

Weekly Study Guide | March 9, 2025

A Steadfast and Willing Spirit

Psalm 51 | A Psalm of Repentance

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. 5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. 7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. 8 Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. 9 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. 14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. 15 Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. 16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. 18 May it please you to prosper Zion, to build up the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the righteous, in burnt offerings offered whole; then bulls will be offered on your altar.

SUPPORT: [Psalm 51](#); [2 Samuel 11:27, 12:7,13](#); [Romans 3:10, 3:23, 5:12, 5:17](#); [John 3:16](#); [Psalm 139:13-16](#); [Exodus 12:22](#); [1 Peter 5:10](#); [Hebrews 10:3-10,18](#)

Questions:

1. What stands out to you in the verses above? What is the main purpose of this Psalm? Why do you think David shared this Psalm with the chief musician?
2. Do you think David deserved to be forgiven? Why or why not? Why do you think it took the prophet Nathan confronting him before he repented? What does this tell you about God?

3. Why is it so important that we receive forgiveness of our sins? What happens when we don't? What happens when we do? What changed in David's life as a result of God's forgiveness?
4. This is a prayer of repentance. Are there a few verses that could summarize this prayer? Can you suggest a shorter version of this prayer that would help someone who needs to be restored in their relationship with God?
5. What can we learn from this lesson? What are a few takeaways? How does it apply to you today? How can it encourage you and help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your daily walk with Christ?

For later: Please take time to prayerfully reflect on how this lesson relates to you. What did you learn? What are some personal takeaways and insights you gained? What is a practical way you can apply this to your life? How will this help strengthen your relationship with God? What difference will this make in your life? Is there anything you need to change in light of this lesson?

Summary: David committed a grievous sin before God. He tried to hide it but God knew. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to confront David so that he would repent and be restored. The Bible tells us that no one is righteous, not even one (Romans 3:10). All have sinned and fallen short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Though none of us deserves to be forgiven, God provides a way by offering His Son, Jesus, in our place on our behalf (John 3:16). Jesus pays the price for our sin so we can be forgiven. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, our sins can be washed away. We can be made holy and righteous through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ once and for all (Hebrews 10:10).

God doesn't require the blood of bulls and goats. Religion or rituals cannot save us. These things cannot take away sin. They only remind us of our sin (Hebrews 10:3-4). God desires a broken and contrite heart. This is the kind of sacrifice God will not reject. David wrote this Psalm to teach others who have transgressed God's law that God is merciful. Sinners can always turn back to God. There is a way to get back on the path when we've wandered from the way. As long as we humble ourselves and repent, God will forgive us and cleanse us from our sin.

A simple prayer to pray every day is this: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." -Psalm 51:10-12