

Doctrinal Summary of
Repentance: Inspired by God's Grace-Orientation Toward Man

In Romans 2:4, the apostle Paul identifies the grace-orientation of God as leading man to repentance.

“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?”

The word “kindness” is translated from the Koine Greek word χρηστότης (“chraest-to-tae-tos”) which literally means, “a mentality of graciousness that is ready and willing to provide for the needs of others at one’s own expense, based on response.” It identifies that God possesses a mentality toward the believer that is not deserved or earned by the believer. God’s mentality toward the believer is one that is ready and willing to provide whatever the believer needs at His own expense. God is grace-oriented towards believers and based on response to their needs will provide what is necessary for them. This grace-oriented mentality toward believers is coupled with His tolerance and patience toward believers.

The word “tolerance” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἀνοχή (“ah-no-chaes”) which literally means, “a mentality of self-restraint that temporarily delays action amidst increasing pressure to act in response to a negative catalyst, based on response.” It describes God as having a mentality that holds Himself back from acting upon man’s sin and the believer’s disobedience even while the sin and disobedience are ongoing. As the negative catalyst of man’s sin and disobedience continues on it builds more pressure upon God’s righteousness to demand justice for the individual’s unrighteousness. Yet, God’s mentality restrains Him from carrying out action. This affords the unbeliever a chance to accept the gospel rather than be removed from earth and affords the believer the chance to heed God’s discipline and repent from his unrighteous behavior. God holds Himself back for a time from acting while allowing the individual to continue to misuse their free will and make a correction.

The word “patience” is translated from the Koine Greek word μακροθυμίας (“mak-ro-thu-mi-ahs”) which literally means, “an ability to endure provocation in a mentality of tranquility as a result of personal confidence in one’s ability to not be defeated or overtaken by the provocation being faced, based on response.” It describes God as possessing a mentality of tranquility during provocation with the full confidence that the provocation He faces will not subdue or overwhelm Him. God’s omnipotence and omniscience provide the necessary characteristics for Him to have confidence in the face of Satan’s attacks and man’s sinfulness. Nothing can overwhelm God’s power or surprise Him and therefore He is able to endure any attack or provocation until it ends. It is the kindness of God which functions while He temporarily suspends His wrath and endures the provocation of sin and unrighteousness from the individual that leads the individual into repentance.

The word “leads” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἄγει (“ah-gei”) which literally means, “it really performs the continuous type of action to bring something from one position into a new position by directly leading or guiding it through one’s own conduct.” God’s grace-orientation toward man performs the action of leading man from his sin and unrighteousness into a position of repentance. As God readily and willingly supplies man’s needs amidst holding temporarily restraining judgment, He provides what is necessary for man to come into repentance. God’s tolerance and patience provide the individual with time to recognize and accept what God has provided for the individual’s needs. His kindness softens the heart of the individual in order to bring them into repentance before Him.