

The Psalms of David

*Franklin Christian Church
Fall 2017 Life Group Study*



Psalm 51 (Week of Oct. 15; 2 Samuel 12)

Introduction: This Psalm of David provides an emotional commentary to David's reaction to the prophet Nathan in 2 Samuel 12. As part of the Hebrew prayer book, it has modeled the attitude of repentance for God's people for thousands of years. Verses 16-17 are especially revolutionary in displaying a proper reaction to sin; not with transactional agreements but with a "contrite heart."

Have a group member read the psalm aloud. Group members with Bibles can follow along and note anything that stands out.

1. Psalm 51 is a highly emotional poem. Take some time as a group to reflect on some of the poignant images that David employs here. Then, consider what role emotion plays in your own relationship with God.

2. Read verse 3 again. We have all experienced a season where our mistakes are "always before [us]." Sometimes, we just cannot get over the mistakes we have made, no matter how long ago they happened. Take some time to reflect on difficulties with this tendency. What are some experiences of overcoming this mindset?

3. Verses 7-12 recount the experience of repentance in David's life after realizing his sins from 2 Samuel 11. He mentions a restoration of joy (NIV vv. 8-12), perhaps as a replacement to the guilt passionately described above. How would you describe "joy?" How does the experience of joy related to your faith?

4. Verses 13-15 could serve as a reaction to that restored joy from verse 12. Read verses 13-15 again and identify the actions that David will take as God restores his joy. How has your own gratitude played itself out in your faith?

5. Read verses 16-17 again. David realizes that no material transactions will make up for his actions. He cannot buy God off. Instead, he offers his "broken and contrite heart." As a group, discuss what this phrase could mean. How is it different than material sacrifices? What kind of effort is involved in cultivating a heart that could break when confronted with sin?

6. What does Psalm 51 reveal about David's heart? What does it reveal about God's heart? What has this psalm revealed in your hearts?