

When a Man Gets Right with God (Psalm 51)

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A London psychologist once told a traveling evangelist that seventy percent of the people in mental hospitals in England could be released if they could find forgiveness. Their problem was a bad conscience and they could gain no relief from the guilt and pressure under which they lived. In this study we are going to find out how to get rid of a bad conscience. The step is rather simple. You must confess your sins and get right with God. This is why I have entitled this message – “When a Man Gets Right With God.”

The background of this Psalm tells us the reason why David needed to get right with God. David had sinned with Bathsheba and committed adultery. You remember the account in 2 Samuel 3. He was on his palace roof one day when the army had gone out to battle and he saw a beautiful woman bathing herself. His passion was aroused and he sent messengers and ordered her to be brought to him. He entered into an adulterous relationship with her for she was a married woman. Her husband, a soldier in David's army, was away fighting for his king.

Later, when David learned that she was expecting a child, he panicked and tried to cover up. He ordered the husband home from battle and sent him down to his home, hoping that he would sleep with his wife and the child would then be accepted as his own. But Uriah was a soldier, committed to battle, and though he came home at the king's orders, he would not go down to his own house but slept with the soldiers at the palace and returned to the battle the next day.

David knew that ultimately his sin would be found out so he took another step. This is always what sin does -- it leads us on deeper and deeper, farther than we ever intended to go. Before the king knew it he found himself forced into a desperate attempt to cover up his evil. He ordered Uriah, the husband, to be put in the forefront of the battle where he would most certainly be killed. When news of Uriah's death reached the king he felt he had safely covered his sin. In Psalm 32 David records how he felt during that terrible time when

he was trying to cover up his sin. "When I kept silence," he says, "my bones grew old through my groaning all day long," (Psalms 32:3). In Psalm 40:12 David spoke of the ravages of sin upon his soul when saying: "For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me." Sin becomes a heavy weight upon the shoulders of his own children. Sooner or later your sin will catch up with you and you will sense the dreadful weight of sin upon your life.

David was a man who needed to get right with God. He needed to clear his conscience. David's sin with Bathsheba and his murder of Uriah were already a year old. David was suffering privately in the midst of His kingship, fame, and fortune. There is a funny thing about sin. Sin in the Christian life has a way of cutting into our soul and grieving us until we are in despair and misery. The pent up passions of our soul must give way to confession, cleansing, and consecration, if we are ever going to get right, be right, and stay right. Such was the case of David. It may be your case as well today. With his heart still pounding in his breast David wrote Psalm 51. Here is a man whose heart was broken and forever changed. What a somber and yet glorious Psalm this is for us today. God took David from the pits of life to the mountains of victory and new rich blessing.

When a man gets right with God he will do three things:

A. He will confess his sin to God (vv. 1-6)

The confession is seen in four ways:

1. I am very sinful – vv. 1-2

Psalm 51:1-2

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."

- a. The expression of our sinfulness – (vv. 1-2)

The expression of David's sinfulness before God is seen by the words he chooses to express his own sinfulness. The words "transgressions" (vs. 1 - revolt and rebellion against God's law – a high handed sin against God) and "iniquity" (vs. 2 – perverseness, depravity) and "sin" (vs. 2 – offence, missing the mark, falling short) all indicate that David was confessing his sinful life to God. These words come from the lips of a penitent sinner who was admitting his dreadful sinfulness before God. This is the reason for confession. We are a dreadful sinner in God's sight.

You know, before we will come to the place of confession we must face our sins head on. We must admit that we have sinned. God does business with those who do business with Him. We need to admit our sin before God if we are going to ever get right before God. Please note that David admitted that he was a foul sinner in God's sight. He takes the blame for his own sin – "my" and "I" (vv. 1-4). David knew that his sin was inexcusable and he took all the blame for his sin. It's me and my sin! Lord, I am sinful!! This is true confession. Stop blaming everyone else for your sin. Stop passing the buck. You sinned. It's your own fault. Admit it. David did not blame heredity, or the fallen nature. He did not blame the devil. He assumed the responsibility for his own sin.

