

# SUMMER IN THE PSALMS

**“Be Gracious to Me, O God”  
Psalm 51:1-9**



<sup>1</sup>Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your  
lovingkindness;  
According to the abundance of Your  
compassion blot out my  
transgressions.<sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from  
my iniquity  
And cleanse me from my sin.<sup>3</sup>For I know my  
transgressions,  
And my sin is ever before me.<sup>4</sup>Against You,  
You only, I have sinned  
And done what is evil in Your sight,  
So that You are justified when You speak  
And pure when You judge.

Psalms 51:1-9

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.<sup>6</sup>Behold,  
You delight in truth in the innermost being,  
And in the hidden part You will make me  
know wisdom.<sup>7</sup>Purify me with hyssop, and I  
shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than  
snow.<sup>8</sup>Make me to hear joy and gladness,  
Let the bones which You have crushed  
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## Introduction

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**B. From heights of praise to depths of despair, the Psalms capture the entire range of human emotions.**



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**D. Psalm 51 has touched many a heart since it was written by King David 3000 years ago.**

**E. Psalm 51 is the greatest of all the seven penitential psalms. In penitential psalms the writer confesses sin and pleads for God's help and forgiveness.**

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**H. David tried to cover his tracks and conceal his sin, but in time he learned an important truth: Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven.**



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**J. Psalm 51 reveals to us how miserable David was after his sin with Bathsheba and his attempted cover-up. Sin in the life of a believer makes us miserable. We cannot sin and get away with it.**



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K. Psalm 51 teaches us what to do when we have messed up royally. When we have sinned against God, we are to cry out to God for His forgiveness.

L. Big Idea: God is a forgiving, compassionate God who will forgive whoever will call on the name of the Lord.

M. What must we do when we have sinned?

### I. Cry for Help (51:1-2)



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**C. David appealed to the character and nature of God. He approached God desperately clinging to God's grace. Please do not give me what I deserve.**



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**D. How do we know God is gracious and merciful? God has revealed it to us.**

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**E. “And He said, I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of Yahweh before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show compassion on whom I will show compassion” (Exodus 33:19).**



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**G. “For whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).**



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H. “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness”—David cried for help on the basis of God’s character. He appealed to God’s “lovingkindness” (hesed)—that’s God’s faithfulness to the covenant He established with His people.

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I. “According to the abundance of Your compassion”—God’s never-ending tender mercies for His people. David appealed to God’s mercy, not his own merits.



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**K. “Transgressions”—Rebellious action that is intentional and willful. Crossing a forbidden boundary.**



## I. Cry for Help (51:1-2)

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M. “Iniquity”—To bend or twist. A perversion. To depart from the right path.

N. “And cleanse me from my sin”—A temple term for religious, ritual cleansing. O God, do whatever it takes to purify me.

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O. “Sin”—To fall short or to miss the mark.



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**O. “Sin”—To fall short or to miss the mark.**

**P. In these two verses David relied on God’s mercy and was repulsed by his own sin. He was sick of sin as sin.**

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You only, I have sinned And done what is evil  
in Your sight, So that You are justified when  
You speak And pure when You judge.

<sup>5</sup>Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And  
in sin my mother conceived me.<sup>6</sup>Behold, You  
delight in truth in the innermost being, And in  
the hidden part You will make me know  
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A. “When we deal seriously with our sin, God will deal gently with us” (Charles Spurgeon).

B. “For I know my transgressions and, and my sin is ever before me”—We need to be aware of our sin. This may seem self-evident, but most of our problems with sin begin at this point. David could not escape from the guilt of his sin.

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C. “Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and pure when You judge”—We need to know that it is sin. “All wounding of another, whether in person or property, in body or soul, is a sin against the goodness of God”  
(James Montgomery Boice).



## **II. Confess Our Sin (51:3-6)**

**D. That's what David did when Nathan had confronted him about his sin. "Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against Yahweh" (2 Samuel 12:13a).**

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**E. "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me"—We need to confess that sin springs from our thoroughly evil nature. We come into this world sinners. We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.**



## II. Confess Our Sin (51:3-6)

F. “Behold, You delight in truth in the innermost being, and in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom”—God desires inward purity. David’s inner being was corrupted by sin which in turn led him to commit sinful acts. God requires a pure nature as well as well as upright conduct.

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G. Our confession of sin must be personal.



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H. Our confession of sin is essential. Confess means to say the same thing. You will never deal with your sin until you call sin what God calls since.

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I. Our confession is theological. We agree with God about our sin.



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**A. David was no longer hiding or denying his sin. He laid bare his soul before God.**

**B. Confident that God is a God of grace, lovingkindness, and compassion, he pleaded with God for a complete and full forgiveness. Nothing less would satisfy his soul.**



### III. Call for Cleansing (51:7-9)

C. “Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”—Ask God to wash you. “Purify” literally means to de-sin.

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C. “Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow”—Ask God to wash you. “Purify” literally means to de-sin.

D. Hyssop” was a leafy shrub used as a brush to splatter blood or water in rituals of purification. When David wrote “purify me with hyssop” he meant cleanse me by the blood. Forgive me and regard me as cleansed on the basis of the innocent sacrifice that has died.



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**E. Ask God to cleanse you completely from sin. Ask God to wash away every spot and stain of sin, resulting in a soul as white as snow. (Isaiah 1:18)**

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**F. “Make me to hear joy and gladness, let the bones that You have crushed rejoice”—Ask God to restore you. Unconfessed sin in your life robs you of joy, gladness, and strength. David wanted to hear a happy song again. He wanted to experience the joy of Yahweh again.**



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**G. “Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities”—Ask God to clear your record of sins. O God, do with my sins what I cannot.**

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**G. “Hide Your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquities”—Ask God to clear your record of sins. O God, do with my sins what I cannot.**

**H. “Blot out all my iniquities”—Remove or wipe clean my slate of sin. “Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us which was hostile to us, He also has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).**



## Conclusion

**A. The BAD NEWS is that the God who created everything and everyone knows everything about you. You belong to Him and are responsible to Him. “So then each of us will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12).**

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**B. The GOOD NEWS is that God is gracious and merciful and He will forgive you if you will repent of your sin and believe in Christ.**



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**C. “There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel’s veins, and sinners plunged beneath that flood, lose all their guilty stains.”  
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## **D. The Gospel Definition**



**The gospel is the good news that the just and gracious God of the universe looked upon hopelessly sinful people and sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, God in human flesh, to bear His wrath against sin on the cross and to show His power over sin in the resurrection so that everyone who turns from their sin (repentance) and believes in Him (faith) will be reconciled to God forever.**