

Psalms for Every Season: Confession Psalms

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Psalm 51

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Reflection & Discussion

Confession is a word most of us do not love

It feels heavy, personal and exposing.

*What happens in your mind, body, and heart when you think about confessing?

*What does confession currently look like in your life?

Psalm 51 is a 3-dimensional picture of what the reality of confession looks like

Read and discuss Psalm 51 (The Message)

51 ¹⁻³ Generous in love—God, give grace!

Huge in mercy—wipe out my bad record.

Scrub away my guilt,

soak out my sins in your laundry.

I know how bad I've been;

my sins are staring me down.

⁴⁻⁶ You're the One I've violated, and you've seen

it all, seen the full extent of my evil.

You have all the facts before you;

whatever you decide about me is fair.

I've been out of step with you for a long time,

in the wrong since before I was born.

What you're after is truth from the inside out.

Enter me, then; conceive a new, true life.

⁷⁻¹⁵ Soak me in your laundry and I'll come out clean,

scrub me and I'll have a snow-white life.

Tune me in to foot-tapping songs,

set these once-broken bones to dancing.

Don't look too close for blemishes,

give me a clean bill of health.

God, make a fresh start in me,

shape a Genesis week from the chaos of my life.

Don't throw me out with the trash,
or fail to breathe holiness in me.

Bring me back from gray exile,
put a fresh wind in my sails!

Give me a job teaching rebels your ways
so the lost can find their way home.

Commute my death sentence, God, my salvation God,
and I'll sing anthems to your life-giving ways.

Unbutton my lips, dear God;

I'll let loose with your praise.

¹⁶⁻¹⁷ Going through the motions doesn't please you,
a flawless performance is nothing to you.

I learned God-worship

when my pride was shattered.

Heart-shattered lives ready for love

don't for a moment escape God's notice.

¹⁸⁻¹⁹ Make Zion the place you delight in,
repair Jerusalem's broken-down walls.

Then you'll get real worship from us,

acts of worship small and large,

Including all the bulls

they can heave onto your altar!

*What do you notice in this passage about how David is modeling confession?

*What vivid language stands out to you? Do you notice the mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the confession?

David doesn't minimize or excuse his sin

He stopped hiding and was fully honest about what he had done – ultimately against God.

*Why is naming our sin so important instead of being vague? What about owning it and not shifting blame?

*Can you think or share about a time when you tried to hide sin? What is hidden right now?

*What do you think it means that David says he had violated God in his sin?

Only God can cleanse and transform

He doesn't patch but rebuilds from the inside out.

*What needs to be recreated or renewed in you right now because of sin?

*Are you trying to find cleansing or transformation in some other way than true confession? Are you trying to fix what only God can recreate?

Obedience is the precursor to joy

Sin steals joy but confession restores it.

*Where has your joy faded? Could unconfessed sin be a part of that fading?

*How are confession and forgiveness related to worship? Freedom?

Psalm 51 shows us no matter how dark our sin or how deep our wounds, God can fully restore us

When we confess and turn toward him with honesty, God meets us with mercy, healing, and forgiveness.

*Where does mercy feel impossible for you right now?

*What places are fear, shame, and/or hiddenness holding you back from transformation?

*What is the Spirit saying to you through this psalm about your current season of life? What are you being invited to confess and receive mercy in?

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