”

- Joel 2:13

What God expected is for our hearts to turn toward Him. What we did was act as if we were even wiser than God by doing all the outward preparations He commanded. But God knew that, in our hearts, we were still far from Him, lacking inward readiness.

“The Lord searches all hearts and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts.”

- 1 Chronicles 28:9

Let us meditate on the word: “Repent”.



Repent is connected with the heart or mind.



Repent means to completely leave the direction one is going and go in another direction. Once we have turned, the vision we saw before will no longer stand before us; we are now on a different path, with someone else.

Observe the Child



Imagine a child who keeps crying over something. Suddenly, a sweet treat, a toy, or the mother diverts the child's mind. The child then begins to play as before.

The child forgets why he was crying, and the attraction of the new thing makes him forget the old.

But for God, who through Moses had done many mighty works to turn us back, it is again a disappointment. This time, He speaks directly: "Let your heart/mind turn to Me."

"Give me your heart, my son."

- Proverbs 23:26

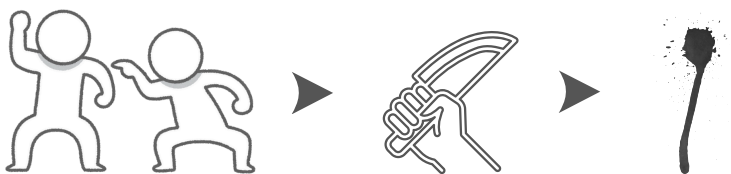
If we examine this heart, we can easily say a lot about a person. What they like, what they dislike, whether they are good or bad—many things are revealed in this place. You will act according to what your mind tells you. Whoever dwells in that mind, the mind will listen to them.

Now, let us observe how God has explained the connection between our mind and our actions.

Murder – Anger

For example, in the Old Testament, the command “You shall not murder” is something many of us have followed outwardly until now.

But in the New Testament, God points not to the act itself, but to the mind from which the act arises. He knows before us that we have given space in our hearts for that act, and says: “Repent.”



“Even the darkness is not dark to You;
The night shines as the day,
For darkness is as light with You.”
- Psalm 139:12

says the psalmist beautifully. The thoughts of our hearts are open before God.

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’”
- Matthew 5:21

“But I tell you, whoever is angry with his brother without a cause will be liable to judgment; whoever says to his brother, ‘Raca,’ will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool,’ will be liable to the hell of fire.”

- Matthew 5:21-22

Where is anger, and where is murder? Do both receive the same punishment? Let us observe how this works.

It is true that every action is first conceived in the mind before it manifests outwardly. The result of sowing the thought of anger in our mind is that, in the end, we reap the act of murder.

Thoughts Become Actions

Just as an embryo develops in the womb for nine months and becomes a child, so also is the connection between our thoughts and actions. For example, observe how a person's thoughts gradually develop before they give themselves over to the act of murder.

Through the actions a person does...

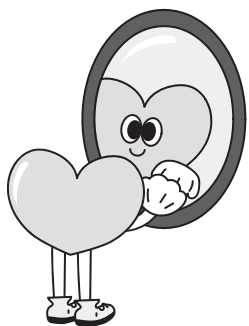
- “I” am affected
- I become angry and I feel hatred
- We reduce communication with that person

- We avoid seeing or meeting them
- We speak less about them to others, and speak angrily of them (“Raca” – worthless, useless).
- If we see them, our anger manifests on objects or people around
- If they dare to speak, harsh words are spoken (“fool”)
- Next comes direct physical confrontation
- Finally, murder

To avoid the ninth step, we must avoid the first step. The depth of God’s command, “You shall not murder,” is very great.

If our thoughts are not right, we cannot follow this command. Let us observe each step carefully:

1. ‘I’ am affected



When is the “I” inside me affected? If someone has not truly loved themselves, it is impossible to realize that the “I” inside is being affected. But the truth is, we all naturally love ourselves. That is why the words and actions of others can disturb us so much. This is what we call the Castle of the “I.”

For example, there are many who have built a mental castle regarding themselves—thinking, “I am honest, loving, righteous, just, blameless; this is my character, this is my property, this is my family, this is how patient I am; I am like this, I am like that.”

It is true that they love themselves. But what is astonishing is that, without our knowledge, this castle of the “I” begins to operate within us

2. ‘I’ Become Angry

Even a small crack in this castle allows the feeling of anger to enter. God desires that this feeling of anger should never arise within us. Moreover, He hates those who exclude God and praise their ‘self’.



Let us examine ourselves carefully. Isn't it true that... only if there is a castle will there be cracks; only if there is a castle of the ‘I’ in the mind will there be cracks of anger?

Let us continue reading with prayer to understand whether our love for ourselves is the reason we become angry with our brother.

