

Psalm 51:1-9 Commentary

[CLICK HERE FOR UPDATED AND REVISED COMMENTARY ON PSALM 51](#)

Psalm 51:1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. **Be gracious** to me, O **God**, according to Your **lovingkindness**; According to the **greatness** of Your **compassion blot out** my **transgressions**.

2 **Wash** me **thoroughly** from my **iniquity** And **cleanse** me from my **sin**.

3 For I **know** my **transgressions**, And my **sin** is **ever before** me.

4 Against You, You **only**, I have **sinned** And **done what** is **evil** in Your **sight**, **So** that You are **justified** when You **speak** And **blameless** when You **judge**.

5 **Behold**, I was **brought forth** in **iniquity**, And in **sin** my **mother conceived** me. 6 **Behold**, You **desire truth** in the **innermost being**, And in the **hidden part** You will make me **know wisdom**.

7 **Purify** me with **hyssop**, and I shall be **clean**; **Wash** me, and I shall be **whiter than snow**.

8 Make me to **hear joy** and **gladness**, Let the **bones** which You have **broken rejoice**.

9 **Hide** Your **face** from my **sins** And **blot out all** my **iniquities**. (NASB: Lockman)

****Verbs in red are imperatives**

Do not give fair names to foul sins.

Call them what you will.

They will smell no sweeter.

What God sees them to be, that do you labour to feel them to be; and with all openness of heart acknowledge their real character. Observe, that David was evidently oppressed with the heinousness of his sin. It is easy to use words, but it is difficult to feel their meaning. The fifty-first Psalm is the photograph of a contrite spirit. Let us seek after the like brokenness of heart; for however excellent our words may be, if our heart is not conscious of the hell-deservingness of sin, we cannot expect to find forgiveness.

The title - For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba - To fully grasp the gravity of David's penitential spirit in Psalm 51 the reader is advised to study his sin and cover-up in 2Samuel 11:1-27 and his reproof by Nathan, his contrition, his confession and his repentance in 2Samuel 12:1-18. As **Derek Kidner** remarks "The power of God's word is nowhere more strikingly evident than in this transformation." (Ed: From the Sin of 2Samuel to the repentance of Psalm 51) ([Psalms 1-72 Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#) or [Logos](#)) In other words, the Word of God David had despised (2Sa 12:9, 10) was the Word that brought reproof through Nathan the prophet (2Sa 12:7), which in turn bore the fruit of repentance (2Sa 12:13).

A C Gaebelein quotes the following excellent summary comment on Psalm 51 from an anonymous source

Well has it been said, "So profound a conviction of sin, so deep and unfeigned a penitence, so true a confession, a heart so tender, so contrite, a desire so fervent for renewal, a trust so humble, so filial in the forgiving love of God, are such as we might surely expect from 'the man after God's own heart.'" ([Psalm 51 Commentary - Brief Notes](#))

William Barrick writes that several well-known individuals turned to Psalm 51 at the time of their death.

- ◆ Both Sir Thomas More and Lady Jane Grey recited this psalm when they were on the scaffold as martyrs during the reigns of Henry VIII and Queen Mary.
- ◆ Henry V requested it be read to him on his deathbed.
- ◆ William Carey requested it be the text of the sermon at his funeral.

Dr. Barrick's Outline of Psalm 51

I. Confession (Ps 51:1-9)

A. I Have Sinned (Ps 51:1-4)

B. I Am a Sinner (Ps 51:5-9)

II. Restoration (Ps 51:10-13)

III. Praise (Ps 51:14-17)

IV. Intercession (Ps 51:18-19)

([Ps 51 Notes](#))

Here is **John MacArthur's** outline...

I. Plea for Forgiveness (Ps 51:1, 2)

II. Proffer of Confession (Ps 51:3-6)

III. Prayer for Moral Cleanness (Ps 51:7-12)

IV. Promise of Renewed Service (Ps 51:13-17)

V. Petition for National Restoration (Ps 51:18, 19)

([MacArthur, J.: The MacArthur Study Bible Nashville: Word or Logos](#))

Alexander divides this psalm as follows...

Ps 51:1-4 Prays for pardon and cleansing, confessing the greatness of his sins

Ps 51:5-8 In utter self-abasement he contrasts the corruption of his nature with the sincerity which God desires, and expresses his confident assurance that God can and will cleanse and gladden him.

Ps 51:9-12 Repeating his petition for pardon, he supplicates for inward renewal for the continuance of God's favor and support.

Ps 51:13-17 He resolves to employ his regained freedom in grateful service, and to express his thanksgiving by that sacrifice of the heart which God most desires. ([The Book of Psalms](#))

Psalm (04210) (**mizmor** from **zamar** = touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument, play upon it, make music, accompanied by voice, celebrate in song and music). This psalm is the classic OT passage on confession, repentance and forgiveness of sin and ranks at the head of the list of the seven great "**penitential psalms**" - Ps 6:1-10; Ps 32:1-11; Ps 38:1-22; Ps 102:1-28; Ps 130:1-8; Ps 143:1-12.

When Nathan the prophet came to him - See 2Samuel 12:1-14 for Nathan's famous confrontation to David that "You are the man!" (2Sa 12:7)

In a sense Psalm 51 is an answer to the promise to prayer in the previous psalm...

And call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me. (Ps 50:15)

Comment: Indeed David has trouble of the worst kind - soul trouble!

Jameison has a helpful note that...

The Psalm illustrates true repentance, in which are comprised conviction, confession, sorrow, prayer for mercy, and purposes of amendment, and it is accompanied by a lively faith.

Of David - 18 psalms bear David's name and 8 have titles connected with historical incidents in his life.

After he had gone in to Bathsheba - This tragic transgression set in motion a chain of evil events that reverberated throughout David's family for the rest of his life! One night of indiscretion led to a lifetime of painful heartache! Oh beloved, how we need to "think before we leap" in to sin! Sin promises pleasure but obscures the pain and thus deceives the sinner (who is not an innocent victim!).

Charles Horne introduces his comments on Psalm 51...

In this Psalm, composed upon a sad occasion, but too well known, we have a perfect model of penitential devotion. The royal suppliant, robed in sackcloth and crowned with ashes, entreates for mercy, 1, 2. from a consideration of his own misery, and of the divine goodness; 3 from that of his confession; 4. of God's sole

right to judge him; 5. laments the corruption of his nature; but, 6. without pleading it as an excuse; 7. prays for gospel remission, in legal terms; 8. for spiritual joy and comfort; 9, 10. for pardoning and cleansing grace; 11, 12. for strength and perseverance, that he may, 13. instruct and convert others; 14, 15. deprecates the vengeance due to blood; 16, 17. beseeches God to accept an evangelical sacrifice, and, 18, 19. concludes with a prayer for the church.

The penitent's first ground for hope of pardon is his own misery, and the divine mercy which rejoices to relieve that misery. The riches, the power, and the glory of a kingdom can neither prevent nor remove the torment of sin, which puts the monarch and the beggar upon a level. Every transgression leaves behind it a guilt, and a stain; the account between God and the sinner is crossed by the blood of the great propitiatory sacrifice, which removes the former; and the soul is cleansed by the Holy Spirit, which takes out the latter. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

James Montgomery Boice wisely reminds us...

Let us remember that everything we do affects other people, whether for good or evil. It is not true that we can sin "as long as it does not hurt anyone," because sin always hurts someone. But it is also true that those who confess their sin find forgiveness and renewal, teach others the ways of God, and become a blessing.

(I agree with Boice's comment) A person who does not have much experience studying the Bible is likely to think that a well-known passage must be easy to elaborate. "It must be easy to teach John 3:16, the twenty-third Psalm, or the Christmas story," he might say. Actually, the opposite is the case. The well-known passages are the hardest, and some seem almost impossible to expound. This is true of Psalm 51. "This is the fourth, and surely the greatest, of the 'penitential' psalms," says **Derek Kidner**. Yet who can properly expound it? **Charles Haddon Spurgeon** was the prince of expositors. He could get more out of a passage than anyone I have ever heard or read. But in the preface to the second part of his first large volume on the psalms, Spurgeon tells how he postponed working on Psalm 51 week after week and often sat down to it and got up again without having written a line. He concluded,

It is a bush burning with fire yet not consumed, and out of it a voice seemed to cry to me, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet." The psalm is very human, its cries and sobs are of one born of a woman; but it is freighted with an inspiration all divine, as if the Great Father were putting words into his child's mouth. Such a psalm may be wept over, absorbed into the soul, and exhaled again in devotion; but, commented on—ah! where is he who having attempted it can do other than blush at his defeat? (**James Montgomery Boice, Psalms, 3 vols. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1996, 2:436**)

Ray Pritchard... ([How Much Sin Will God Forgive](#))

There are three parts to this great prayer. First, David confesses his sin (Ps 51:1-6). Then he prays for cleansing (Ps 51:7-12). Then he offers a prayer of consecration (Ps 51:13-19).

Confession.

Cleansing.

Consecration.

"God doesn't forgive weakness;

He only forgives sin.

Warren Wiersbe says David prays three things in Psalm 51:

"Forgive me."

"Cleanse me."

"Use me."

**THE BASIS FOR DAVID'S
PLEA FOR FORGIVENESS:
THE CHARACTER OF GOD!**

Be gracious - David's first plea should ever be our first plea when we have sinned against God for this is forever the only grounds we have on which to plead for forgiveness and cleansing. This is the plea of one who has no claim on the favor he seeks from God! Indeed, this is a picture of all of us! David further amplifies the basis of his confess is God's **lovingkindness** and His great **compassion**.

J R Miller...

Notice David's thoughts of God, as we find them in his confession. He saw Him as a God of unfailing love. In all the poignant sense of guilt that pressed upon his soul, there was not a shadow of despair. The moment he saw his sin—there poured upon him also a glorious disclosure of God's love. He confessed, "I have sinned," and at once Nathan said, "The Lord also has put away your sin." (2Sa 12:13) From this revealing of the divine mercy—hope came at once. Had David not seen God in this light when the sense of his sin overwhelmed him, utter, hopeless darkness would have come upon him, and he would have been lost in the gloom. Thus it was with Judas, after he had betrayed his Lord, when the terrible tide of conviction swept over his soul. He saw no ray of hope, and in his dark despair—he went out and hanged himself. On the other hand, when Peter had denied his Master, and when, beneath the grieved look of that holy Eye (Lk 22:61), a sense of sin overwhelmed him—he went out and wept bitterly (Lk 22:62). But through his tears—he saw God as a God of mercy and love, and instead of despair—hope sprang up in his soul, and he was restored, living to be a glorious apostle (Ed: Remember beloved, as with Peter, Jesus is praying for you in your hour of failure - Lk 22:32, Heb 7:25-note, Ro 8:34-note). It is most important that the convicted sinner shall see God—as a God of mercy and love—as David saw Him, as Peter saw Him. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Spurgeon...

He appeals at once to the mercy of God, even before he mentions his sin. The sight of mercy is good for eyes that are sore with penitential weeping. Pardon of sin must ever be an act of pure mercy, and therefore to that attribute the awakened sinner flies. ([Psalm 51:1 - Treasury of David](#))

William Plumer said that...

