

Praying for Personal Forgiveness

Psalm 51:1-5, 7-12

Psalm 51:1–5 (ESV)

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!
For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.
Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.
Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 51:7–12 (ESV)

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.
Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.

1. Read the text. Psalm 51. What do you see? How is David feeling? What are your thoughts on what is happening here?
2. What is a conscience, and how do we know if we have it correctly calibrated? Is it possible to feel good about acts of sin, or bad about acts of righteousness? Explain why God's Word is so important in understanding sin.
3. When we sin (any action or thought) there are always complex issues involved. Circumstances, pressure, loneliness, weakness, addictions, family

history, other people, etc.

How can we honestly say that "We are the man" when it comes to any sin?

Is that a word game, or is it true?

4. Even though David had a forced (or manipulated) affair with Bathsheba, and arranged the murder of Uriah, he still said that it was "against God, and God ALONE" that he had sinned. Explain why this is not the way we often think of our actions, and why this is a healthier view when repenting. Why should we feel shame and guilt?
5. When we have repented correctly we feel as if God can do no wrong and is justified to do with us whatever He wills and wants. Not just that He CAN, but that He is RIGHT to do whatever. Is that how you feel about God? Why or why not?
6. David begged for forgiveness. To have his sin hidden and his iniquities blotted out.

How can God respond to David's request and still be God? (Just and Merciful)

Discuss His choices:

- 1) He forgives David by being Just. David must die and be blotted out. The sin is paid for. (But is God Merciful to David?)
- 2) He does not account for his sin and simply overlooks it because He really likes David. (But then is God Just?)
- 3) He forgives David by being just to an undeserving righteous substitute. Now David can come close, and his sin can be justly accounted for by placing it upon someone who had no sin of their own.

What do we know that David couldn't know that should give us more courage in our repentance?

7. Prayer and praise