3. We Avoid Speaking to Our Brother

It becomes very clear now that we are not standing in God's love. God asks,

"If you love those who love you, what reward do you have?"

- Matthew 5:46

In the same way, consider how much more we are commanded to love those who hate us.

It is very important to note: no one here has actually hated you. It is you who are filled with anger and hatred toward others. This is why God first wants us to deal with the beam in our own eye.

"Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? ... First, take the log out of your own eye...!"

- Matthew 7:3, 5



Now, this feeling of anger subtly hardens and prevents conversation. Outwardly, we may smile lightly, but inside, the anger burns.

4. We Avoid Appearing Before Our Brother

It is not right for us to harbor all faults within ourselves, hate others, and become angry with them. Let us read this again.

“Whoever is angry with his brother without a cause...”

- Matthew 5:22

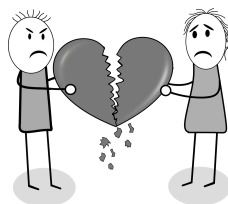
“The one who departs does so according to his own will.”

- Proverbs 18:1

The one who leaves and departs from his brother is the same—he has not stood in God’s love.

As you read this, pay attention to what your conscience tells you.

Does it insist loudly that our anger has a rightful cause?

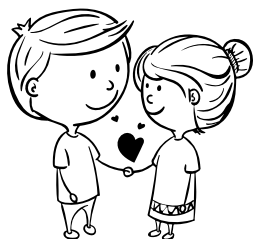


We may know all about that person—their faults, the harms they have caused, the evil deeds they have done—and make a long list of them. Yet, in doing so, we are still indirectly justifying ourselves. We have been carefully protecting the mental castle of the “I.” “I” insist that my anger is justified; my anger is right.”

God Himself said that one who is angry without cause is liable to judgment. But my anger—is a justified one!

If every action we do is meant to glorify the Lord, how does hating someone glorify Him in any way?

The root cause of all anger is that we ourselves have chosen who will receive our love.



In the castle of the “I” that we have built, we choose a person to dwell in it and pour out all our love upon them.

An important point to consider carefully is this: without God, neither do I exist, nor even the person whom I love.

The cause of this anger is that, instead of following God’s will, I try to act according to my own desires. You may say, “Someone has deceived me, and it is my right for me to be angry at them!”

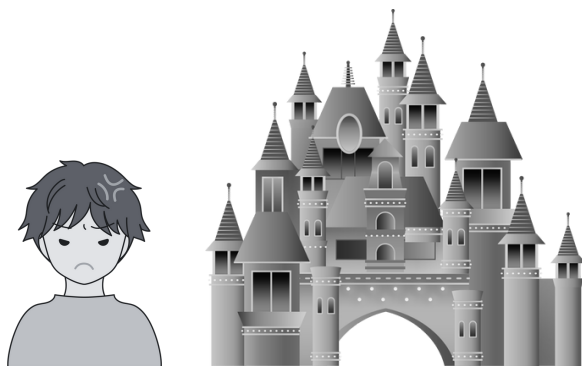
But no one has truly deceived you. Examine carefully where you have placed your trust—on a human being, or on the God who created humans.

Placing your trust in a human is futile. If you go beyond this and continue to place your trust in humans, it leads to disappointment, and from disappointment, anger follows.

If you are still justifying your anger, continue reading. All these efforts are meant to make you understand that God alone is worthy of your trust. Some may even feel anger toward God; for them as well, God will deal through the lessons of this book. Amen.

5. Anger in Words – ‘Raca’ – Toward a Brother, About a Brother

When I call my brother Raca (worthless), it is like criticizing God’s creation, His workmanship. The point to notice here is that our brother has become worthless only “to us.” He has become worthless to me and to the mental castle of the “I” that I have built.



Often, if we carefully observe the people whom God chose to use, we see that they were sometimes people who hated themselves or even dared to end their own lives.

They would have been shattered from many sides in their lives. Many considered themselves worthless and believed that their lives had no purpose, and so thought of ending their life's course.

Until now, they believed they could achieve something, be useful to many, and that they had talent, effort, education, wealth, and people who loved them—all of which gave their life a sense of purpose.

The thought that they had some worth for themselves or for those around them gave direction and certainty to the course of their life.

Beliefs such as “I can do it” or “I have what it takes” became reasons for living life relying on the self—that is, trusting in themselves.

Suddenly, they realize that they can do nothing, their physical health is poor, their mental state is weak, they are flawed, they have no money, no wisdom, no strength, no love—and only shame and criticism remain.