Anything is good for us if it makes us loathe ourselves and penitently sue for mercy.

Be gracious ([02603](#)) (**chanan/hanan**) describes a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need. It generally implies extending "favor" neither expected nor deserved. Thus free bestowal of favor from God to undeserving men. In modern Hebrew **hanan** seems to stress stronger meaning of "to pardon or to show mercy." Mercy denotes God's loving assistance to the pitiful. **Chanan** denotes the affection expressed by moaning over an object we love, the natural affection and tenderness which beasts of the animal kingdom show to their young by the several noises they make over them. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **be gracious** with the verb **eleeo (word study)** which is in the **aorist imperative** and thus is a strong, bold plea for God to show great concern for David, for he is in great need (as are all sinners harboring/covering unconfessed sins)!

After David's confrontation by Nathan, he had made an appeal to God's grace...

And he said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may **be gracious** to me, that the child may live. (2Sa 12:22)

In the Psalms David repeatedly appeals to God's graciousness...

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! Thou hast relieved me in my distress; **Be gracious** to me and hear my prayer. (Ps 4:1-[note](#))

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am pining away; Heal me, O LORD, for my bones are dismayed. (Ps 6:2-[note](#))

Be gracious to me, O LORD; Behold my affliction from those who hate me, Thou who dost lift me up from the gates of death (Ps 9:13-[note](#))

Turn to me and **be gracious** to me, For I am lonely and afflicted. (Ps 25:16-[note](#))

But as for me, I shall walk in my integrity; Redeem me, and **be gracious** to me. (Ps 26:11-[note](#))

Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And **be gracious** to me and answer me. (Ps 27:7-[note](#))

Hear, O LORD, and **be gracious** to me; O LORD, be Thou my helper." (Ps 30:10-[note](#))

Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body also. (Ps 31:9-[note](#))

As for me, I said, "O LORD, **be gracious** to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee. (Ps 41:4-[note](#))

But Thou, O LORD, **be gracious** to me, and raise me up, That I may repay them. (Ps 41:10-[note](#))

Be gracious to me, O God, for man has trampled upon me; Fighting all day long he oppresses me. (Ps

56:1-[note](#))

A Mikhtam of David, when he fled) (from Saul, in the cave.) **Be gracious** to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in Thee; And in the shadow of Thy wings I will take refuge, Until destruction passes by. (Ps 57:1-[note](#))

And Thou, O LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel, Awake to punish all the nations; Do not **be gracious** to any who are treacherous in iniquity. Selah. (Ps 59:5-[note](#))

Be gracious to me, O Lord, For to Thee I cry all day long. (Ps 86:3-[note](#))

Turn to me, and **be gracious** to me; Oh grant Thy strength to Thy servant, And save the son of Thy handmaid. (Ps 86:16-[note](#))

Let there be none to extend lovingkindness to him, Nor any to **be gracious** to his fatherless children. (Ps 109:12-[note](#))

Chanan - 72x in OT - Ge 33:5, 11; 42:21; 43:29; Ex 33:19; Nu 6:25; Dt 3:23; 7:2; 28:50; Jdg 21:22; 2Sa 12:22; 1Kgs 8:33, 47, 59; 9:3; 2Kgs 1:13; 13:23; 2Chr 6:24, 37; Esther 4:8; 8:3; Job 8:5; 9:15; 19:16, 21; 33:24; Ps 4:1; 6:2; 9:13; 25:16; 26:11; 27:7; 30:8, 10; 31:9; 37:21, 26; 41:4, 10; 51:1; 56:1; 57:1; 59:5; 67:1; 86:3, 16; 102:13, 14; 109:12; 112:5; 119:29, 58, 132; 123:2f; 142:1; Pr 14:21, 31; 19:17; 21:10; 26:25; 28:8; Isa 26:10; 27:11; 30:18, 19; 33:2; Jer 22:23; Lam 4:16; Hos 12:4; Amos 5:15; Mal 1:9

In answer to Moses' request to God to show him His glory God said...

"I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will **be gracious** to whom I will **be gracious**, and will show compassion (racham - same word used here by David) on whom I will show compassion (racham)."

In the famous blessing by **Aaron** we read...

The LORD bless you, and keep you. The LORD make His face shine on you, and **be gracious** to you. The LORD lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.' (Nu 6:24, 25, 26)

J J Perowne comments on **according to Your lovingkindness**...

In all godly sorrow (2Cor 7:9, 10) there is hope. Sorrow without hope may be remorse or despair, but it is not repentance. Hence the true penitent always looks to the lovingkindness of God, even at the very time when he feels most deeply how he has sinned against it. The cry on his lips is "My Father," even when he confesses, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son." (Lk 15:18, 19) ([The Book of Psalms](#))

J N Darby writes...

God had announced judgment. Here mercy is looked for by the divinely-moved soul, that He who alone can do it should make us clean, as is suited to Himself; for the soul thus taught feels it has to do with God, and looks for cleansing suited for that. ([Practical Reflections on the Psalms - Book 2](#))

According to - Twice we see this important phrase. Notice first what it does not say -- not **'but of'** but **"according to"**. So what is the difference? The former phrase refers to a "portion" (Webster = "*an often limited part set off or abstracted from a whole*") of while the latter phrase refers to a "proportion" of God's lovingkindness and compassion, both of which are infinite. It's analogous to a very rich man who is approached by a poor person in need and he gives him a ten dollar bill (a portion of his great wealth) versus another rich man who gives him millions of dollars (a proportion of his wealth). This analogy breaks down with God, because His riches are beyond our imagination and even beyond what words can describe, but you get some sense of the what David is requesting by using the phrase "according to" rather than "out of".

Martin Luther comments that...

These are all words of a true repentance which magnifies and multiplies the grace of God by magnifying and multiplying sin. The apostle says (Ro 5:20-note): "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." Therefore the proud have no taste for grace, because their sins do not yet taste bitter to them. (**Luther's works, vol. 14 : Selected Psalms III**)

Stedman...

God is not a penny pincher; He does not dole out bits of mercy, drop by drop. No, He pours it out. His are abundant mercies. When God forgives, He forgives beyond our utmost imaginings. Two figures of speech that are used in the Old Testament depict the forgiveness of God. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has

he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12-[note](#)). How far is that? Well, how far do you have to go east before you start going west? You never come to west. Then God says He will "hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). Someone has added that he puts up a sign that reads "NO FISHING." Do not go down there and try to fish old sins out once God has dealt with them. What relief comes when we begin to understand this fullness of God's forgiveness. ([A Cry For Mercy](#))

According to Your compassion... and Your lovingkindness - David makes no pretense of possessing personal merit but totally leans on the attributes of God to plead for forgiveness, specially on the covenant love ("lovingkindness" is a covenant word) of God. David knew he was unworthy of this love but he also understood covenant which assured him that he still belongs to God (in spite of his sin). David was like the prodigal who twice says to his father "I am no longer worthy to be called your son." (Lk 15:19, 21) to which his father responded because of the unbreakable bond of love he had for his son...

But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry. (Lk 15:22, 23, 24)

Stedman has a unique way of describing God's **lovingkindness**...

On the basis of that unqualified acceptance, that marvelous continuing **bve-that-will-not-let-me-go**, he says to God, "I am coming to you and asking now for this."

Spurgeon...

What a choice word is that of our English version, a rare compound of precious things: love and kindness sweetly blended in one -- "**lovingkindness**." ([Psalm 51:1 - Treasury of David](#))

Lovingkindness ([02617](#))(**hesed/chesed/heced - see word study**) is the idea of faithful love in action and often in the OT refers to God's lovingkindness expressed in His covenant relationship with Israel (His "loyal love" to His "Wife" Israel [cp Hos 2:18, 19, 20-see **note**, Is 54:5, Jer 31:32] = His "loyalty to covenant"). God's **hesed** denotes His persistent and unconditional tenderness, kindness, and mercy, a relationship in which He seeks after man with love and mercy (cp God immediately seeking man Ge 3:9, who was immediately hiding Ge 3:8 trying to cover their shame Ge 3:7 - contrast God's lovingkindness manifest by spilling blood to provide skins to cover their shame! Ge 3:21). **Hesed** expresses both God's loyalty to His covenant and His love for His people along with a faithfulness to keep His promises.

The **Septuagint (LXX)** usually translates **hesed** with the Greek word **eleos [word study]** (or the related verb **eleeo**) while the Latin Vulgate uses the word *miser cordia* (mercy + heart). Here in Psalm 51:1 hesed is translated with **eleeo** and compassion is translated with **oiktirmos**.

Vine writes that...

In general, one may identify three basic meanings of **hesed**, and these 3 meanings always interact -- **strength**, **steadfastness**, and **love**. Any understanding of **hesed** that fails to suggest all three inevitably loses some of its richness. **Love** by itself easily becomes sentimentalized or universalized apart from the covenant. Yet **strength** or **steadfastness** suggests only the fulfillment of a legal (or similar) obligation. **Hesed** refers primarily to mutual and reciprocal rights and obligations between the parties of a relationship (especially Jehovah and Israel). But hesed is not only a matter of obligation but is also of generosity. It is not only a matter of loyalty, but also of mercy. **Hesed** implies personal involvement and commitment in a relationship beyond the rule of law. ([Vine, W E: Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words. 1996. Nelson or Wordsearch](#)) (Bolding added)

Greatness of Your compassion - Great sin calls for great compassion from our Great God. All sin is "great" when shown (shone) for what it is in light of God's pure holiness and perfect justice! There are no "little" sins, for one "little sin" not covered by the blood of the Lamb would take a soul to hell for eternity! I fear I don't fully comprehend the significance of sin in God's eyes.

Greatness ([07230](#)) (**rob**) signifies an abundance, a large number and is used to indicate that which is in abundance, in this case God's compassion (Let us praise God for His abundant compassion!)

Compassion ([07356](#)) (**racham** or plural **rachamim**) (**Septuagint = oiktirmos - word study**) is a feminine noun which means womb (singular form in Hebrew always = "womb") which means to love deeply (usually of superior for inferior) and rooted in some "natural" bond. For example **racham** pictures Joseph's deep yearning feeling toward his youngest brother Benjamin (Ge 43:30). Most of the uses of **racham** refer to God's tender mercy which is rooted in His free love and amazing grace. Compassion is God having a deep ("visceral") feeling for our infirmities. **Have you experienced His precious racham during a time of deep affliction, adversity,**

brokenness or contrition? His racham is always at the disposal of the broken and contrite heart!

Webster says that **compassion** is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire (and in God's case the **power**) to alleviate it.

Racham is a word conveying a greater sense of emotion and we see a beautiful example of this emotional component in Joseph's "reunion" with his youngest brother Benjamin (Ge 43:29)...

Joseph hurried out for he was **deeply** (racham) stirred (KJV = "his bowels did yearn") over his brother, and he sought a place to weep; and he entered his chamber and wept there. (Ge 43:30).