Some people even blame God for their sin. We say, "Well, God, it's the circumstances you put me in. If it weren't for the fact that years ago you allowed me to be married to this woman (or that man), I would never have done this thing. Or, you made me work for this company. Or, it's the people I live with -- my neighbor -- someone else. Or, if you hadn't given me such a strong sex drive I never would do the things that I do." Whenever we blame our sin on someone else we are ultimately blaming it on God.

David was a very sinful man and he knew it. Therefore, he asked God to "blot out his transgressions" (vs. 1). David looked at himself and saw a diary of his evil record or foul deeds and He wanted God to blot it out. David looked at his dress and saw that he needed to go through a "wash" (vs. 2) – a word that means to thoroughly wash. The dirt of sin was so ingrained in David's life that he needed a thorough soaking – not just a rinsing. When you are dirty you need a spiritual bath or cleansing from God. David saw that he had a disease and

asked God to “cleanse” him (vs. 2). The word “cleanse” means to make pure and was used of purity from disease. David had a spiritual disease and it was called sin. He needed to be cured of this disease. Are you spiritually diseased today? Do you have spiritual leprosy? If so, you need to be cured by receiving God’s forgiveness.

b. The prayer for our sinfulness (vs. 1)

This is a prayer directed to God. It is a prayer of confession. Whenever we sin we need to pray a prayer of confession in order to get things right with God once again. David prayed in a manner that was in accord with God’s nature. David understood the basis for his forgiveness. He confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness on the basis of two things: First, he asked for his forgiveness on the basis of God’s love and kindness (“according to thy lovingkindness”).

David understood that he himself deserves nothing from God, that God is not bound to forgive him. Some people think they deserve forgiveness, that God owes it to them. But David knows better than this. He realizes that only because of God's love does he have any right even to ask for His forgiveness. David is saying to God, “God, I ask that You not treat me the way I deserve. Oh Lord, thank You for loving me and forgiving me.” On the basis of that unqualified acceptance, that marvelous continuing love-that-will-not-let-me-go, I can say to God, “I am coming to you and asking now for this.” David pleads for God’s love (“lovingkindness” – vs. 1) knowing that God loved Him in spite of his sin and that He would pardon him. This is because God always loves us (Rom. 8:39). The devil wants us to believe that God no longer loves us when we sin. But David knew better than this. God’s love for us can never be diminished.

Second, David pleads for his forgiveness on the basis of God’s mercy (“mercy” – vs. 1). Sin is like a crime before God. If a criminal is going to be delivered from the effects of his crime, he does not need justice but mercy. So David cried for mercy (vs. 1). Dear friend, there is mercy with the Lord! David is saying, “God, because of Your mercy, I ask that You to erase my awful violations of Your holy law.” Sin is an illegal act, a violation of justice, an act of lawlessness, of rebellion and therefore requires mercy. His mercy is labeled “abundant”

mercies. When God forgives, he forgives beyond our utmost imaginings.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea"

Here are a few figures of speech, which are used in the Old Testament to depict the forgiveness of God. "As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12). How far is that? Well, how far do you need to go east before you start going west? The answer is simple. You never come to "west." You just keep going east. So God says that He will remove our sins from us as far as the east is from the west. Then God says he will "cast all our sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). Someone has added that he puts up a sign that reads, NO FISHING. Do not go down there and try to fish old sins out once God has dealt with them by His mercy. What relief comes when we begin to understand this fullness of God's forgiveness as found in His mercy.

2. I am very sorry – vv. 3-4

"For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

Gentlemen: (the notice read)

Enclosed you will find a check for \$150. I cheated on my income tax return last year and have not been able to sleep ever since. If I still have trouble sleeping I will send you the rest. Sincerely, A Tax Payer

God is looking for true confession today. He is looking for true remorse and sorrow over sin. God is looking for brokenness over sin (see vs. 17). We need to face all of our sins and bring them out into the open with God with a broken heart. There is no sense hiding them any longer.