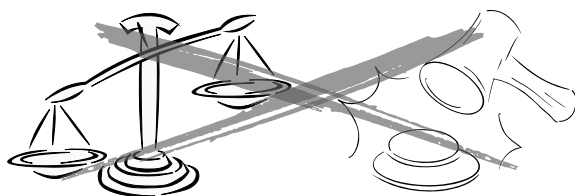


It is at the very moment when a person thinks to themselves, “My life has come to ruin, and I am useless from now on,” that Jesus Christ, as Lord, calls us into His kingdom.

It is only when we realize that the world we trusted so far is of no benefit to us, and that we cannot do any good for the world, that He chooses us.

We are exhausted, worn out in our journey. We have embraced nothing but failure. The question arises: Why should I live? God allows us to continue on our path only until we appear completely powerless and ineffective.

Now we can be used by God. Until we are completely powerless in ourselves, God cannot accomplish anything through us. It is precisely because we do not recognize ourselves as dust and instead have built a mental castle that God refrains from acting through us.

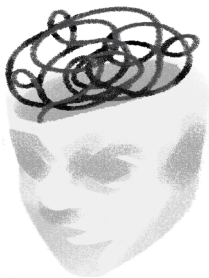


Truly, the one who is used by God is useless to the world. Therefore, it is not right for us to judge any person whom God is using. Calling someone worthless is not our task. Every thought and action of ours should glorify God.

(1 Corinthians 1:28-29)

6. Expressing Anger on Things Around Us

The anger that had been lying dormant in our thoughts until now is beginning to take action. The point to notice is that, until this moment, no one knows that I am angry—except God. That is why God, who closely observes our minds, emphasizes the necessity for our minds to be right. Until now, my thoughts and actions had been different—I appeared to be a good person in my conduct.



The truth is that the anger, which has not yet manifested in my actions, has been within me for all this time or for days. Even if we claim that we have changed and have become a righteous person, and even demonstrate it through our actions, the anger may still remain rooted within us.

That is why God specifically says, “**Repent.**” Just because you have not committed murder until now does not mean you can claim to be a good person. Your inner mind must turn—it must turn away from anger.

If thoughts become actions, then God clarifies the necessity for your mind to change.

God wants all our thoughts and mental inclinations to be holy. He desires them to reflect the thinking of the holy.

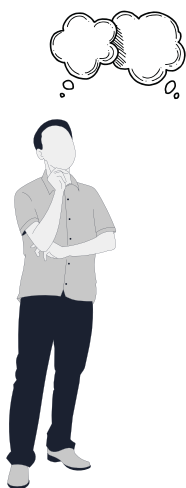
“The Lord searches all hearts and understands every intent of the thoughts.”

- 1 Chronicles 28:9

The days are past when we deceived ourselves into thinking we were righteous just because we kept commandments outwardly. Let us remember the words that God spoke to the Pharisees:

“Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

- Matthew 23:28



Now the anger hidden in your heart begins to grow and shows itself in action. Surely, one day, your deeds will expose you. To people, you may only then appear as a sinner. But to the One who searches the heart, everything is already in the light. That is why He calls you to correct your thoughts and says: **“Repent.”**

7. Fool

Have you noticed how many mistakes are upon us? The first mistake is loving our self — the “I” — and putting our trust in it. The second mistake is pointing to another as the cause when that castle of “I” is broken. Another mistake is having a speck in our own eye, yet blaming our brother. But the greatest mistake of all is to pass judgment on any man who is the handiwork of God.



So then, carrying all these mistakes within us, to unjustly call our brother “Fool” is equal to accusing God and His creation.

Let us quickly look at a few Bible verses on how God has created us: We are:

- A crown of glory in the hand of the Lord (Isaiah 62:3)
- More Valuable (Luke 12:24)
- Called to be kings and priests (Revelation 1:6)
- Filled with the same Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13)
- Commanded to outdo one another in showing honor (Romans 12:10)

If God has created each person with such value and preciousness, how much more should we honor our brothers instead of calling them “Fool” or criticizing God’s creation — our fellow human beings?

In general, we take good care of our close friends. They receive our service, hospitality, gifts, and attention. And anyone who approaches us through that friendship also receives the same care. In the same way, it is our duty to honor everyone who is precious to Jesus.

We were created by the Lord. He is our beginning and our end. Without Him, we are nothing. We came into this world through Him, and even our final days are held in His hands. So consider the race we run in the meantime — a life lived with intensity, as if everything is in our hands. Yet the beginning is His, the end is His, and He rules over the entire journey in between.

During the time when the Lord Jesus Himself came and lived on this earth, He did not seek to pass judgment. Instead, He forgave everyone, thereby glorifying God the Father.

“A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.”