Comment: Here we see racham reflecting Joseph's innermost being expressive of his yearning for his brother. The Septuagint emphasizes this deep guttural sense of racham in translating racham with enteron which is Greek for intestine or bowel. We've all had those same deep feelings with

Vine adds that **racham** means

"bowels; mercies; compassion." This noun, always used in the plural intensive, occurs in Gen. 43:14: "And God Almighty give you mercy ["compassion"]." In Ge 43:30, it is used of Joseph's feelings toward Benjamin: "His bowels did yearn upon his brother." (niv, "He was deeply moved at the sight of his brother.") Rachamim is most often used of God, as by David in 2Sa 24:14: "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for His **mercies** are great..." We have the equivalent Aramaic word in Daniel's request to his friends: "That they would desire mercies of the God of heaven concerning this secret ..." (Da 2:18).

I like the **KJV** rendering of **racham** as "**tender mercies**" because it accurately reflects the fact that the Hebrew word **racham** is in the plural.

J R Miller...

Notice also David's thought of the mercy he needed. First, there is a simple cry for mercy. "Have mercy upon me, O God." This was his greatest need. He did not begin his prayer by asking for favors, for prosperous circumstances, for many friends. Before any blessings could count in his life—he must get clear of his sin, and must have God's mercy. The words represent his transgressions as all written down against him in the book of accounts—and he pleads to have them blotted out, erased, rubbed from the page. There is something very startling in this thought that our sins are charged against us, and that unless we get the record expunged, we shall have to meet the penalty. But the blessed truth here, is that sins may be blotted out—no matter how many or how great they are. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

BLOT OUT ERASE, WIPE OUT

Spurgeon...

Blot out my transgressions. My revolts, my excesses, are all recorded against me; but, Lord, erase the lines. Draw thy pen through the register. Obliterate the record, though now it seems engraven in the rock for ever; many strokes of thy mercy may be needed, to cut out the deep inscription, but then thou has a multitude of mercies, and therefore, I beseech thee, erase my sins. ([Psalm 51:1 - Treasury of David](#))

Blot out (imperative mood) ([04229](#)) (**mahah**) means to stroke or rub, erase, abolish, blot out, destroy, wipe out. The **Septuagint** (**Lxx**) translates the Hebrew verb **mahah** with **exaleipho** (**word study**) meaning to remove so as to leave not a trace! Because of the efficacious, once for all, propitiatory, atoning work of Christ on the Cross, believers can boldly approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need (Heb 4:16-note). I say "**boldly**" because both the Hebrew and Greek verbs are in the **imperative mood** (commands)!

The first OT use gives us a good sense of the meaning of **mahah** when Jehovah says

I will **blot out** man whom I have created from the face of the land. (Ge 6:7)

God says He will "**utterly blot out**" the memory of Amalek (Dt 25:19). Note that erasures on ancient leather scrolls were made by washing or sponging off the ink rather than blotting. "**Wipe out**" is therefore more accurate for the idea of expunging. When God did move in judgment, he wiped Jerusalem as one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down (2Ki 21:13). During the time of the Judges, the entire tribe of Benjamin was almost blotted out (Jdg 21:17-note). **Mahah** figures prominently in the prayer in which Moses begged God to forgive the sin Israel incurred when they worshipped the golden calf. "If not, **blot me out** of your book," prays

Moses (Ex 32:32, 33). In Numbers we read...

The priest shall then write these curses on a scroll (having to do with the Law of Jealousy - Nu 5:11-31), and he shall **wash** them **off** into the water of bitterness. (Nu 5:23)

Mahah - Used in 32 verses in the OT and almost every use is theologically significant and **makes for an interesting study**. Ge 6:7 7:4,23 Ex 17:14 32:32,33 Nu5:23 34:11 Dt 9:14 25:6,19 29:20 Jdg 21:17 2Ki 14:27 21:13 Neh 4:5 13:14 Ps 9:5 51:1, 9 69:28 109:13,14 Pr 6:33 30:20 31:3 Isa 25:6, 8 43:25 44:22 Jer 18:23 Ezekiel 6:6 The **KJV** translates mahah - (blot, put, etc)... out 17, destroy 6, wipe 4, blot 3, wipe away 2, abolished 1, marrow 1, reach 1, utterly 10

Here is a representative use of **mahah**...

He will swallow up death for all time, And the Lord GOD will **wipe** tears **away** from all faces, And He will remove the reproach of His people from all the earth; For the LORD has spoken. (Isaiah 25:8)

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates mahah in Ps 51:1 with the Greek verb **exaleipho** which means to cause to disappear by wiping and thus to erase or to remove in such a way as to leave no trace. Peter uses **exaleipho** in his "altar call" to his Jewish audience declaring...

Therefore **repent** (aorist imperative - command to do it now. It is urgent!) and **return** (aorist imperative - command to do it now. It is urgent!), (**Why?**) so that your sins **may be wiped away** (**exaleipho**), (**What is the result of sins wiped away?**) in order that times of refreshing (**anapsuxis** - from **ana** = again + **psucho** = to blow, refresh with cool air!) may come from the presence (prosopon = more literally the face) of the Lord (**From where does deep, soul refreshing come?** cp Mt 11:28, 29, 30) and that He may send Jesus, the Christ appointed for you (Acts 3:19, 20).

This same verb **exaleipho** is used by Paul to describe the "blotting effect" of the blood of Christ (which was ultimately the foundation of David's appeal for blotting out his transgressions). Paul explains that one of the effects of the Cross was that it...

canceled out (**exaleipho** = "blotting out" Col 2:14KJV) the certificate of debt (our "IOU" for our sins) consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He (Christ) has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:14-note)

Comment: To understand the word **exaleipho** is to understand the amazing mercy and lovingkindness of God. The substance on which ancient documents were written was either papyrus, a kind of paper made of the pith of the bulrush, or vellum, a substance made of the skins of animals. Both were fairly expensive and certainly could not be wasted. Ancient ink had no acid in it and so it set on the surface of the paper and did not, as modern ink usually does, bite into the underlying layers. Sometimes a scribe, to save paper, used papyrus or vellum that had already been written upon. When he did that, he took a sponge and wiped the writing out. Because it was only on the surface of the paper, the ink could be wiped out as if it had never been present! God, in his amazing mercy, banished the record of our sins so completely that it was as if it had never been. Not a trace of them remained. Yes, our sins, even confessed ones, like David's, still reap consequences, but Christ's blood makes us forever free of the wrath of God. Hallelujah!

The Net Bible note comments on "**blot out my transgressions**"...

Because of the reference to washing and cleansing in the following verse, it is likely that the psalmist is comparing forgiveness to wiping an object clean (note the use of the verb מָחָה (makhah) in the sense of "wipe clean; dry" in 2Ki 21:13; Pr 30:20; Isa 25:8). Another option is that the psalmist is comparing forgiveness to erasing or blotting out names from a register (see Ex32:32, 33). In this case one might translate, "erase all record of my rebellious acts."

REBELLION AGAINST GOD

My transgressions - Observe that David repeatedly "owns" his sin against God declaring "**my transgressions... my iniquity... my sin... my transgressions... my sin**". There are no excuses. No attempts to justify himself. No attempts to blame someone else or some ensnaring circumstance. David openly, honestly, repeatedly acknowledges his evil. Notice that his confession is not to another individual but to God. Notice also that he does not name the specific sins he committed although the sins of adultery and murder are clearly in view (bloodguiltiness in Ps 51:14 may allude to Uriah's murder). In using the three most common words for sin, David clearly seeks to leave no stone unturned.

Puritan writer **Thomas Brooks**

True penitential confession is FULL as well as free. **That confession is not sincere that is not full** Lam. 1:18-19. God loves neither halting nor mincing confessions. These undid the Pharisee, Luke 18:11. As penitential confessions are not extorted, so they are not straitened.

Sin must be confessed in its particular species and parts; all known sins must be confessed fully, plainly, particularly, as you may see by turning to these scriptures, Lev. 26:40-42, and 19:21; Judges 10:10; Psalm 51; 1 Sam. 12:19; 1 Tim. 1:13; Acts 26:10, 11; Da 9:5-17; Lev. 16:21-22, etc.

Some there are who **deny** their sins, with the harlot: Proverbs 30:20, "Such is the way of an adulterous woman; she eats and wipes her mouth, and says, I have done no wickedness."

And others there are who **blame** their sins on others, as Adam did, Gen. 3:12; and as Eve did, verse 13; and as Aaron did, Exod. 32:22; and as Saul did, 1 Sam. 15:22.

And many there are who **hide** their wickedness, that conceal their wickedness, as that proud pharisee did, Luke 18:11-12. That expression of the prophet Hosea, chapter 10:13, "You have ploughed wickedness," is rendered by the Septuagint, "You have concealed wickedness;" and, indeed, there is nothing more common to a wicked heart, than to keep close his sin, than to cover and hide his transgressions. And, certainly, this is that sore disease that our first parents were sick to death of, almost six thousand years ago; and, therefore, it is no wonder if we are all infected with it.

Man by nature is a vain-glorious creature, apt to boast and brag of the sins that he is free of—but unwilling to confess the sins that he is guilty of. There are no men so prone to conceal their own wickedness, as those who are most forward to proclaim their own goodness. There are many who are not ashamed to commit sin, who yet are ashamed to confess sin; but certainly of all shame, that is the most shameful shame, which leads a man to hide his sins.

But now the true penitent, he makes conscience of confessing small sins as well as great sins, secret sins as well as open sins, Psalm 90:8, 19:12. David confesses not only his great sins of murder and adultery—but he confesses also his self-revenge intended against Nabal, and of his knife being so near Saul's throat, when he cut off the tip of Saul's garment. [Job 31:33. We are but flesh and blood, says one; it is my nature, says a second; I cannot help it, says a third; I am not the first, says a fourth; it was bad company drew me, says a fifth; if it be a sin, I am sorry for it, says a sixth; if it is bad, I cry God's mercy, says a seventh. And thus wicked men are as hypocritical in their confessions as they are in their professions, etc.]

A true penitent is much in confessing and lamenting over that secret pride, that secret fleshliness, that secret worldliness, that secret hypocrisy, that secret vain glory, etc., which is only obvious to God and his own soul. But it is quite otherwise with wicked men; for they confess their grosser sins—but never observe their lesser sins; they confess their open sins—but never lay open their secret sins. Cain confesses the murdering of his brother—but never confesses his secret enmity, which put him upon washing his hands in his brother's blood. Pharaoh confesses his oppression of the children of Israel—but he does not confess the pride of his heart, nor the hardness of his heart. Judas confesses his betraying of innocent blood—but he never confesses his covetousness, which put him upon betraying of the Lord of glory. And others have confessed their apostasy, who have never confessed their hypocrisy that has led them to apostasy, etc. Well, this is certain, that those little sins, those secret sins, that never break a sinner's sleep—do often break a believer's heart. ([Evangelical Repentance](#))

J R Miller...