Why should we be sorry for our sins?

a. Because of the ghost that haunts us – (vs. 3)

David was confessing his sins because of the ghost that haunted him. Sin is like a ghost that travels along with us and haunts our lives until we confess it and get rid of it. Wherever David turned he saw the ghost of Uriah the Hittite and the ghost of his guilty past. He saw the ghost of his sin with Bathsheba and this ghost haunted him for twelve long months. But now he was confessing his sin and getting rid of the ghost of his past. There comes a time when we must face sin head on and say, "I acknowledge my transgressions" and get rid of our past. We must face sin squarely in the presence of God and admit it if we are going to be cleansed of our past.

b. Because of the guilt that horrifies us (vs. 4)

This is the only proper evaluation of sin! Sin is always against God! This is the guilt that horrified David. He had not merely sinned against Uriah or Bathsheba but against God! We often forget this. Sin is against God and His holiness. The prodigal in Luke 15:18 said: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee." This is true confession. When a person is truly sorry for their sins they will confess that they have sinned against God, that they have offended God's holiness and broken His law. Sin is against God! Sin is an insult and an injury to God. It is God's love that has been wounded. And because of this David recognized that God would be just and clear when He looks down upon David and passes judgment on him – "that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest"- vs. 4b.

David confessed that he had sinned against the Lord. And he submitted to the Lord's will, acknowledging that anything God decided about him would be just and right. David knew that he had sinned against the holy God of heaven and needed to confess his sin for God was just in observing his sinful life and dreadful wickedness. Therefore, he had to open up and confess to the Lord.

Don't be like the man who said: "Lord, there is a slight possibility that I might have done some of these evil things, although it is not very likely. But if I have, then forgive them." That kind of confession can never lay hold of the forgiveness of God. We need to have deep regret and sorrow over our sin if we are going to have God's

forgiveness. When sin breaks our heart, because we know that we have sinned against God and have offended Him, hurt Him, and broke our fellowship with Him, it's only then that we will show remorse and get things right before God.

We are looking at David's confession. So far he has said:

3. I am secretly born in sin – vs. 5

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

This is one of the strongest indications in the Bible that human life begins at conception rather than at birth (Ps. 139:13-16). In this text David is not trying to overlook the responsibility for his sin but is simply acknowledging his human frailty before God. He is saying, “Lord, I am no good. When I was shaped or formed in my mother's womb I was already a sinner by nature. When I was conceived and warmed as a little baby in the womb of my mother, I was already a sinner by nature – born in Adam's family. Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” You do not sin in order to become a sinner you sin because you are already a sinner in your very being or nature. This is what David is saying. In making this statement David was not casting shame on his mother, or even to pass off his own guilt.

What he is saying is this: “I have committed these sins because I am a rotten person – I am a sinner by nature.” Modern theologians hate this verse! Do you know why? It's because they don't want to face that man is a terrible and dreadful sinner after all. They want to candy coat a man's life. They want to tone down sin and make it seem acceptable in a society that is morally corrupt. Humanists hate this Bible verse. They say that we are basically good and are moving toward an evolutionary upgrade. Psychologists hate this verse. Do you know why? Psychology tells people that they are victims and this is why they sin but God says we are sinners by nature! My friend, the source of our sin is in our souls (the old nature). It is not in our surroundings! We are born in sin – we are born with the sin of Adam in our souls.

4. I am seduced by the blindness of sin – vs. 6

“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”

In this verse, David recognized that when he had Bathsheba in his arms that sin had blinded him. When he ordered Uriah’s death sin had blindfolded him. Sin does the same thing to us. It blinds us. But David says that God wants “truth in the inward parts” (the heart) instead of deception (Jer. 17:9 – “the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked”). Instead of blindness and deceit God is looking for truth. David understands what God wants. God wants us to face the fact that we are sinners instead of trying to deceive ourselves (1 John 1:8) and allowing sin to deceive us (Heb. 4:13 – “The deceitfulness of sin”). He then says “make me to know wisdom” or what is right to do.

In this case, God would show David his sin and bring him to confession. God would give him the wisdom to see his sin for what it really was and drive him to the place of confession and change. In the midst of sin’s blindness there is God’s truthful evaluation that cuts deep into our souls and exposes our sin and terrible wickedness. Hebrews 4:12 – “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Sin is not just a surface problem that can be handled lightly; it is a deep problem. It has stained my whole nature (vs. 5). Now David says that unless I find some solution for this polluted nature I will never be able to keep from falling back into sin again." For this very reason David begins to pray for help in the inward life, which is where God wants truth to be found. He prays that he would know what is true and possess wisdom about himself and what is right to do and how to live. This is the only way to keep pure and do what is right.

