

David: Life Lessons

Week 9 – A Broken and Contrite Heart
(Psalm 51)

OPENING QUESTION

When God exposes our sin, will we defend ourselves and hide, or will we confess honestly and run to His mercy?

KEY VERSE

*“The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit.
You will not despise a broken and humbled heart, God.”
- Psalm 51:17*

DAVID’S PRAYER

1. David appeals to God’s mercy, not his own merit. (Ps. 51:1-2)
“Be gracious to me, God, according to your faithful love; according to your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion.” (v.1)
David asks God to blot out, wash, and cleanse his sin.
Lesson: True repentance appeals to **God’s mercy** rather than defending **our merit**.
2. David confesses the seriousness and depth of his sin. (Ps. 51:3-6)
“...My sin is always before me.” (v.3) “Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight...” (v.4) “... I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.” (v.5)
David recognizes that sin against others is rebellion against God.
David’s problem goes beyond sinful actions: he is a sinner by nature.
Lesson: True repentance takes **full responsibility for sin** and recognizes that the problem **reaches the heart**.
3. David asks God to cleanse and renew him. (Ps. 51:7-12)
“Purify me... wash me... create a clean heart for me.” (v. 7-10) “Restore the joy of your salvation to me.” (v. 12)
Lesson: True repentance seeks **cleansing and transformation**, not merely **relief from consequences**.
4. David asks for restored worship and usefulness. (Ps. 51:13-17)
“You do not want a sacrifice, or I would give it.” (v.16) “The sacrifice pleasing to God is a broken spirit” (v.17).
A broken and contrite heart has stopped **defending itself** and comes to God **with empty hands**.

Lesson: God does not despise the sinner who comes to Him with **genuine repentance**.

5. David looks beyond himself to **restored worship among God's people**. (Ps. 51:18-19)

David's prayer moves from his sin to his cleansing, to his restoration, and finally to God's people and worship.

Lesson: God's mercy restores sinners so that **their lives can once again serve His glory and His people**.

THE MAIN IDEA

What is true? The holy God sees our sin completely, but in His mercy, He does not despise the sinner who comes to Him in genuine repentance. His holiness exposes our guilt; His mercy invites us to confess it.

What should we do? Stop defending our sin, confess it honestly, seek God's cleansing, and come to Him with a broken and repentant heart.

Main Idea: Because the holy God is merciful to repentant sinners, we must confess our sin honestly, seek His cleansing, and come to Him with a broken and contrite heart.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

David needed more than regret. He needed cleansing he could not provide for himself. A broken heart does not pay for sin. Jesus does. Jesus had no sin to confess, yet He bore the judgment of sinners at the cross. Through His death and resurrection, Christ provides the forgiveness and cleansing David needed and that every repentant sinner needs.

APPLICATION

1. Stop defending your sin **and confess it honestly**. Do not minimize, rename, rationalize, or blame-shift. If God calls it sin, call it sin. Where your sin has harmed others, repentance may require confession, asking forgiveness, and making things right where possible.
2. Ask God for a changed heart, **not changed circumstances**. David did not pray for the consequences to disappear. He prayed, "Create a clean heart for me." Do not ask only for God to repair what sin damaged around you; ask Him to transform what sin exposed within you.
3. Run to God's mercy **through Christ**. When God exposes sin, do not hide from Him. Come confessing, repenting, and trusting in Jesus Christ. God's holiness means we must never treat sin casually; God's mercy means the repentant sinner need not remain hopelessly distant.
4. Let God's mercy **make you useful again**. David does not stop with "forgive me." He says, "Then I will teach the rebellious your ways, and sinners will return to you" (v. 13). Repentance is not the end of your usefulness. God can restore a repentant sinner and use that restored life to help others return to Him. Don't waste the mercy you have received; let it make you humbler, wiser, and more useful and ready in helping others turn back to God.