Notice also David's thoughts of his sin. First, he thought about his sin as his own. **My** transgressions," "**my** iniquity," "**my** sin," "I have sinned," are the words he uses. He does not try to lay the blame of his wrongdoing, on some other one, as our first parents did (Ge 3:8, 9, 10, 11, 12). He does not plead the peculiar strength of his temptation and try to excuse himself for sinning so grievously. He does not talk of his peculiar environment or circumstances. He does not try in any way to explain his fall, or to mitigate in any measure the degree of his guilt. He frankly takes the whole responsibility on himself. **This shows the sincerity of his repentance.** An old writer said, that

**Nothing else in the world
is so much our own—as our sins.**

We cannot push the responsibility off on any tempter or on any circumstances. Others may tempt us—but **no one can compel us to sin.** There is no sin in being tempted—sin begins when we yield to the temptation.

Jesus was tempted in all points like as we are—but He was without sin (Heb 4:15). We are commanded to resist the Devil, and we are told that he will flee from us. Others may tempt us—and the guilt of the tempter is great. But no one can compel us to sin.

**Until we lift the latch—
sin cannot enter our heart's door.**

We are responsible, therefore, for our sins, and must bear the burden of them ourselves.

We must also personally seek and find forgiveness for our own sins. No intercessor can obtain pardon for us; we must be penitent ourselves. Christ's expiation is for sinners—but even Christ's intercession will not bring forgiveness, if we do not personally repent and seek mercy. No one can obtain forgiveness for us—for any unconfessed sin of ours. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Charles Colson once said that *"If there is anything worse than our sins, it is our infinite capacity to rationalize it away,"* but this was not David's problem. He recognized that the evil of sin enters like a needle but spreads its toxic roots in one's soul like an oak tree!

My transgressions - Notice the plural. **Perowne** wisely comments that...

No sin ever stands alone: each single transgression is the mother of many transgressions: each is a root of bitterness whence spring many bitter branches, so that we cannot one sin without confessing many. (Beloved, how true this is in my personal experience. It is not your experience also?) ([The Book of Psalms](#))

Transgressions ([06588](#)) (**pesha'**) is derived from a root describing the breach of relationship between two parties (civil or religious). The idea of this noun is that the individual makes a willful choice to reject God's authority and hence to deviate from the path of godly living. Defection from God's standard. **Pesha'** describes a rising up in clear defiance to authority. A revolt against God's standards. In short, **pesha'** focuses on the rebellious nature of the sin (E.g., Ge 50:17) and means to go beyond the limits set by (a moral principle, standard, law, etc.).

Rebellion is inherent in this word for sin. The English word rebellion is ugly and describes open, usually unsuccessful defiance or resistance to an established government, in this case God. An open and avowed renunciation of the authority of God to Whom one owes his allegiance. Do we really understand that this is what we do when we willfully choose to sin against a law or commandment that we clearly know? It is utter spiritual insanity! Like one person said when we act this way we are in essence "practical atheists!"

Boice...

It refers to crossing a forbidden boundary with the thought that this is a serious rebellion.

The 1828 Webster's dictionary says that **transgression** is

The act of passing over or beyond any law or rule of moral duty; the violation of a law or known principle of rectitude; breach of command.

Notice that all three primary Hebrew words for "sin" (**pesha'**, **'avon**, **chatta**) are used by David to describe his personal sin in Ps 51:1-3, a section which represents the greatest statement on the nature of sin in the Old Testament. David's greatest sins did not keep God from using him to teach one of the greatest teachings on sin! Perhaps you think you have sinned so greatly that God could never use you! You are wrong and David is living proof of this truth! Notices that each Hebrew word implies the existence of God's standard of righteousness (all that God is, all that God commands, all that God demands, all that God approves, all that God provides in Christ Jesus - cp 1Co1:30).

Perowne comments on David's use of all 3 Hebrew words for **sin** (in his comments on Ps 32:1, 2) ...

Sin is here (as in Ex 34:7) spoken of under three appellations, so as to include the whole idea of sin in all its manifestations: First, as "transgression" (**pesha'**) or departure from God and open defection from His covenant. Secondly (**Ed**: Occurs third in Ps 51:2), as "a coming short of the mark," (**chatta'**) a deflection from an aim, a not doing of our duty. Thirdly, as including the idea of wrong doing (**'avon**), the guilt, and also the punishment. ([The book of Psalms](#))

Pesha' - 90x in the OT - Gen 31:36; 50:17; Ex 22:9; 23:21; 34:7; Lev 16:16, 21; Num 14:18; Josh 24:19; 1Sa 24:11; 25:28; 1Kgs 8:50; Job 7:21; 8:4; 13:23; 14:17; 31:33; 33:9; 34:6, 37; 35:6; 36:9; Ps 5:10; 19:13; 25:7; 32:1, 5; 36:1; 39:8; 51:1, 3; 59:3; 65:3; 89:32; 103:12; 107:17; Pr 10:12, 19; 12:13; 17:9, 19; 19:11; 28:2, 13, 24; 29:6, 16, 22; Isa 24:20; 43:25; 44:22; 50:1; 53:5, 8; 57:4; 58:1; 59:12, 20; Jer 5:6; Lam 1:5, 14, 22; Ezek 14:11; 18:22, 28, 30f; 21:24; 33:10, 12; 37:23; 39:24; Dan 8:12f; 9:24; Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:14; 5:12; Mic 1:5, 13; 3:8; 6:7; 7:18. **Translated in NAS as** - breach of trust(1), rebellion(6), rebellious(1), rebellious act(2), rebellious acts(2), transgression(37), transgressions(45).

Adam Clarke on David's 3 choice descriptions of his sins...

It is transgressions, peshah, rebellion.

It is iniquity, avon, crooked dealing.

It is sin, chattath, error and wandering

I like **Charles Simeon's** introduction to his sermon "True Penitence Described" on Psalm 51:1-3...

SIN is, for the most part, thought a light and venial (meriting no particular censure or notice) evil, especially among the higher ranks of society: as though the restraints of religion were designed only for the poor; and the rich had a dispensation granted them to live according to their own will. But sin, by whomsoever committed, will, sooner or later, be as the gall of asps (small venomous snake of Egypt) within us; nor can all the charms of royalty silence the convictions of a guilty conscience. View the Psalmist. He had been elevated, from the low condition of a shepherd's boy, to a throne: yet, when he had offended God in the matter of Uriah, there was not found in his whole dominions a more miserable wretch than he. Before his repentance became deep and genuine, "his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day long: for day and night God's hand was heavy upon him; and his moisture was turned into the drought of summer." (Ps 32:3, 4) Even in his penitence (sorrow for sins) we may see how heavy a load was laid upon his mind. This psalm was written on that occasion: and the words before us, while they declare the workings of his mind, will serve to show us, in a general view, the true penitent. ([Psalm 51:1-3 True Penitence Described](#))

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C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening - Have mercy upon me, O God." - When Dr. Carey was suffering from a dangerous illness, the enquiry was made, "If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text for your funeral sermon?" He replied, "Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon must be preached, let it be from the words, '**Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.**'" In the same spirit of humility he directed in his will that the following inscription and nothing more should be cut on his gravestone:-

WILLIAM CAREY, BORN AUGUST 17th, 1761: DIED - -

**"A wretched, poor, and helpless worm
On Thy kind arms I fall."**

Only on the footing of free grace can the most experienced and most honored of the saints approach their God. The best of men are conscious above all others that they are men at the best. Empty boats float high, but heavily laden vessels are low in the water; mere professors can boast, but true children of God cry for mercy upon their unprofitableness. We have need that the Lord should have mercy upon our good works, our prayers, our preachings, our alms-givings, and our holiest things. The blood was not only sprinkled upon the doorposts of Israel's dwelling houses, but upon the sanctuary, the mercy-seat, and the altar, because as sin intrudes into our holiest things, the blood of Jesus is needed to purify them from defilement. If mercy be needed to be exercised towards our duties, what shall be said of our sins? **How sweet the remembrance that inexhaustible mercy is waiting to be gracious to us, to restore our backslidings, and make our broken bones rejoice!**

><>><>><>

Warren Wiersbe - All of us struggle with sin. Human nature pulls us down as gravity does, yet God has made us and saved us to lift us up (1Jn 1:5-2:6). There are three ways we may deal with our sins.

Cover them. We cover our sins with our words. This is lying-- deceiving others and ourselves and lying to God. Lies are darkness, whereas God's truth is light. When we lie, our character erodes (Pr. 28:13). When we cover sin, we lose God's light, fellowship and character.

Confess them. Admit and judge them--agree with God about your sin. This involves the heart and the will. Some people have died because they repeatedly, willfully, proudly and arrogantly defied the will of God. Admit you are a sinner, say what is wrong and then come to Him and name it. Confess your sin only in the circle of those influenced by it--individuals or family. (Don't become an exhibitionist with the public.) Confession brings release, freedom, forgiveness and a new beginning.

Conquer them. Jesus is in heaven today as our Advocate--as a Lawyer before the Father. Abide in Him, love Him, walk with Him in the light of His Word. Keep His commandments. Fellowship is a by-product of our walk with God. To love Him is to serve Him and obey His commandments.

Are you covering sin or conquering sin in your life? Confess any known sin and ask God to clean your heart. He wants to forgive you so He can restore fellowship with you ([Psalm 51:1-2 The High Cost of Committing Sin](#)).

><>><>><>

Old Year's Resolution - What we propose to do in the new year is not as important as what we actually do with the old year. That's why I suggest that instead of thinking about new year's resolutions, we should think about the resolution of the old year.

Sound confusing? Here's what I mean. Before we make plans for our lives in the new year and in our service for God, we need to take care of any problems we still have with the old year. We should deal with unconfessed sin before we begin making new plans.

So as the old year winds down, try getting away from everyone else for a little while and have a meeting with God. Take along a Bible, a pen, and a blank sheet of paper. First, spend some time reading and meditating on Psalm 51, David's prayer of repentance. Then write down all of the junk from this past year that you can think of that you still need to confess to God. Next, following David's example, ask God's forgiveness. Then, just to remind yourself that He will blot out your transgressions (Ps 51:1), take that piece of paper, tear it into bits, and throw it away.

Now you can start out the new year with a clean heart. That beats any other resolution you could ever make. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We're thankful, Lord, that when we fall
We can begin anew
If humbly we confess our sin,
Then turn and follow You.
—Sper

**We have to face our sins
before we can put them behind us.**

><>><>><>

William G Heslop...

This is the hymn of the broken heart.

David had willfully sinned and grievously disobeyed. Convicted at last and fully repentant, he poured his heart out to GOD. This well known and never to be forgotten song was forged upon the anvil of intense suffering and sorrow consequent to personal sin. "Be sure your sin will find you out."