David is saying, “Give me the truth and give me wisdom on how to live. Give me an understanding of the facts of life. Show me reality, show me the way things really are about my sin and need for change.” In other words, help me to understand the truth about

myself, that I am a fallen being and that this pollution has penetrated my whole nature. Show me what I am, where I need to be, and where I need to go in life. I want the truth and wisdom instead of the lies and deception that sin brings into my heart and life. This is what David is saying. Don't live in a fool's paradise!

We need to do some old-fashioned confession of sin if God is going to forgive us and if we are ever going to get rid of the past. Confession is necessary for fellowship. Sin builds a barrier between us and God. Confession, which means to agree with God regarding our sin, restores our fellowship. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Someone said: "In confession . . . we open our lives to healing, reconciling, restoring, and the uplifting grace of him who loves us in spite of what we are:

A preacher of the early 1900s said that when he was 12 years old, he had killed one of the family geese by throwing a stone and hitting it squarely on the head. Figuring his parents wouldn't notice that one of the 24 birds was missing, he buried the dead fowl. But that evening his sister called him aside and said, "I saw what you did. If you don't offer to do the dishes tonight, I'll tell Mother." The next morning she gave him the same warning. All that day and the next the frightened boy felt bound to do the dishes. The following morning, however, he surprised his sister by telling her it was her turn. When she quietly reminded him of what she could do, he replied, "I've already told Mother, and she has forgiven me. Now you do the dishes. I'm free again!" Do you need to be free again? We now come to our next major point. When a man gets right with God:

B. He will cry to God for cleansing (vv. 7-12)

In these verses we see how David cried out to God for cleansing. This is what we need to do if we are going to get right with God.

Why do we need to be cleansed from sin?

1. Because of sin's defilement – vs. 7

“Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

A man must cry out to God for cleansing. This is because sin makes us spiritually defiled. David felt dirty. He felt contaminated. There was no relative on earth that could cleanse the sin-stained soul. There was no ritual or religion or resolve on his part that could cleanse his soul. Only God could cleanse his soul. He describes forgiveness – “purge me with hyssop.” This was a figurative expression that looked back to the Mosaic Law and its rituals. The hyssop was an herb that was used in the religious ceremonies to sprinkle or apply the sacrificial blood on the altar so people could be forgiven (Heb. 9:19). Hyssop was also used as a ceremonial sprinkler to indicate that a leper was cleansed of his uncleanness and was not fit to now rejoin the people (Lev. 14:3-4).

Hyssop was a beautiful way to express David’s desire for cleansing. David needed to be purged and cleansed from his sin and only God could do it. David speaks of the washing that make him “whiter than snow.” My friend, the snow depicts cleansing and forgiveness of sins. Isaiah 1:18, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” After a snowstorm we can walk around in the fresh snow pack. This fresh snow reminds us of God’s cleansing or forgiveness.

2. Because of sin’s deafness – vs. 8

“Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.”

A man must cry out to God for cleansing. This is because sin deafens a man to spiritual realities. During his sin David had become deaf to the voice of God and deaf to the sounds of joy. David once again wanted to “hear” or experience the songs of joy and the wonder of fellowship with God. In other words, David was saying that he wanted to experience the joy of sins forgiven and a right relationship with God. Sin makes us deaf to the joys and realities of Christian living. David uses the words “joy,” “gladness,” and “rejoice” to indicate that sin robs us of all these blessed realities of Christian living. When he

says “the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice” he was using an expression that means David’s physical well-being was even affected by his sin. Sin effects us emotionally and physically as well as spiritually. Sin is a complete package that plays havoc with our lives spiritually and physically. The one (spiritual) many times will effect the other (physical).

David asked God to let him once again rejoice in the knowledge of being right with God. Let me hear the music once again of the joys of salvation, cleansing, and fellowship with God. Sin deafens us to these spiritual realities but crying out to God for cleansing will unstop our ears and bring back the song! Have you lost your song? Only God can restore the song to your ears and it’s the song of the soul set free!

