

Rub-A-Dub-Dub

Taken from Psalm 51

Foundation

Take a moment to ask God to soften your heart. Thank him for the forgiveness He gives when we come humbly to Him.



Do you know people who never admit when they've made a mistake or have done wrong?

King David was stunned. Ever since the prophet Nathan approached him and pointed out his wrong, David's heart was filled with remorse. Not only had he sinned before God, but he also tried to cover up his sin by having an innocent person murdered! All of this was done so that David could have his way, and David knew it was wrong. His conscience tormented him, and Nathan's words pierced him in his heart. Knowing that no one is above God's laws—not even a king—David came to God for forgiveness.

"Be merciful because of Your love for us," David prayed in the anguish of his soul. "Your gift of compassion has the power to cover my sin. Please forgive my previous sins and cleanse my heart," he pleaded. "I recognize what I have done, and my disgraceful deeds are ever before me," David admitted.

In a moment of silence, the king humbly considered the bottom line. "I have sinned and the greatest offense is against You, in doing what I knew

The full story behind this psalm can be found in 2 Samuel chapters 11-12 (or by reading the corresponding lesson in Faith Factor OT called, “This Isn’t Lookin’ So Good”).

When David mentioned God cleansing him with hyssop, he wasn’t referring to a special soap. Hyssop was a plant commonly used in sacrifices. The Israelites used hyssop branches to apply the blood of the lamb to their doorposts during the Passover (Exodus 12:22-23), so God’s judgment might “pass over” them.

was evil. You are right in what You say, and Your judgment against me is just,” he confessed.

David sighed heavily before continuing his prayer. He knew it wasn’t a matter of finally being caught—it was a matter of being honest with God and getting back on track. Only God could forgive his wrong and restore the purity of his heart.

“I want to be clean as with hyssop. If the Lord Himself would wash me, I could be as white as fresh snow. I have been broken. Please restore the joy and gladness that was once in my heart,” David humbly asked. He knew only God could do such a miracle.

“O God, you can cleanse my heart and renew my spirit to obey. Please don’t refuse me and turn away, but return my heart to the joy I felt when I was first saved,” he prayed. David paused, knowing the weakness of his own heart. “Renew in me a spirit that seeks to obey You,” he whispered. “Then I will tell others of Your ways so sinners will return to You.”

David knew God was not impressed by “bargains” or by religious acts done to make up for wrong deeds. He knew God was only interested in matters of the heart. “O Lord, I know You wouldn’t be pleased with sacrifices, or I’d bring them. If I brought You a burnt offering, You wouldn’t accept it.” David acknowledged. “The sacrifice You desire is that of a broken and a repentant heart. For a humble and a sorrowful heart, O Lord, You will not reject.” David knew that for a fact. Forgiveness wasn’t granted on the basis of David’s goodness—it was based on the fact of God’s mercy.

Footwork

Turn to Psalm 51 in your Bible and read verse 10. What two things did David ask of God? Why do you think he asked specifically for those?



David saw the importance of confessing (admitting) his sin to God. No effort on his own part could ever set his heart straight or remove the blot of his sin. Trying to hide behind his mistakes, hoping no one noticed, and wishing they'd go away only made matters worse for David. It wasn't until he came clean before God that God was able to clean David's heart. It's the same with us. Covering up our sin only rubs against God and makes us a prisoner to our mistakes. This week, what will you do with your heart? Will you try to cover over your sin and remain a prisoner, or will you confess it and experience God's forgiveness?