From the contrite spirit and broken heart of the sweet singer there arose a ten-fold cry:

- (1) "Have mercy upon me."
- (2) "Blot out my transgressions."
- (3) "Wash me thoroughly."
- (4) "Cleanse me."
- (5) "Purge me."
- (6) "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."
- (7) "Create in me a clean heart."
- (8) "Renew a right spirit within me."
- (9) "Restore unto me the joy ... "
- (10) "Uphold me... Then will I teach ... "

This versatile, sagacious, and incomparable hymn (Psalm 51)` has been repeated and rehearsed ten thousand times in the lives and testimonies of the people of GOD in all ages. It will be sung by the remnant of Israel when their King takes the throne. This prayer will be prayed, heard, and answered fully just before the millennial kingdom begins. ([Psalms 50-59](#))

God, Be Merciful to Me

by Richard Redhead, The Psalter, 1912

God, be merciful to me;
on thy grace I rest my plea;
Plenteous in compassion thou,
blot out my transgressions now;
Wash me, make me pure within,
cleanse, O cleanse me from my sin.
My transgressions I confess,
grief and guilt my soul oppress;
I have sinned against thy grace
and provoked thee to thy face;
I confess thy judgment just,
speechless, I thy mercy trust.
I am evil, born in sin;
thou desirest truth within.
Thou alone my Savior art,
teach thy wisdom to my heart;
Make me pure, thy grace bestow,
wash me whiter than the snow.
Broken, humbled to the dust
by thy wrath and judgment just,
Let my contrite heart rejoice
and in gladness hear thy voice;
From my sins O hide thy face,
blot them out in boundless grace.
Gracious God, my heart renew,
make my spirit right and true;
Cast me not away from thee,
let thy Spirit dwell in me;
Thy salvation's joy impart,
steadfast make my willing heart.
Sinners then shall learn from me
and return, O God, to thee;
Savior, all my guilt remove,
and my tongue shall sing thy love;

Touch my silent lips, O Lord,
and my mouth shall praise accord.

Psalm 51:2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity And cleanse me from my sin :

- **Wash:** Ps 51:7 Eze 36:25 Zec 13:1 1Co 6:11 Heb 9:13,14 10:21,22 1Jn 1:7 8 9 Rev 1:5 7:14
- **Wash:** Ps 51:7 19:12)

THE DIRTINESS OF SIN!

Sin defiles our entire person, making us "dirty" from the inside out! If we really understood sin the way God sees sin and understood the defiling character of sin, we would hopefully be less likely to deliberately sin against God. Man's problem, my problem, is that we don't see sin the way God sees sin. **Lord open the eyes of our heart to see sin and the effects of sin the way you see it. Amen.**

Note the symmetrical presentation of David's requests...

Blot out (Ps 51:1)

Wash (Ps 51:2)

Cleanse (Ps 51:2)

Purify (Ps 51:7)

Wash (Ps 51:7)

Blot out (Ps 51:9)

Wash me thoroughly - Note that **wash** and **thoroughly** are both verbs and both are imperatives in the Hebrew. The literal is awkward to render into English, the word thoroughly being first in the original Hebrew. It could be rendered something like "multiply to wash me" (Barnes OT Commentary and C H Spurgeon).

David pleads for and pictures divine forgiveness using three verbs (actually 4 if one counts "thoroughly") - **blot out, wash and cleanse**. The metaphor of washing is that of the ancient mode of laundering clothes which would be soaked, soaped, beat, wrung out, and rinsed. David pictures himself as dirty, polluted clothing in need of a deep, cleansing washing. **Thoroughly** in English means fully, completely, carried through to completion, taking care about detail, being complete in all respects, all of these ideas serving to help us understand the degree of washing David is asking of God.

Wiersbe...

In the Jewish society of that day, to wash and change clothes marked a new beginning in life (Gen. 35:2; 41:14; 45:22; Ex. 19:10, 14), and David made such a new start (2Sa 12:20).

Wash (same verb Ps 51:7) (03526) (**kabac/kabas**) means to make clean and soft by treading, kneading and beating clothes in cold water. Kabac was always used of clothing, "to launder" and never of "washing" the body. Most uses of **kabac** have to do with washing of clothes which have become contaminated in one way or another (28x). Particularly important contaminants would be leprosy.

Derek Kidner notes that the verb **kabac/kabas** is...

normally connected with the laundering of clothes, as if David is comparing himself to a foul garment needing to be washed and washed. The thought is still primarily of the guilt that makes him unfit for God's presence or God's people (cf. the potent object-lessons in Lev. 15). He will dwell on the more inward aspect of cleansing in Ps 51:6-12. ([Psalms 1-72 Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#) or [Logos](#))

Barnes has this note on the meaning of "**wash**" (albeit not the same verb kabac but rahas which was also used in sense of "ethical" or "moral" washing in Isa 1:16-note)

This (washing) is, of course, to be understood in a moral sense; meaning that they should put away their sins. Sin is represented

in the Scriptures as defiling or polluting the soul (Ezek. 20:31; 23:30; Hos. 5:8; 9:4); and the removal of it is represented by the act of washing; Ps. 51:2; Jer. 4:14; Job 9:30; 1Co 6:11; Heb 10:22; 2Pe 2:22; Rev 1:5; 7:14. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Kabac/kabas - 48x in OT - Ge 49:11; Ex 19:10, 14; Lev 6:27; 11:25, 28, 40; 13:6, 34, 54, 55, 56, 58; 14:8, 9, 47; 15:5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 17, 21, 22, 27; 16:26, 28; 17:15, 16; Nu 8:7, 21; 19:7 8, 10, 19, 21; 31:24; 2Sa 19:24; 2Ki 18:17; Ps 51:2, 7; Isa 7:3; 36:2; Jer 2:22; 4:14; Mal 3:2

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **kabac/kabas** with the verb **pluno** which means to wash something other than a body part, such as washing of clothes. Pluno for example describes the saints in heaven as those who "have **washed** their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14) clearly speaking of spiritual cleansing which is David's desire also.

J R Miller...

"Wash away all my iniquity." Sin is represented as leaving a stain, and the prayer is that it may be washed off. That is, sin not only writes its record against us on God's book—but it also defiles and pollutes our lives. We need not only to have the guilt removed—to be justified; but we need also to have our lives cleansed—to be sanctified. We need a cleansing which reaches the very center of the being. The stains are deep, and the purifying process must go on until they are all removed. The ancient method of washing clothes was by beating or treading, and David asks God even to tread him down if necessary to remove the foul spots. We should pray God to wash us until every stain is taken away, however painful the process must be (cp Ps 119:67, Ps 119:71). ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

John Donne spoke of spiritual cleansing...

Sleep with clean hands, either kept clean all day by integrity or washed clean at night by repentance.

Roy Hession noted that one of the dominant themes of the great awakening in East Africa was a constant cleansing from sin which prompted him to write

We do not lose peace with God over another person's sin, but only over our own. Only when we are willing to be cleansed, will we have His peace. (**I recommend reading his book [The Calvary Road](#)** now available free online)

Norman Grubb had these thoughts about the revival in East Africa (in his preface to the Calvary Road)...

I am sure from my own experience, as well as from what we have seen in the ranks of our Mission these last three years, that what the authors tell us about in these pages is one of God's vital words to His worldwide church today. For long I had regarded revival only from the angle of some longed for, but very rare, sudden outpouring of the Spirit on a company of people. I felt that there was a missing link somewhere. Knowing of the continuing revival on a certain mission field and because it was continuing and not merely sudden and passing, I long felt that they had a further secret we needed to learn. Then chance came for heart to heart fellowship with them, first through one of our own missionary leaders whose life and ministry had been transformed by a visit to that field, and then through conferences with some of their missionaries on furlough and finally through the privilege of having two of the native brethren living for six months at our headquarters. From them I learned and saw that revival is first personal and immediate. It is the constant experience of the simplest Christian who "walks in the light," but I saw that walking in the light means an altogether new sensitiveness to sin, a calling things by their proper name of sin, such as pride, hardness, doubt, fear, self-pity, which are often passed over as merely human reaction. It means a readiness to "break" and confess at the feet of Him who was broken for us, for the Blood does not cleanse excuses, but always cleanses sin, confessed as sin: then revival is just the daily experience of a soul full of Jesus and running over. ([The Calvary Road](#))

Thoroughly (rabah) means to multiply, to become numerous, to become (or make) great or large (enlarge, increase). The idea David is conveying to wash me over and over and over.

Barnes writes...

The word rendered thoroughly is a verb, either in the infinitive or imperative mood, and suggests the idea of multiplying or increasing. The reference is to that which might need constant or repeated washings in order to remove a stain. The word is used, however, adverbially to denote intensity, or thoroughness. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Spurgeon

"Wash me thoroughly." It is not enough to blot out the sin; his person is defiled, and he fain would be purified. He would have God himself cleanse him, for none but he could do it effectually. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore he cries, **"Multiply to wash me."** The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson is ingrained: but, Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left. The hypocrite is content if his garments be washed; but the true suppliant cries, "wash me." The careless soul is content with a nominal cleansing, but the truly-awakened conscience desires a real and practical washing, and that of a most complete and efficient kind. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 2 - Treasury of David](#))

Adam Clarke

"Wash me again and again,—cause my washings to be multiplied." My stain is deep; ordinary purgation will not be sufficient.

Mattoon comments **wash me thoroughly** is literally...

"Multiply to wash me." The word rendered "thoroughly" is from the Hebrew word **rabah**. It is a verb, either in the infinitive or imperative mood, and suggests the idea of "multiplying" or "increasing." The reference is to that which might need constant or repeated washing in order to remove a stain. This verb indicates intensity or thoroughness. The washing must be thorough, it must be repeated, therefore David basically cries, "Multiply to wash me! The dye is in itself immovable, and I, the sinner, have lain long in it, till the crimson stain is ingrained, but Lord, wash, and wash, and wash again, till the last stain is gone, and not a trace of my defilement is left.

CROOKED, PERVERTED BEHAVIOR

Iniquity (05771) ('**avon**) from '**avah** = to bend, twist, distort) describes a twisting of the standard or deviation from it.

Boice says '**avon**...

means "perversion" and refers to what we usually call "original sin" or the "depravity" of our natures. Significantly, it is the word used in the first part of verse 5, in the phrase "sinful from birth."

Baker notes that '**avon**

indicates sin that is particularly evil, since it strongly conveys the idea of twisting or perverting deliberately. The noun carries along with it the idea of guilt from conscious wrongdoing (Ge 44:16; Jer 2:22). The punishment that goes with this deliberate act as a consequence is indicated by the word also (Ge 4:13; Isa 53:11).

Man's way of dealing with sin is denial or defense.

God's way is declaration.

Larry R Moyer

Cleanse me from my sin - This verb **cleanse** pictures the purification that was necessary in order for one to approach the altar or to participate in worship in the OT Tabernacle.

Barnes explains that David's call for cleansing is a plea to...

Remove it entirely. Make me wholly pure. In what manner he hoped that this would be done is shown in the following portions of the psalm. It was (a) by forgiveness of the past, Ps 51:9,10 (b) by making the heart pure and holy through the renewing and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, Ps 51:10, 11. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Cleanse (same verb in Ps 51:7) (02891) (**taher**) means to make pure and is found most often in Leviticus where it describes ritual cleansing of either things or persons (Lev 14:48, 16:19, 22:7).

