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Beautiful Progressions of Repentance, 2 of 3

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1. The Progression from Brokenness to Wholeness
2. The Progression of Abiding in Humility
3. The Progression of Abiding in Contentment

We follow God's ways, not because He needs our subjugation, but because He created us to walk in freedom. He established His precepts for our highest good. The result is God's delight and our joy!

Sin is simply *walking in our own ways*, not God's. The Bible often says, "They did what was right in their own eyes" and "They did not inquire of the Lord to understand His ways."

We cannot assume we know God's ways or say, "God would never do that." When we spend time getting to know Him in His word, we are often surprised by His ways. Our sin is only revealed in His light.

Repentance, then, is listening to God, agreeing with Him about our sin, and turning away from it by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A garden needs daily attention. Dominant weeds spring up quickly and take over. It is work to tend a garden, and it is work to guard our hearts, but it is possible for us to walk a peaceful, tended path.

Following is a 3-step guide for abiding in humility and cleansing. The verses can be visited daily or weekly.

1. Ask the Father God to search you intimately – Psalm 139:23-24 and 139:2b-3

"Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way."

"You understand my thought from afar. You scrutinize my path. You are intimately acquainted with all my ways."

According to Psalm 139, we ask the Lord:

- **Have I hurt myself?**
- **Have I hurt someone else?**
- **Have I hurt God?**

In His love and mercy, God will show you the truth as you eagerly wait for Him to respond either at that time or as you go about your day. Be open to His Spirit; be open to being wrong. When you seek to get rid of sin, it is like pulling out a huge weed and then watching the garden breathe and produce better growth.

As you seek Him, it is important to understand the difference between *introspection* and *examination*.

- *Introspection* is something *we* do, and it is sin. It is self focused and brings depression and bondage.
- *Examination* is something *God* does as we let Him bring light to our heart.

2. After we have asked the Father to search us, we have two options, A and B:

A. If the Father shows me a specific sin(s) – I go to 1 John 1:9

- *If I sin:* The Apostle John wrote, “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9)
- *If I sin again:* 1 John 1:9 still applies.
- *If I sin again and again in an area of my life:* I follow 2 Chronicles 7:14 by taking the sin seriously. James 5:16a directs us to, “Confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.”

B. If the Father does not show me a specific sin – I go to Philippians 3:15

- If God doesn’t show you something specific, don’t conjure something up. Let Him reveal it. Your part is to be open to being wrong if He *does* reveal it.
 - The enemy accuses in generalities.
 - The Father lovingly points to specific sins and gives a way out.
- Our words or actions may have hurt someone even though we did nothing wrong. Remain in the truth; Never apologize if you did nothing wrong. Always apologize if you did.
- In Philippians 3:15, Paul addressed people who had a fervor for God. He wrote,
“Let us, as many as are perfect have this attitude and if in anything you have a different attitude, God will reveal that also to you.”

To be *perfect* in this verse means to be complete, to walk in victory, or to walk in the light that He has given to you. You can actually be at peace in your walk with God.

If you have sincerely asked God to reveal sin, and He did not, you may joyfully go your way. Don’t let the enemy continue to accuse you. God promises to reveal any bad attitudes as we remain open to Him. We don’t have to go searching for them.

3. Walk forward in newness of life

After we receive Jesus, He gives us a new heart and His Spirit comes to reside in us! As we turn our thoughts, affections, and actions to God to work His way in us, we walk in His life. Our instructions are:

- **Put sin to death** – See Romans 8:11-13b “If, by the Spirit, you keep putting to death the practices of the body, you will live.”
- **Let Him lead** – (See Romans 8:14) Inquire of Him before you make a plan.
- **Put on the new self** – (Colossians 3:10) We agree with God about who we are in Him. Over and over, Paul says, “But such were some of you...” Even though we still sin, the Bible never calls us sinners or broken. We are called weak, but in Him we are strong, set apart, chosen, sealed, new, beloved, faithful, triumphant, His bride, light in the darkness, hidden in Him, justified, righteous... (the list is too long to include here)! And we are these things whether we feel like it or not!
- **Embrace rebuke.** We are willing to listen to others and also help a brother or sister. Consider these verses: Proverbs 27:6; 1 Corinthians 5:12; Matthew 18:15; James 5:19; Psalm 133.
- **Choose His ways! Choose life!**