

***Prayers of Repentance***  
*Psalm 51*

**Introduction:** In our last study we looked at Psalm 73 and found guidance regarding how to pray in the midst of temptation. In the best case scenario we would consistently pray our way through our temptations to a place of obedience. But the reality is that at times we do sin. Sometimes we even sin in spectacular ways. How do we pray then - after we sin? Is there really any point in praying? Does God want to hear us? In Psalm 51, David illustrates that not only can we pray, but we must pray and trust God to do a deep work in our lives after we have sinned.

**Read Psalm 51**

1. What does the superscription tell us about the context of this psalm? (see 2 Samuel 11-12)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What are some observations you would make about how David prays about his sin?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. What is David asking for in verse 1?

Steve said:

Yes, David had sinned against other people. As someone in a position of power and authority he sinned against both Bathsheba and Uriah. But ultimately his actions were an offense to God. Ultimately David answered to his God. This doesn't minimize the offense against others involved; rather, it heightens David's accountability to God. I suspect our tendency is to do the opposite. We think, "God is gracious. I'm not worried about Him. I'm worried about my husband/wife/coworker!" Those we see with our eyes tend to evoke more fear in us than the One whom we can't see. But unless we understand that the sins we commit are first and foremost against our heavenly Father, we'll never really repent (which includes a change of life). We may have a guilty conscience or we may feel horrible that we got caught. But unless we see our sin through God's eyes, we won't have a true change of heart.

4. Do you tend to think of your sin as committed first and foremost against God or are you often more concerned about the person against whom you sinned? Explain.

5. Why do you think it is important to see that your sin is ultimately against God?
6. How do you see David appealing to God for full spiritual restoration (vv. 7-12)?
7. Do you ever doubt whether you can experience full spiritual restoration in light of your sin? How does this psalm speak to any doubts that you might have?
8. In verse 11, David asks God to not take His Holy Spirit from him. Is this something a New Testament believer would need to pray? Why or why not?
9. Despite the depth of David's sin he believes that God can make him clean (v. 7), restored to joy (v. 8, 12), and useable again (v. 13). How does this make you feel about your own sin?
10. Have you ever felt that your sin is really just too much for God to fully forgive and restore you? How does this psalm speak to those feelings?
11. What is your main take-away from this study?