Taher - 79x in the OT - Gen 35:2; Lev 11:32; 12:7f; 13:6, 13, 17, 23, 28, 34, 37, 58f; 14:4, 7ff, 11, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 28f, 31, 48, 53; 15:13, 28; 16:19, 30; 17:15; 22:4, 7; Num 8:6f, 15, 21; 19:12, 19; 31:23f; Josh 22:17; 2 Kgs 5:10, 12, 13, 14; 2 Chr 29:15f, 18; 30:18; 34:3, 5, 8; Ezra 6:20; Neh 12:30; 13:9, 22, 30; Job 4:17; 37:21; Ps 51:2, 7; Pr 20:9; Isa 66:17; Jer 13:27; 33:8; Ezek 22:24; 24:13; 36:25, 33; 37:23; 39:12, 14, 16; 43:26; Mal 3:3. In the **NAS taher** is translated 5), cleanse(15), cleansed(19), cleansing(1), cleared(1), pronounce him clean(6), pronounce the clean(1), pronounce clean(2), pronounces him clean(1), pronouncing it clean(1), pure(2), purge(1), purged(2), purified(5), purifier(1), purify(5), purifying(1), remain(1), unclean*(1).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the verb **katharizo (word study)** in this verse for the Hebrew verb **taher**.. **Katharizo** is from **katharos** = pure, clean, without stain or spot and gives us our English words catharsis (emotional or physical purging), cathartic (substance used to induce a purging) and Cathar (member of a medieval sect which sought the purging of evil from its members). **Katharizo**

means to make clean by taking away an undesirable part. To cleanse from filth or impurity. Figuratively **katharizo** refers to cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity as in (Acts 10:15). In a similar sense **katharizo** is used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al) Another figurative use in 1John 1:9 (cf James 4:8, Hebrews 10:2) describes the purifying or cleansing from sin and a guilty conscience thus making one acceptable to God and reestablishing fellowship. To cause to become clean as from physical stains and dirt (Mt 23:25). This word group conveys the idea of physical, religious, and moral cleanness or purity in such senses as clean, free from stains or shame, and free from adulteration.

J R Miller...

"Cleanse me from my sin." It is the language used of cleansing lepers. The word "wash" refers to garments and surface stains, and the word "cleanse" refers to sin as a disease, a leprosy in the soul. This prayer, therefore, is for the cleansing of the very nature. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Sin (02403) (**chatta**) comes from a root which has the basic meaning of to miss or to be mistaken, although some have argued against this derivation. While one of the most common definitions of sin is missing the mark or a failure to live up to God's standard of righteousness (what is "right" before Him and in our interactions with others). The one caveat to this definition is that it fails to take into account that when the mark is missed, something is hit! Stated another way, sin is anything that is contrary to what the Word of God instructs, commands or forbids. found in 1Jn 5:17, "All unrighteousness is sin."

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **chatta** with the Greek word **hamartia (word study)**, which literally conveys the sense of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose.

Vine writes that...

The basic nuance of this word is "sin" conceived as missing the road or mark (155 times). **Chatta** can refer to an offense against a man (Ge 31:36).

Wiersbe sums up David's the ways of asking for forgiveness...

Blot out refers to paying a debt. **Wash** indicates that sin defiles the entire person. **Cleanse** means the sinner is like a leper, in need of total healing. Before you yield to temptation, remember how it damaged David. Count the high cost of committing sin, and you will be less inclined to do it. ([Psalm 51:1,2](#))

APPLICATION:
CONFRONTATION
CONVICTION
CONFESSION
CONTRITION

R C Sproul has an interesting note...

Historically, there has been considerable debate about **attrition** and **contrition** in repentance and forgiveness. **Attrition** is a "*repentance*" motivated primarily by fear of punishment. It clings to the mercy of God as a ticket out of hell, an escape from punitive wrath. **Contrition** produces genuine sorrow for having offended God. The New Testament calls us to be **contrite** in order to receive the forgiveness of God. The spirit of genuine contrition may be best illustrated by Psalm 51:2-4. Here the confession is pointed. There is no attempt by the psalmist to minimize his guilt or to deprive God of the right to judge him. He concludes with the following declaration (Ps 51:16, 17) Indeed, God does not despise brokenness. His response to contrite penitence is forgiveness. (**Renewing your Mind**)

Eddie Rasnake adds that...

God knows we need to confess our sin. Unless we agree with Him that our actions are wrong, we will never be able to put them behind us. What qualified David as a man after God's own heart is not the absence of sin in his life—no one but Jesus ever accomplished that. David's heart for God was seen in his brokenness and repentance over his sin. He wanted more from God than to escape the consequences. He prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). We come to God in confession after our sin, not just to be forgiven, but also that we may be cleansed and restored... Remember, don't go looking for something to confess; instead, ask God to search your heart and bring to your mind anything that needs to be dealt with. Be willing to recognize any hiding of sin or blaming of others... Pray for God to work in your life by helping you to be honest with Him and to keep short accounts with Him regarding

your sin... If we don't confess, we will either hide our sin or blame others for it, but God still knows. ([How To Develop A Quiet Time- A Forty-Day Journey](#))

Have you been reproved by the Word of God (2Ti 3:13 "**All Scripture is... profitable for... reproof**"), by the preaching of God's Word (2Ti 4:2 "**preach the Word... reprove, rebuke, exhort with great patient and instruction**)

1. Confess your sin, making this your lifestyle, your constant practice(1John 1:9 where confess is in the **present tense** = calling for this to be our habitual practice). Agree with God that what you have done is wrong. And don't reserve your confession for just the "big sins" but be sensitive to the conviction of the Spirit prompting you to confess the "little sins" because before a holy God all sins are "big sins."

2. Take responsibility for your sin just as David did. You cannot blame anyone else. You made the choice to do what you did.

3. Thank God for the blood of Jesus Christ which cleanses you from all sin, and accept in faith His forgiveness. Remember that forgiveness is the basis of grace, not merit. Remember that God's forgiveness is based on His love and compassion, not on our worthiness.)

4. Take God at His Word. No matter how you feel, cling in faith to what God says. Don't allow the accuser, Satan, to rob you of your victory.

><>><>><>

A Clear Conscience - In 1971 he killed a man. Even though he was the prime suspect in the murder, no one could prove it and the case was abandoned. So, he got away with it. Or did he?

Nearly three decades later, in failing health and living in a nursing home, he confessed to the crime. A detective who headed the original investigation said, "He was looking over his shoulder for the last 26 years, not only for the law, but for his Maker. I think he wants to clear his conscience before he meets his Maker—or try to at least."

How's your conscience today? Clear or clouded? What would it take to be ready to meet your Maker? How can you be made clean?

It may seem strange to speak of blood as a cleansing agent, but that's how the Bible connects the death of Jesus on the cross to our standing before God (Heb. 10:19). Christ shed His blood so that we might be forgiven and made clean inside. Because of what He has done, we can have a clear conscience and "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (He 10:22).

No matter who you are or what you've done, Jesus Christ can give you a clear conscience. Why not confess your sin and make things right with your Maker today. — by David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Now in His mercy He waits to impart
Peace to the conscience and joy to the heart,
Waits to be gracious, to pardon and heal
All who their guilt and their sinfulness feel.
—Anon.

**A clear conscience
is a soft pillow.**

Psalm 51:3 For I know my transgressions And my sin is ever before me : (For: Ps 32:5 38:18 Lev 26:40,41 Ne 9:2 Job 33:27 Pr 28:13 Lk 15:18-21) (**my sin:** Ps 40:12 Isa 59:12 Jer 3:25)

For - Term of explanation. David is not giving the reason God should forgive him but the reason why he is begging for forgiveness - he is very acutely aware of his transgressions and sins and in acute need of divine forgiveness! **Albert Barnes** adds that...

The word "for" does not imply that he referred to his willingness to confess his sins as an act of merit, but it indicates a state of mind which was necessary to forgiveness, and without which he could not hope for pardon. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

When I sin, do I truly comprehend the greatness of my sin against God and thus the greatest of my need to be forgiven by God? I think far too often this truth does not cross my mind, to my great shame!

Wiersbe is correct when he says...

If we really understood what **sin** *is* and what **sin** *does*, it would keep us from **deliberately sinning** against God. But we don't see **sin** the way He does.

Charles Horne comments that...

The penitent's second plea for mercy is, that he doth not deny, excuse, or palliate his fault, but confesses it openly and honestly, with all its aggravations, truly alleging that it haunts him night and day, causing his conscience incessantly to reproach him with his base ingratitude to a good and gracious Father. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Jameison rightly reminds us that...

Conviction precedes forgiveness; and, as a gift of God, is a plea for it (2Sa 12:13; Ps 32:5; 1Jn 1:9).

I know my transgressions - The Hebrew word "**yada**" speaks of intimate knowledge. The **Lxx** uses **ginosko** in the **present tense** indicating that David continually knew about or was continually conscious of his rebellious acts against God. In other words, David had a continual awareness of his wanton rebellion against God during that dark time (estimated at from 6-9 months based on Bathsheba's pregnancy -2Sa 11:5, 12:14, 15) when he tried to keep his sins (adultery, murder, lying) secret! No wonder his body wasted away from the overwhelming sense of guilt (Ps 32:3, 4, Pr 28:13). I pray we who are under the New Covenant of grace will learn from David's sad example (1Co 10:6, 11, 12) and when we experience the heaviness of unconfessed sin against a righteous God Who is rightly angered at our sin, we will quickly bow low, humbling ourselves, rending our hearts not our garments, agreeing with God that our rebellion was against His perfect, priceless love, and radically turning from (repenting) the darkness of that sin and unto the light of His presence (communion and intimacy with the Almighty restored), all made possible by the mercy and grace won for us (and David) at Calvary (David looked forward toward the Cross).

The Holman Christian Standard Bible (a very nice translation) has **'I am conscious of my rebellion.'**

Martin Luther has a pithy comment on this passage writing that...

The difference between the true saints and the sham saints is this: the former see their transgressions and realize that they are not what they should be and want to be. Therefore they judge themselves and are not concerned about others. The others, however, do not perceive their own wickedness; they imagine they are as they should be. They always forget about themselves and sit in judgment on the wickedness of others. They pervert this psalm and say: "I perceive the sins of others, and the sins of others are always before me." This is because they have their own sins on their back and a log in their eyes (Mt 7:3, 4, 5). (**Luther's works, vol. 14 : Selected Psalms III**)

Martin Luther in another note writes...

No one is able to desire forgiveness of sins unless he first acknowledges his sins. Man daily confesses his sins and longs for the remission of sins. Therefore, man acknowledges his sins. The minor premise is proved from the Psalm [51:8], "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me." Explanation: I reply that this is revealed through the Word. The whole world is ignorant of the magnitude of its sin and does not want to hear about it, and yes, yes it rather punishes those who expose sins. Even if it recognizes, it still does not wish to acknowledge it. But he who confesses and believes is already justified. Men see sin, to be sure, but they do not want this to be sin. They do not want to believe that we still have sins. (**Luther's works, vol. 34 : Career of the Reformer IV**)

My sin is ever before me - Literally "**my sin [is] in front of me continually.**" Is this not our experience when we have overtly sinned and then try to carry on our daily life as if nothing had transpired? **Martin Luther** comments that David is saying "*My sin plagues me, gives me no rest, no peace.*" **Perowne** adds that David is expressing "*the deep sorrow for despite done to God's love and goodness*" and "*dreads... separation from God.*" Indeed, although we cannot lose our salvation, we nevertheless should dread even the momentary separation from the vital, vibrant, dynamic communion with God's Spirit, Who is quenched and grieved by our unconfessed sin, for sin that is allowed to "simmer" "kills" our relationship until that sin is personally owned and completely confessed.