“Tis the song of the soul set free,
And my heart is ever ringing.
Tis the song of the soul set free,
Joy and peace to me it’s bringing.
Tis the song of the soul set free,
And my heart is ever ringing.
Hallelujah, Hallelujah, ‘
The song of the soul set free.”

Have you become deaf to this song and the joy of knowing that you are right before God? We must say, “Lord, to my heart bring back the springtime. Unstop my ears and let me hear the birds sing again, smell the flowers, and sense that You have forgiven me.”

3. Because of sin’s disgrace – vs. 9

“Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.”

A man must cry out to God for cleansing. This is because sin should bring shame into our lives. David wanted God to hide his face from his terrible sins and forgive them. Why? Because David was ashamed of his sins! Are you? The disgrace that sin brings into our lives should shame us. We should hang our heads in shame when we sin against God. People do not want to show their faces on camera when they are caught in some kind of scandal. They shield their faces in shame. We should do the same when we sin. Sin

should cause us to blush in God's presence ("hide thy face from my sins"). David was ashamed that God had seen him sin! The worst thing that could ever happen to our lives is that we become immune to sin and are no longer shocked by sin or ashamed when we sin. We will truly be ashamed when we sin when we realize that God is holy and that He hates sin. It will cause us to blush in His presence and cry out to Him for cleansing.

A judge in Washington State has been using bumper- stickers to encourage better driving. He has found that people guilty of driving while intoxicated resent having to attach the following message to their bumper: THIS CAR OWNED BY A CONVICTED DRUNK DRIVER. The judge found out that this brought shame to those who were driving the car. Dear friend, we ought to be ashamed of our sins.

4. Because of sin's damage – vv. 10-11

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me."

A man must cry out to God for cleansing. This is because sin causes damage in our lives that needs to be repaired.

The damage of sin is expressed in five ways:

a. Loss of purity – vs. 10

The words "create in me a clean heart" remind us of sin's damage. Sin robs us of purity of living and this is why David is praying for a clean heart once again. David was praying for a new heart. He wanted to have a pure heart before God once again. David also prayed for a renewed or "right spirit" before God. This means David wanted to possess a new inner life that was controlled by God instead of sin. He wanted his insides to be changed so that he would stop sinning on the outside. David knew that his natural inclination was to sin so he wanted a transformation of his heart or inner life. Listen, when your heart is changed then you will have no problem changing on the outside and doing what is right. When we allow God to do a work in our hearts we will change our lives around.

b. Loss of fellowship – vs. 11a

David's words "Cast me not away from thy presence" demonstrate what happens when we sin. Sin robs us of fellowship (communion) with God (the reality of God's presence and companionship in our lives) and this is why David is praying for restored fellowship with God. We need to have a fresh awareness of God's presence in our lives today. Sin keeps us from experiencing God's presence and fellowship in our lives.

D.L. Moody once said,
"Keep short accounts with God."

This is what we must do if we are going to stay close to God and walk with Him. We need to quickly confess our sins and get right with God. It was recorded that Charles Spurgeon stopped in the middle of the street to stop and confess his sin because he did not want to pass to the other side out of fellowship with God.

Jim Elliot said:

"To stand by the shadows of a friendly tree with the wind tugging at your coattail and the heavens hailing your heart, to gaze and glory and to give oneself again to God, what more could a man ask? Oh, the fullness, pleasure, sheer excitement of knowing God on earth. I care not if I never raise my voice again for Him, if only I may love Him, please Him."

c. Loss of power – vs. 11b

When David prayed "take not thy Holy Spirit from me" he was worried about a loss of power in his life. Sin robs us of victorious living and this is why David is praying for restored power through the Spirit's presence. Note: This is a prayer that we cannot pray today in the exact same way that David prayed it. Do you know why? It's because Jesus promised that we will never lose the Holy Spirit's presence in our lives. Jesus said in John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." During the Old Testament the Holy Spirit came upon the lives of people and went at will. This is not the case in the new dispensational order. However, David knew that God took the Holy

Spirit from Saul (1 Sam. 16:14) and He surely did not want this to happen to him. The practical application to us today is that sin robs us of the Holy Spirit's power – not His presence. We need the power and working of the Spirit in our lives if we are going to be victorious and spiritually healthy.

