

Week 4

GRACIOUS FORGIVENESS

PSALM 32

OPENING PRAYER

Almighty God, you who have sent Jesus into the world to suffer, die, and rise again for our sake, help us to experience your transforming resurrection power within our lives and ministry. We offer our prayers in the name and Spirit of Jesus Christ, our Lord. *Amen.*³⁷

INTRODUCTION

Psalm 32 is an excellent summary of the Psalms of Internal Lament, covered in Week 4 of our devotions. It leads us through the vital movement of confessing our sins, accepting the gift of forgiveness as an act of sheer grace from God, and walking into the new life he calls us. In an interesting play on words, Psalm 32 shows us the essential elements of the law of grace, where our faith is counted as righteousness. Through Christ, we find that our transgressions are taken off, our sins are covered, and we are clothed in his righteousness. Though Psalm 32 is still a lament, we can join the psalmist in shouts of joy as we understand what Jesus has done for us.

KEY VERSE

*“Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven,
whose sin is covered.”*

PSALM 32:1

GETTING STARTED

Can you think of a time when you were glad to “come clean” in a relationship (when you revealed the truth about your feelings or behavior, past or present)? In your experience, what happens to a relationship that is based on truth, no matter how painful?

ENCOUNTER THE WORD

PAYING ATTENTION TO THE TEXT AND MAKING OBSERVATIONS

Read Psalm 32.

1. David, the psalmist, starts with his conclusion. Who is the one who lives a happy, fulfilled life (v. 1–2)?
2. What does God not count according to verse 2? What does he count, according to Romans 4:3–5?
3. Describe David’s state of mind and body when he harbored his guilt (v. 3–4). Do you think sin and guilt have a physical impact on the body? If so, in what ways?
4. Compare verse 4 with verse 7. What has happened to David’s relationship with God as a result of confessing his sins and being forgiven?

WATCH VIDEO

The video teaching can be found at biblestudymedia.com/pilgrimspath.

Video Notes

BIG CONCEPTS:

- The movement from guilt to forgiveness
 - Understanding our predicament: rebels and sinners by birth
 - God's gracious act of imputing righteousness
 - Our responsibility—clothed in power
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ENGAGE OUR HEARTS

APPLYING SCRIPTURE TO DEVELOP INTIMACY WITH GOD

5. In what ways does sin feel “heavy” upon you? Why do you think this is so? (Consider Romans 2:5.)

6. What does it require on your part to confess your sins to God? (See v. 2b and Psalm 51:6.) Why is this so hard to do sometimes?

7. According to verse 5, what do we have to do to receive God's forgiveness? (See also Acts 2:38; Acts 10:43.) Describe what this grace means to you.

ENCOURAGE OTHERS

BEARING WITNESS TO JESUS IN THE WORLD

8. If God has not counted your sins against you and this same grace applies to all believers, how does this understanding affect your response to others when they sin against you or God? (See Colossians 3:12–13; John 13:14–17.)
 9. How can we forgive even after the worst offenses against us (v. 8; Acts 1:8; John 16:12–15)?
 10. How might your forgiveness of others be a witness to Jesus in the world?
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PRAYERS

If you are doing this study as part of a group, you may want to share your prayer requests with each other. There is a Prayer & Praise Journal on p. 202 where you can keep track of your group's requests or write your own. Have someone close in prayer or pray the following prayer together.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, clothe me in yourself and enable me to live and serve after the pattern of Jesus. Amen.³⁸