

Living in Your Forgiven Identity

Rev. Michael Angel

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**Repentance isn't groveling for forgiveness you
already have...**

**...it's changing your mind to align with how God
sees you and your situation.**

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Introduction:

In a world where shame whispers, “You’re not enough,” and religion sometimes echoes, “Try harder,” the gospel shouts a liberating truth: You are already accepted.

The moment you placed your faith in Christ, you were not just forgiven—you were transformed.

You became a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Yet so many of us still live as beggars in the Father’s house, knocking on the door of grace when we already live inside the mansion of mercy.

Today, we are going to reframe repentance—not as a desperate plea for forgiveness, but as a divine mind upgrade from the security of our forgiven identity in Christ.

1. Repentance Begins with Identity, Not Indebtedness

“You repent from wrong thinking, not from your identity.”

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Many have been taught that repentance means falling on our knees in self-condemnation, begging God not to reject us.

But that model belongs to the old covenant. Under the new covenant, Jesus has already settled the debt.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

Repentance isn't about earning forgiveness—it's about embracing it.

When you realize you've believed a lie about yourself, you don't repent from who you are in Christ—you repent toward the truth of who you are.

Jesus didn't die so you could live in guilt; He died so you could live in truth.

“If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36).

Your repentance starts not in shame, but in the settled reality: I am forgiven. I am loved. I am His.

2. True Repentance Aligns Your Mind with God's Perspective, Not Your Performance

“You align your mind with God's perspective, not grovel for His acceptance.”

The enemy wants you to believe God is distant, waiting for you to perform before He'll smile.

But Scripture says: “He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32).

If He gave you His Son, will He withhold acceptance when you stumble?

Repentance under grace is not a performance review.

It's a perspective correction.

When you sin or think wrongly, you don't need to beg—you need to remember.

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5).

You're not changing your standing with God—He already sees you as holy and blameless (Colossians 1:22).

You're changing your mindset to match His eternal view of you.

That's repentance: trading the lie of failure for the truth of sonship.

3. Your Standing with God Is Unchanged—Only Your View Needs Adjusting

“You change your viewpoint, not your standing with Him.”

Imagine a child who spills juice and runs to hide, fearing punishment.

But the father runs to embrace him, saying, “It’s okay.

I still love you.

Let’s clean it up together.” That’s the heart of God.

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When you sin, your behavior may be off track, but your identity is not up for debate.

You are still seated with Christ in heavenly places (Ephesians 2:6).

“For our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).

Repentance, then, is not a demotion—it’s a reorientation.

You’re not falling from grace; you’re returning to the truth of grace.

You’re not losing your sonship; you’re remembering it.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Note: He doesn’t say, “then I’ll love you again.”
He says He’s faithful and just—because He already declared you righteous.

4. You Adjust Your Lens to See What God Sees—Not Apologize for Existing

“You adjust your lens to see what He sees, not apologize for existing.”

Too many believers live under the weight of existential guilt—feeling like their very presence is a burden to God.

But Scripture says you are “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Peter 2:9).

You don’t need to apologize for being human—you need to awaken to being divine by adoption.

When you see failure, God sees a child learning.

When you see sin, He sees a saint being refined.

“As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him” (Psalm 103:13).

Repentance is not self-hatred.

It’s truth-affirmation.

It's saying: "God, I was seeing this through fear.

Help me see it through faith.

Help me see me through Your eyes."

That's the lens shift.

That's kingdom thinking.

5. You Turn Toward Truth—Not Away from Yourself

When Jesus stood by the Sea of Galilee and declared, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 4:17),

He wasn't launching a guilt campaign.

He wasn't calling people to beat their chests, cover themselves in sackcloth, or live in a never-ending regret.

He was issuing a radical invitation: "Wake up!
The kingdom has arrived.

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The old way of seeing yourself, God, and the world is obsolete.

A new reality is here—adjust your mind to it.”

This is the heart of true repentance: metanoia—a change of mind, a transformation of perspective.

Not self-hatred.

Not shame.

Not groveling.

But a turning—a reorientation from the lie to the truth.

Yet for generations, the church has often taught repentance as self-denial in a distorted way—twisting Jesus’ words: “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me” (Matthew 16:24).

Many have heard this as: “Reject who you are.
Suppress your desires.

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Beat down your identity.

Be nothing so God can be everything.” But that’s not the full picture.

Yes, we are to deny self—but not the self that God has made righteous in Christ.

We are to deny the false self, the fallen narrative, the identity built on performance, shame, or fear.

We are not called to deny the truth of who we are in Christ—we are called to deny the lie that we are anything less.

The Old Model: Deny Yourself = Reject Who You Are
In religious systems, “deny yourself” became code for:

- Don’t feel worthy.
- Don’t believe you’re loved.
- Don’t trust grace—earn it.

See yourself as a sinner first, saved by grace as an afterthought.

This model breeds spiritual insecurity.

