

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



# CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

## Sunday Morning

Study 14

*Psalm 51*

# Psalm 51

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** To give the students an understanding of repentance by studying David's example in Psalm 51.

## Key Verses

Psalm 51—Main Teaching Passage  
Matthew 4:17

## Memory Verse - Psalm 51:10

"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, 2 Samuel 12:9a.

Ask the students if they have ever gotten in trouble for doing the wrong thing. How did they feel? Ask them if they felt bad because they got caught, or if they felt bad because they knew they had done the wrong thing (explain the difference).

Tell the students that today we will be looking at how David demonstrated repentance after his sin had been exposed by God.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

The Psalm begins by placing it in its historical context: “Of David when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.”

David writes this Psalm as a response to the Lord putting David’s sin before him.

In verses 1-2 David cries first for mercy, leaning on the truth of God’s love and mercy. He asks that the Lord would cleanse him completely from it.

Verses 3-4 show that David knew how serious his sin was, placing the transgression as one against the Lord Himself.

In verses 5-6, we see that David deeply regretted his sin and knows that the Lord desires honesty and wisdom to be shown in his life.

David again asks to be cleaned, this time “whiter than snow,” in verses 7-9, knowing that if the Lord does so, that David will be filled with joy and gladness. He follows this in verses 10-11 by asking for a clean heart and for his spirit to be renewed. David begs for the Spirit of God to stay with him, knowing that the Lord took His Spirit from Saul because Saul was unrepentant.

In verses 14-17, David makes an important statement. He shows that God desires a broken and contrite heart, not the sacrifices of burnt offerings.

# LOOK

As we studied before, the first King of Israel was Saul. Saul disobeyed God, broke God’s law, and because of that, the kingdom was stripped from him. God removed His Spirit from Saul and handed the kingdom to David. Last week we saw David’s great sin with Bathsheba. He lied and committed adultery and murder, and yet God did not take His kingdom from David. Why? What was the difference between David and Saul? The answer is found in Psalm 51. Whereas Saul was unwilling to admit that he was wrong and would not repent of his sin, David was broken before the Lord when confronted by his sin.

David wrote Psalm 51 as a direct response to his sin being exposed. When Nathan the prophet had come to David and pointed out his sin, David could have reacted defensively. He could have accused Nathan of lying or making up stories, but instead David owned his sin and powerfully repented of it.

The interpretation/  
exegesis of the passage.  
What does this passage  
mean? How does this  
passage apply to my  
life?

# LOOK (Continued)

Repentance is a very important part of the Christian walk. We all make mistakes, we all sin, and when do, we need to take a lesson from David's repentance. In Psalm 51, we notice a few things about the way that David asked for forgiveness.

The first thing we notice is that David didn't try and blame somebody else. Sometimes when we get in trouble we attempt to shift the blame and make it look like someone else was the cause of the problem. David tells us in Psalm 51, "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me." David tells God that he knows he has done the wrong thing. That is a great start, but it is not repentance.

Second, David shows us that he is sorry for what he has done. David isn't just sad that he got caught, but rather he recognizes that he has sinned against God. David is sad because he broke the law.

Lastly, David asks God to help him not to do it again. He asks God to create in him a clean heart. David doesn't want to sin anymore.

These three steps are crucial for true repentance. We need to recognize and admit that we have sinned, we have to feel sorrow for the harm we have caused to ourselves, others, and God, and we need to ask God to help us not to do it again. When we can honestly say that we have repented of our sin, then we can be sure that God will "Restore to us the joy of our salvation, and uphold us by His generous spirit" (v.12). We can be confident that God will not despise a broken and contrite heart (v.17) but will show us loving-kindness and tender mercy.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize Psalm 51:10

Tell the students that Jesus said, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Matt 4:17). Ask them what they think Jesus meant by this.

**Pray:** Ask God to help the students to repent in truth. Ask Him to keep us from temptation and to help us live upright and clean lives before Him.

**Parent Question:** Why did David write Psalm 51?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Psalm 51 by David Guzik

This Psalm is titled, To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David When Nathan the Prophet went to Him, After He Had Gone in to Bathsheba. The events are plainly and painfully described in 2 Samuel chapters 11 and 12.