Several years ago, while preparing to preach a sermon on this psalm, a pastor received an anonymous letter from someone in his congregation, saying that he was a Christian but was involved in a very serious and continuing moral failure. The letter was an attempt to be honest and tell him the trouble in his life. The pastor said he didn't know if that person would be in the service the next Sunday or not, but he hoped that he would be. On Sunday he decided to refer to the letter in his sermon for two reasons: Because it was anonymous, and he could do it without betraying a confidence; and because the problem was of such a serious nature that he wanted to help the person if he could.

The writer of the letter had acknowledged that he knew the action was wrong, but finally excused himself on the basis that God had not yet given him the power to break away from it. Now this was self-deception. The truth is that God has given us the power to break away from these things and all things! Peter declares that "His divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3).

d. Loss of joy – vs. 12a

Sin robs us of joyful living and this is why David is praying for restored joy ("restore unto me the joy of thy salvation"). Notice: David is not praying that his salvation be restored but the joy of his salvation. There is a difference! Sin takes away the true joy that comes from living free from sin, living close to God, and enjoying His wonderful life and freedom from sin. Sin wrecks everything. A person must cry out to God for restored joy because of the depression that sin brings into their lives. Sin brings depression into the life of the child of God that zaps the Christian of all his true joy. Depression and joy cannot coexist in the same inner life. When we seek cleansing we can kick out depression and bring back the springtime of God's joy and inner healing.

In his book "Depression, What It Is and What to Do About It," Roger Barrett describes this condition as "a miserable, wretched experience that leaves you exhausted, uninvolved, and in deep, hopeless despair. There seems to be absolutely nowhere to turn and not one single thing you can do to escape these horrible feelings. You feel doomed, trapped, and at the end of your rope....It's awful!" Yes, this is depression but the culprit of depression is sin! Sin keeps us from living the joyful life and takes us down into the dumps of life!

Now my friend, David did not take his depression to a psychologist or the shrink. He took it to God for he knew that sin was the cause of his depression and loss of joy. He knew that he had to confess his sin in order to get rid of his depression. David wanted to get back the joy of salvation and leave the depression behind. He wanted to have joy as bright and beautiful as the lily.

"If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all sunshine
In the sweetness of our Lord."

e. Loss of liberty – vs. 12b

Sin robs us of freedom of living and this is why David is praying for a "free spirit" or an inner life that is freed from sin's power and sin's torment. When we sin we possess a spirit of inner torment and torture instead of a spirit that is freed from sin's hounding and powerful sway over our lives. True liberty is when we possess a "free spirit" or a life that is no longer tormented by sin and controlled by sin. Jesus said in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." True liberty is when we are able to live free from sin's powerful grip and live in such a way that my life is pleasing to God.

"I'm free from the fear of tomorrow,
I'm free from the sin of my past,
For I've traded all my shackles
For a glorious song.
I'm free praise the Lord free at last. "

David sees that he must deal with the old life, the old heart, and his old past if he is going to get right with God. The damage of sin is great and it needs to be dealt with through confession and cleansing from sin.

The sign at a drive-in carwash said: REGULAR WASHING PAYS OFF. It's not only a message to auto owners, it's also a reminder of an important spiritual lesson. Just as cars require periodic washing to remove harmful dirt and grime, so Christians need continual cleansing to keep their lives bright and useful. And we must cry out to God for cleansing and forgiveness so that we can be made clean and whole again.

C. He will consecrate himself to God (vv. 13-19).

Confession and cleansing are important and necessary. But now we must seek to live differently by God's enablement. We must learn the secret of consecrating and dedicating ourselves to God. We must consecrate ourselves to God and in doing so forsake sin. There comes a time we must say no to sin and make a new start in life.

Our consecration to God will be seen in three ways:

1. We will continue to preach (share deliverance with others) – vs. 13

“Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee.”

