

## JMBC Bible Study #6 David's Change from the Inside Out

### Goal: To help students understand repentance and change from the "inside-out."

After giving Israel the Ten Commandments, God led Israel to Palestine as He had promised to do. Under the leadership of Joshua the people crossed the Jordan, conquered Jericho, and then began the long task of conquering the Promised Land. During the days of the Judges "everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Then there came the time, recorded in 1 Samuel when the people asked for a king. Samuel the prophet at first resisted, then God allowed them to choose Saul, warning that a king "would take your daughters... the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves...your manservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and your donkeys... and you yourself will become his slaves (1 Samuel 8: 13-17)

Saul did not do all these things, but he disobeyed the Lord (1 Samuel 14: 34-35) by sacrificing animals to the Lord, a thing that he was not to do. God replaced Saul with David, "a man after his own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22), and God promised David that "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever (2 Sam. 7: 16).

But at the height of his success, after he had defeated the Ammonites, David became careless in his personal responsibilities. He sent Joab out to war (2 Sam. 11:1), when he himself should have gone at the head of the army. Then one evening, from the roof of the palace, the sight of a beautiful woman named Bathsheba tempted him. Since he was the king, a "big" man, a powerful man, he sent for the woman, slept with her, and she became pregnant.

David was terrified at being discovered in this sin. Uriah, Bathsheba's husband with Joab, fighting at a place called Rabbah. He sent for Uriah and tried to trick him into sleeping with Bathsheba, hoping that Uriah would think that the child was his own. But tradition said that a soldier in battle was not to have sex with his wife. So Uriah did not have relations with Bathsheba. As a final result, David made a plan to kill Uriah. Joab was instructed to put Uriah in the front of the battle, and when the battle was the strongest, to draw back the army, leaving Uriah to be killed. Thus it happened. David thought his sin was hidden, but God knew. He sent Nathan to David to tell about his sin, and David understood the terribleness of his sin. David sought God's forgiveness, and Psalm 51 is the report of David's experience of God's forgiveness. (Accompanying the text of the Psalm are notes that will help you explain the depth of the Psalm.)

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.

*When he agrees with God about his sin, he understands that his only hope is in God's mercy. This mercy, or hesed, is God's undeserving favour, and David was a man who understood just how full of mercy God is. Of course, God is also just. Because of David's sin, judgement would fall on his family. Yet, above all God is compassionate. The Hebrew word translated loving-kindness, "loyalty", steadfast love", or "unfailing love" is the steady, persistent refusal of God to wash his hands of wayward Israel. 1 David is not pleading with God to ignore his sin; he is pleading with God to continue to deal with him and not to destroy him.*

*His even greater request is that God would wash away the stain that has come to his relationship with the Lord. Sin and iniquity in the NIV are essentially the same things; he wants a clean relationship again with God. This is a radical request. In ancient Israel sacrifices could only atone for sins of ignorance. But David knows that God wants more than sacrifices.*

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 that you are proved right when you speak and justified when you judge.

*David is a man after God's own heart, in part, because his own heart is tender. True, he committed a terrible sin against God—but once he saw what he had really done, he could not forget it, or lie to himself. People's hearts become hard when they lie to themselves. Strange as it is, David does not speak of the evil that he did to Bathsheba, or Uriah.. David understands that our sins are not simply against other people, but that*

when we sin against others are really sins against God (Matt. 25: 40). David has no excuses; though he pleads for forgiveness, he is ready to take judgement.

5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

*David now understands the true depth of his sin. When he says that he was “sinful at birth” or “from the time my mother conceived me” he does not mean that a baby is necessarily aware of, or understands his sin. He means that from the very beginning of a human’s life, man seeks to disobey God’s law. This is because man is self-centered, or selfish from his very beginning. We want our own way; we do not want God’s way. Larry Crabb has said that we walk in either one of two ways. We walk in self-centeredness, where the world exists for me, or we walk in forgiveness, where my life exists for God and his purposes. David is learning to walk in forgiveness.*

6 Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost 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.

*Walking in forgiveness means we are changed from the inside out. God desires “truth in our inner parts.” We cannot live in peace with God if we lie to ourselves about our sins, if we lie to others about the truth, and if we seek to hide the truth from God. Of course, there is the song “You cannot hide it from God”—but we try.*

*As we have seen in verse 1, David wants to be clean before God. So he asks again, this time, to be cleansed with hyssop. Hyssop was a plant used for ritual cleansing. But he wants more. Hear wants to hear joy and gladness from God. The Bible says that we can grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph 4:30). It also says that there is joy in heaven when a sinner repents. David repented that day and asks for something wonderful. He asks that God would help him change from the inside out. He asks for a “steadfast spirit within me” and a willing spirit to sustain me.” These are things from God. They are the marks of true repentance.*

13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you. 14 Save me from bloodguilt, O God, the God who saves me, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

*But true repentance does not stay on the inside of us. David knows that he must change his life’s direction. His future will be different from his past. He will teach transgressors the way of God, not from pride, but from the humility of a forgiven sinner. And he will sing of God’s righteousness if God allows him to live, for if bloodguilt remains upon him he will die. Our testimonies come from God; David asks the Lord to open his lips.*

16 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. 17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

*Now David comes to the heart of repentance. Repentance is not something we do on the outside. Repentance begins on the inside, with the deepest part of our lives. We must be broken in spirit; our hearts must be broken and contrite. [We must be ashamed, not before people, but before God.] Of course, David knows that burnt offerings [genuine sacrifices] are not wrong. But what must come first is repentance.[See the next verse*

18 In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem. 19 Then there will be righteous sacrifices, whole burnt offerings to delight you; then bulls will be offered on your altar. (NIV)

*And finally David, now forgiven, turns to praying for his people, and asking that God would bless them. The Bible says that David received forgiveness that day (2 Sam 12:14) Jesus told the woman caught in adultery “Go now and leave your life of sin.” (John 8:11). If you’re a Christian, how deep is the change in your life? If you’re not a believer, do you want to change from the inside out? God will show you the way.*