James Montgomery Boice noted that this Psalm has been long beloved by believers: “It was recited in full by Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey when they were on the scaffold in the bloody days of Henry VIII and Queen Mary. William Carey, the great pioneer missionary to India, asked that it might be the text of his funeral sermon.”

“This great song, pulsating with the agony of a sin-stricken soul, helps us to understand the stupendous wonder of the everlasting mercy of our God.” (G. Campbell Morgan)

A. Sin confessed, and forgiveness requested.

1. (1-2) The direct plea for mercy.

Have mercy upon me, O God,  
According to Your lovingkindness;  
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,  
Blot out my transgressions.  
Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
And cleanse me from my sin.

a. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness: The title of this Psalm gives the tragic context for David’s plea. He had sinned in murder, adultery, the covering of His sin, and in hardness against repentance. It took the bold confrontation of Nathan the Prophet to shake him from this (2 Samuel 12); yet once shaken, David came in great honesty and brokenness before God.

i. Have mercy upon me, O God is the prayer of a man who knows he has sinned and stopped from all self-justification. David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD (2 Samuel 12:13) – a good and direct confession, without excuse and with clarity.

ii. David asked for mercy, and that according to the measure of God’s lovingkindness. This is God’s hesed, His loyal love, His covenant mercy. It was a well-phrased request with the eloquence of true brokenness.

b. According to the multitude of Your tender mercies: In slightly different words, David repeated the thought of the previous appeal. He had before experienced the multitude of God’s tender mercies; he asks for this outpouring again.

i. Multitude of Your tender mercies: “Men are greatly terrified at the multitude of their sins, but here is a comfort—our God hath multitude of mercies. If our sins be in number as the hairs of our head, God’s mercies are as the stars of heaven.” (Symson, cited in Spurgeon)

ii. David used several words to speak of the kindness he desired from God. “Mercy denotes God’s loving assistance to the pitiful. Unfailing love [lovingkindness] points to the continuing operation of this mercy. Compassion [tender mercies] teaches that God feels for our infirmities.” (Boice)

c. Blot out my transgressions: David felt a register of his many sins condemned him and he wanted the account of them to be erased. The blotting out may refer to David’s own conscience, or to God’s accounting of sin – or perhaps to both.

i. Blot out my transgressions: “The plea, blot out, means ‘wipe away’, like the writing from a book (cf. Exodus 32:32; Numbers 5:23).” (Kidner)

ii. Blot out my transgressions: “Out of thy debt-book; cross out the black lines of my sins with the red lines of Christ’s blood; cancel the bond, though written in black and bloody characters.” (Trapp)

d. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity: The word of God through Nathan the Prophet worked like a mirror to show David how dirty and stained he was. He had lived in that condition for some time (perhaps a year) without an acute knowledge of his iniquity and sin. Now the sense of the stain drove him to beg to be cleansed.

i. “Wash me thoroughly, Hebrew multiply to wash me; by which phrase he implies the greatness of his guilt, and the insufficiency of all legal washings, and the absolute necessity of some other and better thing to wash him.” (Poole)

ii. Wash me thoroughly: “The word employed is significant, in that it probably means washing by kneading or beating, not by simple rinsing.” (Maclaren)

iii. Wash me thoroughly: “To be cleansed not only from outward defilements, but from his swinish nature; for though a swine be washed never so clean, if she retain her nature, she will be ready to wallow in the next guzle.” (Trapp)

iv. David used several words to speak of his offense against God.

· Transgressions has the idea of crossing a boundary.

· Iniquity has the idea of twistedness or perversion.

· Sin has the idea of falling short or missing the mark.