David is saying that when he is delivered from the pits of despair and sin that he will then be able to help others in a greater way. He will be able to proclaim or “teach” or preach to “transgressors” who have fallen into the same type of sin as himself and help them to be converted or experience the same transformation that he has gone through. David will be able to say to other sinners, “I know what you are going through. I have been there myself and can help you. There is a way out.” This would continue to be David's message that he can share or proclaim to others.

2. We will continue to praise (share our hearts before God) – vv. 14
-15

“Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.”

This verse is David’s promise of praise for his restoration. David is saying, “O God, If you deliver me from the guilt of ‘bloodguiltiness’ or bloodshed (taking Uriah’s life), if you deliverer me from this great sin then the whole world will hear of my testimony of Your deliverance (‘my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness’ and ‘my mouth shall shew forth thy praise’). Dear God, I’ll tell the world that I’m a Christian! I’ll tell others what you have done for me! The guilt of Uriah’s blood is heavy upon me. O God of my salvation, wipe the slate clean and I’ll praise Your name forever. I’ll praise your name Lord and sing your song!” Dear friend, we ought to sing songs of praise to God for His deliverance or when He helps us out of the pits of life, forgives us of our sins, and sets our feet on the rock. “Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever sing to Thee. I will ever sing to Thee.”

In Psalm 40:2-3 David also said:

“He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”

Forgiveness should result in a renewed commitment to worship and serve the Lord. This was David’s heart and pattern. David is saying, I will praise You God and tell others of the wonderful forgiveness and transformation that You have made in my life. He made something beautiful out of my life! I can’t help but share it with others! Deliverance from sin sparks praise. Praise forevermore!

3. We will continue to ponder truth (share truth with ourselves) –
vv. 16 -19

“For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a

broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.”

Let’s be honest with ourselves and allow God to teach us the things that we need to learn when sinning and straying from Him.

When we sin there are two truths we must learn:

a. God wants us to sorrow over our sin – vv. 16-17

In David’s case, there was no sin or trespass offering that he could present that God would accept. Since he had sinned with a high hand, in rebellious defiance of Yahweh, and in repudiation of the terms of the Mosaic Law, his sentence was death (Num. 15:30, 31; 2 Sam. 12:9). This is why David said there was no sacrifice that God would accept. The only reason he did not suffer this fate was because God pardoned him. The prophet Nathan brought the news of God’s special pardon to David. 2 Samuel 12:13, “And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.”

In Psalm 51:16 David realized that there was no sacrifice that could bring forgiveness to him. He realized that God would have to look past the ritual and grant him forgiveness for his sins. David realized that the sacrificial Old Testament system was only a ritual that many pass through and it only looked ahead to God’s true forgiveness found only in Christ. The point is this. What we need for the forgiveness of sins is remorse (“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit”) and not the ritual of sacrifice.

David is saying, “Lord, I am not depending on rituals or ceremonies for forgiveness. They will not work in my case. I know that You are not a ritualist. You are looking for true remorse over sin and a penitent heart and that is what I’m giving to You today.” Verse 16 reminds us that God is not interested in the rituals. What he is interested in is found in verse 17 – true remorse over sin and the reality of a broken heart. This is the real sacrifice! It’s the sacrifice of

a broken heart toward God. You see, God is not looking for your church membership, your Sunday School badges, or any other earthly deeds that you have done. God is looking for a broken and crushed heart. Put your broken heart on God's altar and God will hear your cry. He may turn away ritual sacrifices but He never turns away from a broken heart. Never! And wonder of wonders, God can make a brand new heart!

A "contrite" heart is a crushed heart, a heart that is broken in pieces over sin and failure before God. David learned that what God really wanted from the sinner was a broken heart (a crushed heart or broken spirit). God wants true brokenness over sin for it's only this type of remorse that will bring true confession and consecration in the life of His child. Psalm 34:18 says, "The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Dear friend, God wants to break you. He wants to shatter your heart so that you might come to Him in confession and consecration as David did so long ago.

There are many Christians who think they are all right with God but they are not walking with God for the simple reason that they are not sensitive to sin. They are like the man in the far North who, as he got colder, wanted to rest. He felt very comfortable sitting down. But those with him knew what was happening to him—he was freezing to death. They wouldn't let him sit down but kept him moving so he would not die. Today there are many Christians sitting in our churches so cold and so comfortable with their compromise with sin that they do not realize that in God's sight they are sinners. Friend, we need cleansing. And this will only come into our lives when we are filled with remorse over our sins and willing to confess them before God.

b. God wants us to seek personal change – vv. 18-19

"Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar."