- Proverbs. 25:28

If we meditate on every word of God to purify ourselves, we will not pass judgment on others. Judgment belongs to God alone. If I see the faults of another with my own eyes, I will quickly become like a city broken into and left without walls, completely exposed and vulnerable.

If we give in to anger, we risk losing our joy, peace, tranquility, prosperity, and even God Himself, who is everything to us.

8. Physical Confrontation with a Brother

The anger I allowed to take root and grow in my heart has now completely blinded my eyes. I have dared to raise my hand against my brother, leaving no room for God to be glorified.



This event did not happen in a single day. It is the result of many days, weeks, months, and even years of nurturing and harboring these thoughts in our minds. Today, it has led us to the point where we dare to strike our brother.

The love I harbored for my “self” became the very seed of the anger I nurtured within me, which eventually led me to confront my brother.

God knows that the thoughts of the heart are the source of all actions. That is why He expects holiness in the heart. Only He can capture the true picture of our inner being. (Genesis 18:12–15)

God saw that Sarah laughed within her heart. In the same way, He knows us completely. Let us reflect: is even the slightest reflection of God's nature seen in our inner thoughts?

“They struck Him with a staff on the head and spit on Him...”
- Mark 15:19

For we have treated our sinless God in this way—how much right would He have to punish us! Yet, in His great compassion, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins and forgave our transgressions. But let us examine ourselves: how do we reflect God's love? Is God being glorified through us?

If we remain patient in the face of the wrongs done to us, God will be glorified. But if we respond in anger, we fail to honor Him.

9. Murder

“The Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.”
- Genesis 2:7



Forgetting that we were created by God, we attempt to take away the life He has given. The reason is that a small anger, nurtured over time, has grown to this point.

It is only when we think of murder that we recognize we have broken the commandment. Yet, even before that, when we have allowed anger to grow in our hearts while forgetting God, we have already fallen into sin. As we read earlier, there is no justification for our anger. We are the cause —“forgetting God is the root of it.”

First, break down the castle of “I.” Without God, who am I? What truly belongs to me? When nothing is truly mine, what is there to grieve over, saying, “I have lost this”? When we are with God, our thoughts will be filled with Him. When God came to earth, the prayer He offered was...

“Yet not as I will, but as You will.”

- Matthew 26:39

He came to fulfill the will of His Father. Whose will are we fulfilling—our own, or the will of those we love?

If we are with God, we will not cling to “what is mine,” but will think of how we can be spent for many on His behalf. He bore the cost for our sins and redeemed us.

Paul, the servant, says, “I am willing to be spent for your souls.” Until now, I have only thought about my own loss.



But have I ever considered losing myself to save many? I say it again: no matter whom our anger is directed toward, it is unjust. Because of the love God has for us, He gave His only Son for our salvation. He Himself became the sacrifice and redeemed us. If I draw near to God, He will say...

“My son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours.”

- Luke 15:31

If the one who calls his brother “Fool” is fit for hell, then where do we stand? What is our heart saying? The Lord is listening.

“Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

- Matthew 5:17

For the Law to be fulfilled, repentance of the heart is essential. God makes it very clear that unless our hearts turn directly to Him, we cannot truly keep the commandments of the Law He has given.

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”

- Matthew 4:17

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

- Matthew 3:8

“Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”

- Matthew 18:3

By your fruits you will be recognized. Only when the heart has truly turned can you produce good fruit. We must experience a heart fully turned to Him, forgetting ourselves. Just as a child places all trust and love in their parents and rejoices, so must we turn wholly to Him.

“All these I have kept since my youth.”

- Luke 18:21

Does your heart tell you, “I am keeping His commandments and focusing on Him alone”? That may seem so, but consider this: if even a single commandment—“You shall not murder”—requires so much explanation for us, then let us continue reading to understand what we must do for the entire Law and the Prophets to be fulfilled.

The fruits of our actions reveal who we truly are. This may help humans discern character, but God is beyond such outward signs—He searches and knows the heart even before a thought is conceived within us. Does our mind think of Him? Are we producing fruits that are pleasing to Him? **“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.”**

Thought For Reflection

- Am I keeping God's commandments?
- Do I outwardly smile while harboring anger within?
- What castle have I built concerning myself? Who am I?
- Do I like myself, and if so, why? How much do I cling to myself?
- Why do I choose someone as my friend? Why do I flee or hide from someone?
- Whom do I glorify when I speak—myself or God? Do my words carry grace?
- Who rules me—me or the Lord? (His words?)
- Are the thoughts of my heart holy, bringing glory to God, or are they filled with anger?
- Do I strive to purify my thoughts? What am I doing to achieve this?
- Do I examine whether all I do is pleasing to the Lord? (Ephesians 5:10)
- What will happen if I delay without repenting?
- Who must repent in the first place? To whom should we repent to?