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It teaches believers to say things like:

“I’m just a worm,” or “I’m nothing without Him,” as if humility means self-erasure.

But that’s not biblical humility.

Biblical humility is knowing who you are in Him—and walking in that truth with gratitude.

Under this old model, repentance becomes a performance:

“God, I’m garbage. Forgive me again.”

But that’s not repentance—it’s self-condemnation.

And condemnation has no place in the household of grace.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1).

The New Covenant: Deny the Lie, Take Up the Truth
Now, hear this: The cross didn’t make you acceptable—It revealed that you already were.
God didn’t wait for Jesus to die to start loving you.

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He predestined you, chose you, adopted you “before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4–5).

So when you sin, you don’t fall out of grace—you drift out of awareness of grace.

And repentance? It’s not about crawling back. It’s about remembering where you’ve always been.

The new covenant flips the script:

“You are not your old self.

You are a new creation.

The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

So “deny yourself” no longer means “reject who you are.”

It means:

- Deny the lie that you’re unloved.
- Deny the belief that you must perform to be accepted.

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- Deny the voice that says, “You blew it—God’s done with you.”

Instead, take up the truth:

“I am God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10).

“I am complete in Him” (Colossians 2:10).

“I am more than a conqueror through Him who loved me” (Romans 8:37).

That’s the repentance of the kingdom: turning toward the truth of your identity, not turning away from yourself in shame.

Repentance Is a Homecoming, Not a Hauling of Shame
Think of the prodigal son (Luke 15).

He left, squandered his inheritance, and hit rock bottom.

And what did he rehearse on the way home?

“Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son” (Luke 15:21).

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He was ready to beg for a job.

But before he could finish his groveling speech, the father ran, embraced him, kissed him, and restored him.

Why?

Because the father wasn't waiting for an apology to love him.

He was waiting for his son to come home—to stop believing the lie of unworthiness.

That's our story.

God isn't waiting for you to feel bad enough.

He's waiting for you to believe how good He is.

To stop defining yourself by your failures and start living from your forgiven, adopted, glorified identity.

So When Guilt Comes—Don't Grovel.

Remember.

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Guilt says: “You messed up.

You’re out of favor.”

But the Holy Spirit says: “You are My beloved.

Let’s walk through this together.”

When you fall into sin, the first response isn’t confession born out of fear—it’s realignment born out of love.

Ask not: “How do I get back into God’s presence?”

But: “How does God see me in this moment?”

And the answer is always:

- Beloved.
- Forgiven.
- Secure.
- Held.

“Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world”
(1 John 4:4).

That’s not just a promise about spiritual warfare.
It’s a declaration about your identity.

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The same power that raised Christ from the dead lives in you (Ephesians 1:19–20).

- You are not weak.
- You are not defeated.
- You are not on probation.

So when you sin, don't retreat from your identity—return to it.

Repentance isn't a rejection of self.

It's a reaffirmation of who God says you are.

You're Not Moving Toward Acceptance—You're Moving Into Awareness

You don't repent to be accepted.

You repent because you are accepted.

Your repentance flows from rest, not striving.

From love, not fear.

From identity, not insecurity.

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Imagine a wife who constantly apologizes to her husband, even when he's already forgiven her.

She keeps saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry," not because he's angry—but because she can't believe he still loves her.

That's not humility.

That's unbelief.

That's how many of us relate to God.

We keep apologizing for who we are, even though He's already declared us righteous.

But grace doesn't want your guilt.

It wants your gaze—fixed on the truth.

So the next time you stumble, don't turn away from yourself in shame.

Turn toward the mirror of God's Word—and see yourself as He sees you:

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- Holy.
- Blameless.
- Redeemed.
- Seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Repentance, then, is not a retreat.

- It's a return.
- Not a rejection.
- But a reclamation.

Final Word:

You are not called to deny your identity in Christ.

You are called to deny every lie that tries to steal it.

So when the enemy whispers, "You're a failure," preach:
"I am an overcomer through the blood of the Lamb."

When guilt says, "You're not worthy," declare:
"I am clothed in the righteousness of God."

And when shame demands repentance as punishment,
respond with the boldness of grace:
"I repent—because I am already forgiven."

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I turn—because I am already home.”

Repentance is not the path to acceptance.
It is the practice of living in it.

Conclusion & Kingdom Routine:

The old covenant said: “Repent, then I’ll forgive.”

The new covenant declares: “I’ve already forgiven—now repent from the lie that you’re not forgiven!”

So here’s your daily kingdom routine:
When guilt whispers, “You’re unworthy,” preach the gospel to your soul:

“I am the righteousness of God in Christ” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

When condemnation knocks, don’t open the door.

Reset in rest.

“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Repentance is not a ladder to climb to God.

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It's a U-turn back to the truth:

You are already home. You are already loved. You are already forgiven.

So change your mind.

Not to earn grace—

But because you're safe enough to see clearly.

Repent not from who you are—repent into who you've always been in Christ.