David looked ahead and prayed that “Zion” (another name for the city of Jerusalem) would be strengthened. The building up of the walls of Jerusalem could be a prayer for general prosperity of the city’s defenses under His kingship. It could also be figurative expression that refers to the moral defenses of the city and the people themselves. Zion needed a moral defense within its borders. This understanding of the verse goes well with the next verse. Psalm 51:19, “Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering: then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.” “Then” (when the moral defenses are built up in Zion) God will accept the people’s sacrifices. The people needed to straighten out their lives from a spiritual perspective and make the necessary changes. Only then will God be pleased with the people’s lives (“Then shalt thou be pleased”). The anticipation of right sacrifices (vs. 19) is closely related to what David said in verses 16-17.

The point is this. When the people are willing to confess their sins with a broken heart (the true sacrifice) then God will accept their Mosaic sacrifices and deem them as “righteousness” (vs. 19) in His sight. Any sacrifice without a broken heart over sin is not a real sacrifice in God’s eyes. When the people bring the burnt offerings they must do so with a broken heart over their sin and be ready to confess to God and get right with God. Burnt offerings without a broken heart won’t do in God’s sight. God wants a broken heart and then the burnt offering. When we follow this order then God will be pleased with our lives. God wants the personal change of heart.

Herschell Hobbs grew up on the farm. One spring day his mother came out and gave him a small bucket of corn to plant in the garden. In no mood to work, little Herschell just dug one hole and dumped all the corn into it. He covered it over with dirt and went off to play. Weeks passed and his mother couldn't understand why the corn wasn't coming up. Then one day she discovered the thickest stand of little corn plants she'd ever seen, and the mystery was solved. Hobbs leaves it to the reader's imagination what happened next, but points out that he learned the lesson of Proverbs 28:13 well: "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

In a similar way, it's far better to confess our sins before God and make things right. Waiting for confession will only bring us heartache and misery. Dear friend, don't try to hide or cover your sins! God cannot be pleased with us when we try to bury our sins. Instead of hiding our sins we must be broken over our sins. David is saying that God wants the true sacrifice of a broken heart. When our heart is broken over sin, we will confess our sins, and God will then be pleased with our lives (John 8:29).

Someone sent me a nice card this week and the Bible verse at the bottom was Psalm 129:8: "And the blessing of the Lord be upon you." Dear friend, if we want His blessing we must confess our sins and get right with Him. If we want God to be pleased with our lives we must allow our hearts to be broken over sin, confess our sins to God, have our lives cleansed, and then consecrate ourselves to God in holiness and service.

Let me conclude this study by repeating something. The pent up passions of our souls must give way to confession, cleansing, and then consecration, if we are ever going to get right with God, be right before God, and stay right in God's eyes.

When a man gets right with God he will do three things:

- He will confess his sin to God (vv. 1-6)
- He will cry to God for cleansing (vv. 7-12)
- He will consecrate himself to God (vv. 13-19).

How about you today? Where are you at in your Christian life? Do you need to get some things right? If so, you need to do some old-fashioned confession. You need to be cleansed from your sins and consecrated to do God's work again. How about you? Are you ready to cry out to God in utter despair and despondency and get things right? Is your heart broken over your failure and sin? Do you have a broken spirit? If so, why don't you do like David did, and get things right today.

When you have a broken heart and confess your sin, it's then that you will once again sing God's praises. You will have a new song of a soul that has been set free. You will start a new way of life and go on

with the Lord. When a man gets right with God he will have a newfound freedom and fellowship with God that he has not previously had. He will possess a new desire to walk with God and grow in his spiritual life. May this be true in your heart and life today as a dad, mom, husband, wife, teen, or young person. Get things right today. God and His forgiveness is only a prayer away.

“I thank the Lord for everything,
I count my blessings each day.
He came to me when I needed Him,
I only had to pray.
And He'll come to you if you ask Him to,
He's only a prayer away!”