

THE GOD OF THE SECOND CHANCE

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Roxborough Bible Chapel, Philadelphia, PA
August 7, 2022

We know that God has amazing **attributes** that make Him unique. He is *Omnipresent*, *Omniscient*, and *Omnipotent*. He is also the God of Justice, and the God of Mercy.

God not only has divine attributes, but also has divine **attitudes**. His attitudes stem from His immutable attributes. Among the most touching *attitudes* of God that should encourage us very much are those of His *forbearance*, *lovingkindness*, and *longsuffering*. In fact, He knows we are **imperfect**, **fallible**, and **sin-prone**—whereas God Himself is Perfect, Infallible, and Sinless.

When we were unbelievers lost in sin, God *loved* us, *understood* us, *provided* for us, and most importantly, *died* for us to make us positionally righteous in His sight—and without the penalty for sin when we leave this world and are allowed into His glorious heaven as *redeemed* sinners.

God's character embraces the twin pillars of **Justice** and **Mercy**. If it were not for God's Mercy, we would all perish. In fact, when Adam brought sin into the world through his disobedience, God could have taken his life, but instead banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden—amazingly, with a *blessing* to “go forth and multiply.” (Gen. 1:28):

“And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” (Gen. 1:28). God gave Adam a ‘*second chance*’ at life—though permanently stained with sin. Despite the *congenital* sin of mankind through Adam, Noah's ark in Genesis 7 was provided to preserve sinful mankind on earth.

This brings us to our subject today: **Our wonderful God is a God of the ‘second’ chance.**

In Lamentations 3:22-23 we read: “It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.”

God's attitudes of forbearance, lovingkindness, and longsuffering should fill us with **hope**, **gratitude**, and **joy**, rather than with **hopelessness**, **depression**, and **despair**.

We have several examples from Scripture, of God giving a ‘second chance; to sinners. We will look at just THREE examples each from the Old Testament and from the New Testament.

OLD TESTAMENT: David (2 Samuel 12:7); Samson (Judges 16:28); Jonah (Jonah 3:1)

NEW TESTAMENT: Adulterous Woman (John 8:3-11); Peter (John 21:15-17); Paul (Acts 9: 1-31)

As we focus on how the Lord gives us ‘second chances’ when we feel hopeless, guilty, and ashamed, we may note that believers in communion with the Lord are encouraged by Him:

“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)

HOW God gives us our 'second chance':

1. By *preserving* our life, well-being, health, and reputation from possible harm.
2. By the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit—unease, grieving, groaning (Psalm 139: 23-24)
3. By revealing His Will through the Word, prayer, fellowship, and specific circumstances

WHY we should grasp our 'second chance' from God:

1. God is forbearing, but *not* infinitely forbearing (Jonah Ch. 4).
"He, that being often reprov'd hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (Proverbs 29:1).
2. Satan is prowling about to prevent us from grasping the 'second chance' from God.
"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8).
3. God refines us through our 'second chance'. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." (Philippians 1:6). Cf. 1 Peter 1:7.

WHAT we should do when God gives us a 'second chance':

1. DO NOT REPEAT THE FOLLY: **Woman in adultery**: "Go, and sin no more." (John 8:11).
2. MAKE EACH DAY COUNT FOR GOD: **Moses**: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." Psalm 90:12 ("Carpe Diem: Seize the day!")
3. BE A FAITHFUL WITNESS FOR GOD: **Peter**: "Feed my sheep."; **Jonah**: "Arise, and go..."

Our three-fold response to the 'second chance' from God are as follows:

GODWARD: Be deeply grateful to God, and to those God is using in giving us a 'second chance'. *He brings the right people into our lives to make that second chance happen.*

INWARD: Make a commitment to love the Lord and to obey God's Will. *Obey God by studying the Word, by prayer, through fellowship with fellow-believers, and by sharing the Gospel for our renewed spiritual growth. "If you love me, keep my commandments."* (John 14:15).

OUTWARD: Be accountable to family and fellow-believers to monitor the authenticity of our Christian lives. *Accountability to caring people enables us to avoid getting tripped up again and again. "As a dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool returneth to his folly."* (Prov. 26:11).

Conclusion: The story of Stan McCoy: a backslidden, drug-addicted, and AIDS-stricken believer who did not get the 'second chance' he craved for—and died of AIDS at only 24 years of age.

Challenge: When God gives YOU a second chance, will you take it gratefully, seek God's Will, renew your Christian life, and be accountable for your life? It *could* be your LAST chance!