

A Spirit of Repentance

The Making of a King: Part 22

Psalm 51

Here we stand on the other side of what was likely the biggest mistake of David's life. He has committed a major moral failure in not only committing adultery with Bathsheba but then proceeding to cover it up AND when that didn't work arranging to have her husband killed. There was no question about it, David messed up. 2 Samuel 12:1-12 details the prophet Nathan using a fable to show David his sin. David, upon hearing this story, is outraged and demands the man in the story be put to death. Nathan, of course, replies that David *is* the man in the story.

But now David sits at a crossroads. How would he respond upon realizing what a terrible mistake he had made? Would he respond like his predecessor, Saul, and seek to explain his way out of it? Or would he have a heart of humility and repentance, seeking to restore his relationship with the Lord even if it meant a personal cost to him? Thankfully, David chose the path of repentance, and Psalm 51 details his prayer here for us.

Discussion Question: Read verses 1-3. David clearly refused to stay in denial any longer. Admitting our sin is a vital, albeit often overlooked part of repentance. Why is staying in denial about our sin so dangerous for the Christian? Why is being honest with God (and ourselves) about our sin so important for our growth personally and spiritually?

The first step in genuine repentance must always be an admitting of our wrongs. This can be difficult for many because if we choose to admit something as the truth, we become responsible to do something about it. Sadly, for some Christians, they are willing to greatly damage their walk with the Lord because they think it is easier/better to walk in willful ignorance than to do the hard work of meaningful life change. Thankfully for us, David did not make that choice.

Discussion Question: Read verse 4. Oftentimes, our focus is only on the outward consequences of our sin. Why is it important for us to not just focus on the outward consequences of sin, but understand that our sin hurts our Heavenly Father?

At times, it can be easy to merely focus on the outward consequences of our sin. Sadly, sometimes our only goal in repentance is not true restoration in our relationship with God but a thinly veiled attempt to dodge consequences for our actions. Friend, if we truly value our relationship with the Lord the way we say we do, we must always remember that his heart is grieved by our sin. And regardless of the outward consequences, we should always seek restoration with our Heavenly Father.

Discussion Question: Read verse 6. How does this verse show us that repentance isn't just about modifying our behavior? What does this verse show to be the real purpose of repentance in the life of the believer?

We have to applaud just how thorough David was in his repentance. David makes it abundantly clear what his desire is for God to do in his life. David truly leaves no stone unturned in an attempt to restore his relationship with the Lord. It's entirely possible that it was this honesty, transparency, and humility that caused the Lord to choose not to take the throne from David as he took it from Saul. Yes, there were consequences for David's actions, but the Lord didn't decide that the best path was to remove David from the throne. While we'll never know with absolute certainty, it's hard to believe that David's response to his sin didn't play a big part in that.

Discussion Question: Read verses 10-13. What was part of the reason David detailed for wanting the Lord to restore him? What does this tell us about what was most important to David? What does our response to sin reveal about what is most important to us?

For Personal Reflection: What is the biggest lesson you personally learned from this lesson? Write it out below.
