

Overcoming Guilt & Shame



"Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." Psalm 51:7 NLT

The back story for Psalm 51 and 32 is found in 2 Samuel 11-12. It is the story of David slipping away from God, committing adultery with Bathsheba, plotting and murdering her husband, Uriah, and covering it up for at least a year. Guilt ate away at David. He described the torment of his soul and heart. It made him physically sick. He had no joy or peace. He never experienced happiness again until he confessed his sin and sought God's forgiveness.

Many people today have no joy. Guilt is eating away at their heart and mind. They exist under a dark cloud. But there is good news! There is forgiveness. There is an opportunity to get right with God.

Central Lesson:
No sin is too great to be forgiven. Sincerely seek God's mercy.

The Weight of Guilt

1. **Guilt continuously HAUNTS** or torments the conscience (51:3).

"3 For I recognize my rebellion; it haunts me day and night."

In the back of David's mind was the constant thought of the wrong he had committed. It was never a passing thought, but a haunting thought.

2. **Guilt is ultimately the result of sin against GOD** (51:4).

"4 Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just."

David sinned against Uriah, Bathsheba, himself, his kingdom, but ultimately was against God. Our sin is never isolated to ourselves. Everyone connected to us is hurt when we sin. However, sin ultimately hurts our relationship with God, then, trickles down to everyone else. *Is anyone suffering because you have secret sin?*

3. **Guilt starts at CONCEPTION** (51:5-6). Everyone needs forgiveness and salvation.

"5 For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. 6 But you desire honesty from the womb, teaching me wisdom even there."

The *Life Application Study Bible* explains, "Because we are born sinners (51:5), our natural inclination is to please ourselves rather than God. David followed that inclination when he took another man's wife. Like David, we must ask God to cleanse us from within (51:7), filling our hearts and spirits with new thoughts and desires. Right conduct can come only from a clean heart and spirit. Ask God to create a pure heart and spirit in you." (51:10).

4. **Guilt robs life of JOY** (51:8).

"8 Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me—now let me rejoice."

5. **Guilt causes a sense of SEPARATION** from God and loss of His presence (51:11).

"11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me."

6. **Guilt hinders the ability to WORSHIP** God (51:15).

"15 Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you."

The Way to Forgiveness

1. **Seek God for MERCY**, for the stain of sin to be blotted, for internal cleansing and purification (51:1-2, 7).

"1 Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. 2 Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin." 7 Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

The *Life Application Study Bible* comments, "David was truly sorry for his adultery with Bathsheba and for murdering her husband to cover it up. He knew that his actions had hurt many people. But because David repented of their sins, God mercifully forgave him. No sin is too great to be forgiven! Do you feel that you could never come close to God because you have done something terrible? God can and will forgive you of any sin. While God forgives us, however, he does not always erase the natural consequences of our sin. David's life and family were never the same as a result of what he had done (see 2 Samuel 12:1-23)." (51:1-7).

2. **Ask God to COVER** your sin with Christ's she's blood - so they are out of His sight (51:9).

"9 Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt."

3. **Ask God to give you a "LOYAL" spirit** (51:10).

"10 Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me."

4. **Seek to have a CLOSE** relationship with God (51:11).

"11 Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me."

During the Old Testament era, the Holy Spirit did not dwell within God's redeemed people. Occasionally the Spirit would come "upon" people to enable them to accomplish some special service for God (Judges 3:10; 11:29; 14:6, 19; 15:14; 1 Chron. 12:18). As a result, sin could cause the Spirit to be removed from an individual (Psalm 51:11). However, after Pentecost in Acts 2, the Holy Spirit indwells the believer. The Spirit can be grieved (Eph. 4:30-31), but will never leave the believer (John 14:16).

5. **Ask God to fill you with the JOY** of salvation (51:12, 14-15).

"12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you." 14 Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. 15 Unseal my lips, O Lord, that my mouth may praise you."

6. **DEDICATE** yourself to living for God (51:13).

"13 Then I will teach your ways to rebels, and they will return to you."

7. **Focus more on your heart** for God than religious rituals (51:16-17).

"16 You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. 17 The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God."

Central Lesson:
No sin is too great to be forgiven. Sincerely seek God's mercy.

► Accept Christ as your Savior. ► As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ.
► Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ► Attend a small group. ► Read the Bible this week & journal meaningful verses. ► Pray for friends that need Jesus.