2. (3-4) The open confession of sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions,  
And my sin is always before me.  
Against You, You only, have I sinned,  
And done this evil in Your sight—  
That You may be found just when You speak,  
And blameless when You judge.

a. I acknowledge my transgressions: David realized it was not only one, but multiple transgressions. He did this without excuse, blame-shifting, or rationalization.

i. “The author is fully aware of his condition before God. He confesses ‘I know’ with an emphasis on ‘I.’ He knows himself intimately and sees how rebellious he has been.” (VanGemeran)

b. My sin is always before me: In the many months between the time David committed these sins and this confession, he had not escaped the sense of sin – it was always before him. He did his best to ignore it and deny it, but as a genuine child of God he could not escape it. He was in unconfessed sin, but miserable in it, as a child of God should be.

i. David didn’t say, “My punishment is ever before me” or “My consequences are ever before me.” What bothered him was his sin. Many grieve over the consequences of sin, few over sin itself.

ii. Is ever before me: “To my great grief and regret, my conscience twitteth me with it, and the devil layeth it in my dish.” (Trapp)

iii. We remember that David suffered this agony as a king. “The riches, the power, and the glory of a kingdom, can neither prevent nor remove the torment of sin, which puts the monarch and the beggar upon a level.” (Horne)

iv. My sin: “We note, too, how the psalmist realises his personal responsibility. He reiterates ‘my’ — ‘my transgressions, my iniquity, my sin.’ He does not throw blame on circumstances, or talk about temperament or maxims of society or bodily organisation. All these had some share in impelling him to sin; but after all allowance made for them, the deed is the doer’s, and he must bear its burden.” (Maclaren)

c. Against You, You only, have I sinned: In an objective sense this was not true. David had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, their families, his family, his kingdom, and in a sense even against his own body (1 Corinthians 6:18). Yet all of that faded into the background as he considered the greatness of his sin against God. He rightly felt as if, against You, You only, have I sinned.

d. And done this evil in Your sight: David realized that God was there and God was looking when he did his evil. He was not absent from the bedroom of adultery or the place where the command to kill Uriah was given.

i. “David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God.” (Spurgeon)

e. That You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge: David’s confession of sin was not only to relieve himself of the great burden of his sin and guilt. More so, it was to bring glory to God. In confessing his sin David hoped to confirm God’s justice and holy character, proving that His commands were good and just even when David broke those commands.

3. (5-6) The depth of David’s need.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
And in sin my mother conceived me.  
Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts,  
And in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

a. I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me: David wasn't born out of a sinful relationship; that isn't his idea. Neither is his idea to excuse his sin by saying, "Look how bad I started out – what else could be expected?" The purpose was to show the depths of his sin, that it went beyond specific sinful actions all the way to a stubborn sin nature, one he was born with.

i. "The act of sin is traced back to its reason in the pollution of the nature." (Morgan)

ii. From this and similar passages we gain the Biblical idea of original sin – the idea that all humans are born sinners, receiving a sinful nature as sons of Adam and daughters of Eve. "This verse is both by Jewish and Christian, by ancient and later, interpreters, generally and most truly understood of original sin." (Poole)

iii. "It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith." (Spurgeon)

b. You desire truth in the inward parts: Though the sin nature was deep within David, God wanted to work deeply in him. God wanted a transformation in David all the way to the inward parts, to the hidden part that would know wisdom. David did not cry out for a superficial reform, but something much deeper.

i. "Oh! delude not yourselves with the thought that you have holy desires unless you truly have them. Do not think your desires are true towards God unless they are really so: he desireth truth in our desires." (Spurgeon)

B. Prayers for restoration.

1. (7-9) Restoration through the blood of sacrifice.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
Make me hear joy and gladness,  
That the bones You have broken may rejoice.  
Hide Your face from my sins,  
And blot out all my iniquities.

a. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: David looked for God to do a work of spiritual and moral cleansing, and to do it in connection with the atoning sacrifice of a substitute. Hyssop was used to apply the blood of the Passover lamb (Exodus 12:22). Hyssop was used to sprinkle the priest's purifying water (Numbers 19:18).

i. In the Levitical law it was often the priests who used the hyssop to sprinkle the purifying water. "Here the psalmist petitions the Lord to be his priest by taking the hyssop and by declaring him cleansed from all sin." (VanGemenen)

ii. David didn't think for a moment that he could cleanse himself. He needed God to cleanse him, and to do it through the blood of the perfect sacrifice anticipated by animal sacrifices.

