

Day 1

Prayer: Start by praying to God to help you start your transformation.

Scripture:

*"Let your broken heart show your sorrow; tearing your clothes is not enough."
Come back to the Lord your God. He is kind and full of mercy; he is patient and
keeps his promise; he is always ready to forgive and not punish."*

Joel 2:13 GNT

Explanation:

When the Jews came to experience a defeat, or a great conflict they would tear their garments as a sign of lamentation and sorrow. This was an outward sign that everyone could witness. The emphasis is placed in the tearing of the heart, in order for the Lord to see the pain they endure for sinning. The purpose is emphasized once again for them to "...**turn to the Lord**...". The conversion that God seeks is one that is genuine from beginning to end (e.g. Psalm 51:17). An abandonment of all malice, and an inward willingness to do His will.

Why? "...**for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and sore chastened by the chastisement!**" The prophet Joel wishes to recall the nature of the God they serve. He does so in recounting four attributes of God.

(1) **God is merciful** - This term is exclusively used in reference to God. It is the way He responds towards people who repent (*as in this case*). God is willing to give mercy (*i.e., give the nation what it doesn't deserve*) for repenting of its sins. Therefore God is "rich in his mercy..." (Ephesians 2:4).

(2) **God is gracious** - This adjective is one that expresses or determines the quality of the noun under consideration. Thus, in this case the noun is God and His character is to be "*gracious, merciful, and/or compassionate*" (e.g. Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 112:4; 116:5; 145:8; Isa. 19:22; Jonah 4:2). This is one of the qualities of God that describe him as a God of pure, sincere love nature (e.g. 1 John 4:7-21; John 3:16). And by that same nature he knows how to sympathize with our weaknesses in Christ Jesus (e.g. Hebrews 4:15).

(3) **God is patient** - This description of God is composed of two Hebrew language terms which are "אָרֶךְ **'ârêk, aw-rake**" (H750) which implies "*long (of time), patient, and/or slow to anger*", and "אָפַּי **'aph, af**" (H639) which denotes "*nose, face, and/or anger*". When these two are together they allude to the "*patience*" God possesses (e.g., Proverbs 15:18; 16:32; Exodus 34:6; Numbers 14:18).

(4) **Compassionate God** - This characteristic is emphasized through the psalmist when he writes Psalm 136, in which, he uses the term 26 times to emphasize the goodness, kindness, and faithfulness, God possesses. He knows how to be kind (*since His quality is to be good*), and do good to you whether you believe you deserve it or not, because you have obeyed His commandments.

Meditate:

Have you sinned? How does it make you feel? Do you ask for forgiveness immediately? In the midst of all you have done all year, God wants you to remember constantly who He is. He is merciful, gracious, patient, and compassionate, always willing to forgive you for your sins if you surrender all your heart to Him.

Prayer: Finish with a prayer asking God for wisdom to surrender all to Him.

Repentance