Adam Clarke

A true, deep, and unsophisticated mark of a genuine penitent. Wherever he turns his face, he sees his sin, and through it the eye of an angry God.

Before (**neged** from **nagad** = to place a matter high and conspicuous before a person) means prominently before so that it is conspicuous. God (through His prophet Nathan) used this same word **neged** to explain how conspicuous David's little secret would

become...

Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing **before** (neged) all Israel, and under the sun." (2Sa 12:12)

Imagine every time David looked at his new wife Bathsheba, it must have been a painful reminder of his sin of adultery.

Thomas Brooks

Godly sorrow is a LASTING sorrow, it is a durable sorrow.

**As long as a Christian continues sinning,
he cannot but continue mourning.**

David's sins were always before him, Psalm 51:3, though his Absalom nor his Bathsheba were not ever before him.

**Godly sorrow will every day
follow sin hard at heels.**

Look! as a wicked man, in respect of his desire and will to sin—would sin forever, if he should live forever; so I may say, if a godly man should live forever—he would sorrow forever. After Paul had been converted many years, some think fourteen, you shall find him a-mourning and lamenting over his sins, Romans 7. A sincere child will never cease mourning, until he ceases from offending an indulgent father. Though sin and godly sorrow were never born together—yet while a believer lives in this world, they must live together. And indeed holy joy and godly sorrow are in no way inconsistent, Psalm 2:11; yes, a godly man's eyes are always fullest of tears, when his heart is fullest of holy joy, etc. A man may go joying and mourning to his grave, yes, to heaven, at the same time.

But now the sorrow, the grief of wicked men for sin, it is like a morning cloud, or the early dew, or the crackling of thorns under a pot, or a runner who quickly passes by, or a dream which soon vanishes, or like a tale which is told, etc., their sorrowful hearts and mournful eyes soon dry up together, as you may see in Esau, Ahab, Pharaoh, and Judas. But the streams of godly sorrow will last and run as long as sin hangs upon us, and dwells in us: 1Co 15:9, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God." Psalm 25:7, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions." David prays to the Lord, not only to forgive—but also to forget, both the sins of his youth and the sins of his age. David remembered all his faults, both of former and of later times. David was well in years when he defiled himself with Bathsheba; and this he remembers and mourns over, Psalm 51. ([Evangelical Repentance](#))

Spurgeon comments...

My sin as a whole is never out of my mind; it continually oppresses my spirit. I lay it before thee because it is ever before me: Lord, put it away both from thee and me. To an awakened conscience, pain on account of sin is not transient and occasional, but intense and permanent, and this is no sign of divine wrath, but rather a sure preface of abounding favor. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 3](#))

**The sins that would entangle us
Must never be ignored;
For if we try to cover them
They'll pierce us like a sword.**

><>><><>

Just Like David - The elderly woman didn't like the way her pastor prayed each Sunday morning, so she told him. It bothered her that before he preached he would confess to God that he had sinned the week before. "Pastor," she said, "I don't like to think my pastor sins."

We'd like to believe that our spiritual leaders don't sin, but reality tells us that no Christian is exempt from the burdens of the sinful nature. Paul told the believers at Colosse to "put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature" (Col 3:5NIV). The problem is that sometimes we don't do that. We yield to temptation, and we're left with a mess. But we are not left helpless. We have a pattern to follow for restoration.

That pattern comes from the heart and pen of King David, whose sin demonstrated the sad consequences of succumbing to

temptation. Look closely at Psalm 51 as David owned up to his sin. First, he flung himself at God's feet, pleading for mercy, acknowledging his sin, and trusting in God's judgment (Ps 51:1-6). Next, he sought cleansing from the One who forgives and wipes the slate clean (Ps 51:7-9). Finally, David asked for restoration with the Holy Spirit's help (Ps 51:10-12).

Is sin stealing your joy and blocking your fellowship with the Lord? Like David, turn it over to Him. — by Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our sinful ways can sap our joy
And isolate us from the Lord;
Confession and repentance, though,
Provide the way to be restored.
—Sper

**Repentance clears the way
for us to walk with God.**

><>><>><>

Call it Sin - A professional baseball player was suspended from the team when the coach learned that he was addicted to cocaine. He told reporters that his drug abuse wasn't his fault; he had the disease of chemical dependency.

This approach is understandable— even if it is inaccurate. Some people may indeed have a genetic predisposition to addiction, but we aren't facing our problem if we won't accept responsibility for the choices we've made. It's easier to say, "I'm sick," than it is to say, "I'm wrong."

That's the trouble. What may appear at first to be the easiest way out may eventually leave us in a worse condition. Unless we acknowledge that a problem may also be rooted in a sinful choice we've made, we will never enjoy the healing we can receive by being forgiven. On the other hand, if we are willing to admit that we did wrong—that we sinned—we can be forgiven by God and by others. By admitting that we have failed, we qualify for the spiritual deliverance that only God can give, and this is a vital part of our healing.

Let's not hinder the healing process by seeing only the physical side of sin. We must also see the spiritual side. We shouldn't be too easy on ourselves. If we don't call sin "sin," we'll never experience God's healing touch. — by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Jesus died to pay sin's debt,
Forgiveness to bestow;
But if we try to make excuse,
His grace we'll never know.
—DJD

**If you make an excuse for sin,
your sin won't be excused.**

Psalm 51:4 Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight, So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge:

- **Against:** Ge 9:6 20:6 39:9 Lev 5:19 6:2-7 2Sa 12:9,10,13,14 Jas 2:9,11
- **evil:** Ge 38:7 2Ki 17:17 21:6 Lk 15:21
- **So that:** Ps 50:4,6 Lk 7:29 Ro 3:4
- **when:** Ac 17:31 Ro 2:5, Ro 3:4 Rev 15:3,4 16:5 19:11

**SIN: HIGH TREASON
AGAINST THE MOST HIGH GOD!
A GREAT DETERRENT TO SIN**

Against You, You only, I have sinned - Here David gives us a "working definition" of the heinousness of sin as that which is "anti-

God"! Although it may seem basic, this truth is one which seems to have escaped so many of God's saints. We seem to forget He is holy so that even our "little" willful sins are big in light of His perfect holiness and hatred of sin. Although it is not popular to study the doctrine of sin, I would submit that there are few doctrines more needed by the modern evangelical church. As I have been discipling men using the sins in David's life (2Sa 11, 12), I have been amazed at their surprised reactions to the power of sin and the divine affront of their sin -- against a holy God Who sees every transgression, iniquity and sin. Nathan confronted David with the heart piercing rebuke that "You are the man!" and went on to rehearse the favor from God which David had come to take for granted and the punishment that God would allow because of His sin. As a result of this reproof, David's sense of guilt and conviction overwhelmed him and gave birth to his short but powerful and sincere confession...

"I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. (2Sa 12:13)

Kent Hughes Comments: The grand deterrent to Joseph's sinning (Ge 39:9) was the awareness that God sees all and that a sin that no one knows about, committed behind locked doors in a dark room, is actually done in the presence of a holy God. Joseph believed this.

**And I am convinced that
the personal realization and conviction of this truth
is the strongest deterrent to sin that there is.**

King David invoked it after the horror of his own sin ravaged his soul: "For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight" (Psalm 51:3, 4a). ([Beginning and Blessing Preaching the Word](#))

Derek Kidner comments on David's self-abased outlook...

Notice the immense contrast here to the self-absorbed outlook of 2 Samuel, where David's only question was, in effect, 'How do I cover my tracks?' Now it is, 'How could I treat God so?' His complete acceptance of God's verdict (Ps 51:4b) is matched in the New Testament by the penitent thief (Luke 23:41) ([Psalms 1-72 Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#) or [Logos](#))

Spurgeon...

Against thee, thee only have I sinned. The virus of sin lies in its opposition to God: the psalmist's sense of sin towards others rather tended to increase the force of this feeling of sin against God. All his wrong doing centered, culminated, and came to a climax, at the foot of the divine throne. To injure our fellow men is sin, mainly because in so doing we violate the law of God. The penitent's heart was so filled with a sense of the wrong done to the Lord himself, that all other confession was swallowed up in a broken hearted acknowledgment of offence against him. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 4 - Treasury of David](#))

Albert Barnes comments that...

The state of mind here illustrated is that which occurs in every case of true penitence. It is not merely because that which has been done is a violation of human law; it is not that it brings us to poverty or disgrace; it is not that it exposes us to punishment on earth from a parent, a teacher, or civil ruler; it is not that it exposes us to punishment in the world to come—it is that it is of itself, and apart from all other relations and consequences, an offence against God; a violation of his pure and holy law; a wrong done against him, and in his sight. Unless there is this feeling there can be no true penitence; and unless there is this feeling there can be no hope of pardon, for God forgives offences only as committed against himself; not as involving us in dangerous consequences, or as committed against our fellow-men. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

J R Miller...

Another of David's thoughts about his sin, was that it was against God alone. "Against you, you only, have I sinned." The smallest wrong thing we do—is done primarily against God. If we speak a rude or impatient word to a beggar—it strikes God's heart, and the sin is against Him. If we are unkind to a dumb beast—we sin against God. Our unholy thoughts, which we think harm no one—grieve God. Every sin is a personal offence to Him. We may injure others and do wrong and injustice to them—but the sin is really and always against God. It is the law of God that we break, no matter what evil thing we do; and in breaking His law—we have struck God in the face. We stand in such relations to God all the while—that

**every act, word, or thought of ours affects Him personally:
either pleasing Him and meeting His approval or
grieving Him and receiving His condemnation.**

And done what is evil in your sight - Spurgeon comments...

To commit treason in the very court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed: David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God, but where there is grace in the soul it reflects a fearful guilt upon every evil act, when we remember that the God whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed. ([Psalm 51 Verse 4 - Treasury of David](#))

In **Isaiah** God speaking to His chosen people refers to them as

A people who continually provoke Me **to My face**, Offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on bricks (Is 65:3)

Barnes comments: It is a great aggravation of the guilt of the sinner, that his offence is committed in the very presence, and under the very eye, of God.

God saw what he had done; and David knew, or might have known, that the eye of God was upon him in his wickedness. It was to him then a great aggravation of his sin that he had dared to commit it when he knew that God saw everything. The presence of a child—or even of an idiot—would restrain men from many acts of sin which they would venture to commit if alone; how much more should the fact that God is always present, and always sees all that is done, restrain us from open and from secret transgression.

David's recognition of the ultimate "victim" of his sin is reminiscent of the story of the prodigal son...