iii. Purge: "It is based on the word for sin (chattath) and literally means 'de-sin' me. David wanted to have his sin completely purged away." (Boice)



b. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow: David knew that God's cleansing was effective. His sin was a deep stain but purity could be restored. We sense that David spoke with the voice of faith; it can be difficult for the convicted sinner to believe in such complete cleansing. It takes faith to believe God despite the doubt and difficulty.

i. "God could make him as if he had never sinned at all. Such is the power of the cleansing work of God upon the heart that he can restore innocence to us, and make us as if we had never been stained with transgression at all." (Spurgeon)

c. Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice: David felt the brokenness fitting for the sinner under the conviction of the Holy Spirit; it was so severe he felt as if his bones were broken. Confident that this was the work of the Holy Spirit, David could pray that it would lead to joy and gladness, that out of his brokenness David would rejoice.

i. It is a terrible thing to be so directly confronted with the blackness of our sin, yet God means even this to be a prelude to joy and gladness. The restoration of joy is His goal.

ii. "He is requesting a great thing; he seeks joy for a sinful heart, music for crushed bones. Preposterous prayer anywhere but at the throne of God!" (Spurgeon)

d. Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities: Repeatedly, David asked for forgiveness and restoration. In the repetition we see that this was not a light thing for David. It was not easily expressed or easily received by faith. There was a sense in which he had to contend both with God and himself to bring him to the place he should be.

## 2. (10-11) Restoration of heart.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.  
Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

a. Create in me a clean heart, O God: David felt that it wasn't enough if God simply cleaned up the heart he had. The plea create indicated he needed a new heart from God, a clean heart. In this David anticipated one of the great promises to all who believe under the New Covenant: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 36:26).

i. "The word that begins this section is the Hebrew verb bara, which is used in Genesis 1 for the creation of the heavens and the earth by God. Strictly used, this word describes what only God can do; create ex nihilo, out of nothing." (Boice)

ii. "With the word Create he asks for nothing less than a miracle. It is a term for what God alone can do." (Kidner)

b. And renew a steadfast spirit within me: Along with a new and clean heart David needed a steadfast spirit to continue in the way of godliness. This expressed a humble reliance upon the LORD.

i. Renew a steadfast spirit: "Or, a firm spirit, firm for God, able to resist the devil, steadfast in the faith, and to abide constant in the way that is called holy." (Trapp)

ii. “‘A steadfast spirit’ is needful in order to keep a cleansed heart clean; and, on the other hand, when, by cleanness of heart, a man is freed from the perturbations of rebellious desires and the weakening influences of sin, his spirit will be steadfast.” (Maclaren)

c. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me: This was a further way David expressed his ongoing reliance upon God. For him, the whole point of cleansing and restoration was to renew relationship with God. David didn’t want a God who cleansed him yet remained distant.

i. Do not cast me away from Your presence: “Cain’s punishment, which possibly David might have here mind, as being guilty of murder.” (Trapp)

ii. Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me: “The likely background to this fear of being a castaway was the example of Saul, from whom the Spirit of the Lord had departed (1 Samuel 16:14).” (Kidner)

iii. “The soul that is truly penitent, dreads nothing but the thought of being rejected from the ‘presence,’ and deserted by the ‘Spirit’ of God. This is the most deplorable and irremediable effect of sin; but it is one that in general, perhaps, is the least considered and regarded of all others.” (Horne)

iv. It has been noted that several of these requests don’t fit for the believer under the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:25-27). In the New Covenant the believer already has a new heart and is promised the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. This point is technically true, yet doesn’t take away from the deep sense of a need for restoration and return to the first things that may mark an erring child of God even under the New Covenant.

### 3. (12-13) Restoration to the joy of salvation.

Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.  
Then I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And sinners shall be converted to You.

a. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation: In his many months of unconfessed sin, David felt the misery of spiritual defeat. He wanted once again the joy appropriate to salvation, to those whom the LORD rescues.

b. Uphold me by Your generous Spirit: This expresses again David’s confidence in God for his future. He did not dream of upholding himself. Such self confidence is what typically leads even good men into sin.

c. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You: In the dark days before this confession of sin, David was not able to teach those who were far from God and saw none converted to Him. We don’t know if David never made the attempt because of a sense of guilt, or if he attempted and saw no blessing on his work. One way or another, getting this right with God was key to effectiveness in his spiritual work.

i. Sinners shall be converted: VanGemeren notes that David used the same word here translated converted that was previously translated restore (Psalm 51:12). “The psalmist who prayed ‘restore to me’ also prays that he may be instrumental in restoring sinners to the ‘ways’ of the Lord.” (VanGemeren)

### 4. (14-17) Restoration of praise.

Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
The God of my salvation,  
And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.  
O Lord, open my lips,  
And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.  
For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it;  
You do not delight in burnt offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,  
A broken and a contrite heart—  
These, O God, You will not despise.

a. Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed: David was deeply aware of his sin of murder against Uriah (2 Samuel 11). Though he makes no specific reference to his adultery in this Psalm, he felt that he must make specific mention of this great sin. Such a request presented to the God of my salvation would surely be answered.

i. “The unhappy criminal entreats, in this verse, for the divine help and deliverance, as if he not only heard the voice of innocent blood crying from the ground, but as if he saw the murdered Uriah coming upon him for vengeance, like an armed man.” (Horne)

b. And my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness: David knew that with his guilt dealt with before God, he would again be able to sing aloud; that my mouth shall show forth Your praise. We believe that the months of unconfessed sin were silent from a spirit of true praise.

c. You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it: David expressed the principle brought forth in the previous Psalm (Psalm 50). He understood that though animal sacrifice had its place, what God really desired was in the heart of man.

i. Or else I would give it: “He would have been glad enough to present tens of thousands of victims if these would have met the case. Indeed, anything which the Lord prescribed he would cheerfully have rendered.” (Spurgeon)

d. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart: David had a great love for the House of the LORD and had sponsored great sacrifices unto God (2 Samuel 6:13, 6:17-18). Yet he understood that one could sacrifice an animal or many animals to God without a broken and contrite heart. Perhaps David had offered many sacrifices at God’s altar in his months of unconfessed sin. He recognized the emptiness of all that, and the value of his present broken spirit and broken and contrite heart.

i. A broken spirit: “If you and I have a broken spirit, all idea of our own importance is gone. What is the use of a broken heart? Why, much the same as the use of a broken pot, or a broken jug, or a broken bottle!” (Spurgeon)

ii. A broken and contrite heart: “This is opposed to that hard or stony heart, of which we read so oft, which signifies a heart insensible of the burden of sin, stubborn and rebellious against God, imminent and incorrigible.” (Poole)

iii. “The clean heart must continue contrite, if it is not to cease to be clean.” (Maclaren)

e. These, O God, You will not despise: It's easy to imagine that many in David's day would despise his broken and contrite heart. What he did – taking whatever woman he wanted and killing anyone who got in his way – this was expected conduct for the kings of the world. Perhaps his neighboring kings were mystified as to why any of this bothered David. To him, it did not matter what others thought; God did not despise his broken and contrite heart, and that was enough.

i. You will not despise: “This is great comfort to those that droop under sense of sin and fear of wrath, being at next door to despair.” (Trapp)

5. (18-19) Restoration of good to the kingdom.

Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion;

Build the walls of Jerusalem.

Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness,

With burnt offering and whole burnt offering;

Then they shall offer bulls on Your altar.

a. Do good in Your good pleasure to Zion; build the walls of Jerusalem: David realized that in his sin he did not only fail as a man, a husband, and a father. He also failed as a king over God's people. He humbly asked God to restore His favor to the kingdom.

i. We don't know if there was an obvious demonstration of God's displeasure against the Kingdom of Israel in the period of David's unconfessed sin. Whether there was or was not, David understood that there was an aspect of restoration in terms of the kingdom that needed to be addressed.

b. Then You shall be pleased with the sacrifices of righteousness: Under the Old Covenant, David knew that God was not yet done with animal sacrifices. They would still offer bulls on Your altar. With the heart issues addressed, those sacrifices could be full of meaning and benefit.

i. It's also possible that David had in mind the sacrifices that were regularly offered on behalf of Israel, and that they could be restored to meaning and benefit on behalf of the nation.