And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 'But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; 24 for this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' And they began to be merry. (Luke 15:21, 22, 23, 24)

When David says **"you only"**, which sounds somewhat exclusive, what is the idea he is conveying, because David clearly sinned against Bathsheba and Uriah? Even when a sin is perpetrated against someone else, the act is in the final analysis rebellion against God's laws and instructions. (Leviticus 5:21).

Thomas Brooks

Godly sorrow is a mourning rather for sin—than for the trouble which sin brings; it is not so much for loss of goods, lands, wife, child, credit, name, etc.—but for that a holy God is offended, a righteous law violated, Christ dishonored, the Spirit grieved, and the gospel blemished, etc. Peter's sorrow was godly—but Judas' sorrow was worldly; Peter mourns over the evil of sin—but Judas mourns over the evil of punishment. David mourns over his sin, "Against you, you only have I sinned, and done this evil in your sight," Psalm 51:4. ([Evangelical Repentance](#))

When you speak...

In this context the psalmist refers to God's word of condemnation against his sin delivered through Nathan (cf. 2Sa 12:7-12). (NET Bible Notes).

At the end of 2Samuel 11 after David had committed adultery and murder we read...

When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD. (2Sa 11:27)

Barnes commenting on **"that You are justified when You speak"** writes that...

That thy character might be vindicated in all that thou hast said;—in the law which thou hast revealed; in the condemnation of the sin in that law; and in the punishment which thou mayest appoint. That is, he acknowledged his guilt. He did not seek to apologize for it, or to vindicate it. God was right, and he was wrong. The sin deserved all that God in his law had declared it to deserve; it deserved all that God by any sentence which he might pass upon him would declare it to deserve. The sin was so aggravated that any sentence which God might pronounce would not be beyond the measure of its ill-desert.

(This verse is quoted in Romans 3:4, upon which Barnes comments) That thou might be regarded as just or

right, or, that it may appear that God is not unjust. This does not mean that David had sinned against God for the purpose of justifying him, but that he now clearly saw that his sin had been so directly against him, and so aggravated, that God was right in his sentence of condemnation. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

OBlameless (zakah) means to be translucent, and figuratively means to be innocent. God was innocent in any judgment He might deem appropriate for David.

Zakah - 8x in OT: Job15:14 25:4 Ps 51:4 Ps 73:13 Ps 119:9 Pr 20:9 Isa 1:16 Micah 6:1

Barnes explains **blameless when You judge**, noting that it refers to God's...

words in relation to this offence... Remember that the psalm was written immediately after Nathan, at the command of God, had gone to reprove David for his crime. God, by the mouth of Nathan, had expressly condemned David for his crime. To this expression of condemnation David doubtless refers by the expression "in thy sayings;" see 2Sa 12:7-13. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Martin Luther...

Wounds cannot be healed until they are revealed and sins cannot be forgiven until they are confessed.

Spurgeon...

That thou might be justified when thou speaks, and be clear when thou judges. He could not present any argument against divine justice, if it proceeded at once to condemn him and punish him for his crime. His own confession, and the judge's own witness of the whole transaction, places the transgression beyond all question or debate; the iniquity was indisputably committed, and was unquestionably a foul wrong, and therefore the course of justice was clear and beyond all controversy. ([Psalm 51 Verse 4 - Treasury of David](#))

><>><>><

Hurting God - When we hurt another person, we hurt God. If I wrong you, I am also offending Him. If I steal from you, I am robbing Him. If I lie to you, I am lying to the One who is truth. If I take your life, I destroy what is precious to God. This truth is often forgotten in the lax moral environment of our culture.

A top officer of a Japanese financial institution was in tears as he heaped blame on himself for his corporation's collapse. We too may feel sorry when our actions inflict undeserved suffering on others. This is commendable. But when there is deliberate wrongdoing, a tearful apology is incomplete if God is left out of the confession. Until we see sin for what it is—rebellion against God—we have not come to grips with it.

When Joseph was tempted by Potiphar's wife, he said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). And in Psalm 51 David confessed, "Against You, You only, have I sinned" (Ps 51:4). Surely David knew he had stolen another man's wife and murdered a loyal soldier. Yet he went to the heart of the matter—no excuses, no rationalization. He had sinned against God! That's the admission God is looking for, because He longs to give us His mercy and forgiveness. --Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

O Lord, return to me Your power
That once by grace I knew;
Forgive the sin that grieves Your heart,
And help me to be true.
—Anon.

**No sin is little,
for it is against an infinitely holy God.**

><>><>><

Ezekiel speaks of the hurtful effect of sin on God...

Then those of you who escape will remember Me among the nations to which they will be carried captive, how **I have been hurt by their adulterous hearts which turned away from Me**, and by their eyes, which played the harlot after their idols; and they will loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed, for all their abominations. (Ezekiel 6:9-see note)

Dear Father, help us by Thy Spirit to loathe our sin and to grasp the eternal truth that our sin hurts You,

so that we might allow this truth to serve as a preventative of willful transgressions against You. Amen.

Psalm 51:5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me:

- **Conceived:** Ps 58:3 Ge 5:3 8:21 Job 14:4 15:14-16 Jn 3:6 Ro 5:12 Eph 2:3)

ORIGINAL SIN: OUR CORRUPT NATURE

Behold - This interjection always calls one to pay special attention to what follows. It is as if David now sees sin as he has never seen sin before.

In sin my mother conceived me - Note that this is no diatribe against conception. Neither is David seeking to use this as an excuse. David's point is that from birth every human being has the innate propensity to commit sins. His crime was not some accidental misstep but was an outworking of his inherently warped heart, a heart that sprang forth from faulty stock that could ultimately be traced back to Adam.

Paul explained it this way...

Therefore, just as through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin (This is the "sin virus" which Adam passed on to every person ever born), and so death spread to all men, because all sinned (they commit individual acts of sin because they have inherited the "sin virus" from Adam) (Ro 5:12-note)

We see a similar statement in Psalm 58...

The wicked are estranged from the womb. These who speak lies go astray from birth. (Ps 58:3-note).

John Brug comments that

In this confession David also acknowledges original sin.

CORRUPT ACTIONS FLOW FROM A CORRUPT NATURE.

Like all of us, David had been conceived and born with a corrupt nature inherited from Adam (Ro 5:12). He had been born as an enemy of God, whose will was opposed to God. He had been born as a condemned sinner, worthy of damnation. Although David had been freed from the rule of his sinful nature, he had allowed it to regain control over him, and he had fallen into terrible sin. Though it was an extreme example, David's sin was no fluke, no accident, no surprise. It was an expression of the **corrupt nature** that lurks within, even when it is covered with a veneer of decency. David realized that his need for forgiveness extended beyond forgiveness for a few gross sins, horrible as those may have been. He recognized a need for complete renewal. (The People's Bible)

J R Miller...

Another thought of his sin which David had, was that it was inborn. "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." He was not born holy. Sin is not altogether a habit which one acquires through years of living. It is not a result of bad education. It is not a little soiling of one's nature from the outside, by contact with an evil world. Sin is in the heart—and was born with us ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Spurgeon...

Behold, I was shapen in iniquity. He is thunderstruck at the discovery of his inbred sin, and proceeds to set it forth. This was not intended to justify himself, but it rather meant to complete the confession. It is as if he said, not only have I sinned this once, but I am in my very nature a sinner. The fountain of my life is polluted as well as its streams. My birth tendencies are out of the square of equity; I naturally lean to forbidden things. Mine is a constitutional disease, rendering my very person obnoxious to thy wrath.

And in sin did my mother conceive me. He goes back to the earliest moment of his being, not to traduce his mother, but to acknowledge the deep tap roots of his sin. It is a wicked wresting of Scripture to deny that

original sin and natural depravity are here taught. Surely men who cavil at this doctrine have need to be taught of the Holy Spirit what be the first principles of the faith. David's mother was the Lord's handmaid, he was born in chaste wedlock, of a good father, and he was himself, "the man after God's own heart;" and yet his nature was as fallen as that of any other son of Adam, and there only needed the occasion for the manifesting of that sad fact. In our shaping we were put out of shape, and when we were conceived our nature conceived sin. Alas, for poor humanity! Those who will may cry it up, but he is most blessed who in his own soul has learned to lament his lost estate. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 5 - Treasury of David](#))

True Confessions - I love coconut. I always have! So, after an exhausting day in second grade, I found a bag of shredded coconut in the cupboard and devoured the whole thing. When my mother went into the kitchen later to bake—you guessed it, a coconut cake—I heard, "Who ate the coconut?!"

I knew I was in trouble, but my escape plan was simple—a quick, easy lie: "Not me!"

She continued her inquiry with my sisters, but after they denied it, we all heard the familiar words: "Wait till your Dad comes home!" My cover-up plan was doomed to failure, and later that evening I finally confessed.

No one had to teach me to lie. As the psalmist David admits, "I was brought forth in iniquity" (Ps. 51:5). But in his sin David knew where to go—to the God of abundant mercy who will cleanse us from our sin (Ps. 51:1, 2).

When we recognize the ongoing reality of sin in our lives, we are reminded of our ongoing need for the presence of God and the power of His Word to keep us safe and spiritually sane. He is waiting for us to confess our faults and embrace the forgiveness and cleansing that He readily offers.

Remember, a refreshing plunge into God's mercy awaits you on the other side of confessed sin! — by Joe Stowell ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Out of my shameful failure and loss,
Jesus, I come, Jesus, I come;
Into the glorious gain of Thy cross,
Jesus, I come to Thee.
—Sleeper

**Own up to your sin and
experience the joy of confession**

Psalm 51:6 Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom (

- **Behold:** Ps 26:2 125:4 Ge 20:5,6 2Ki 20:3 1Ch 29:17 2Ch 31:20,21 Pr 2:21 Jer 5:3 Jn 4:23,24 2Co 1:12 Jas 4:8)
- **innermost being:** Ps 5:9 1Sa 16:7 Job 38:36 Lk 11:39 Ro 7:22)
- **The hidden:** Job 32:8 Jer 31:33 32:40 1Pe 3:4)

Behold ([02005](#)) (**hen**) is an interjection demanding attention, "look!" "see!" here in the context of speaking directly to God.

Net Bible Notes...

The juxtaposition of two occurrences of "look" (**Behold**) in vv. 5–6 draws attention to the sharp contrast between the sinful reality of the psalmist's condition and the lofty ideal God has for him.

Amplified - Behold, You desire truth in the inner being; make me therefore to know wisdom in my inmost heart.

Kidner observes that the Hebrew verbs are "A series of futures, not imperatives, begins with 6b (Heb. 8b; lit. 'thou shalt teach me ...'), to the end of 8. Coverdale's version, in the Prayer Book, is almost alone in reproducing them as the affirmations which they are. ([Psalms 1-72 Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#))

Spurgeon...Behold. Here is the great matter for consideration. God desires not merely outward virtue, but inward purity, and the penitent's sense of sin is greatly deepened as with astonishment he discovers this truth, and how far he is from satisfying the divine demand. The second "Behold" is fitly set over against the first; how great the gulf which yawns between them! Thou desirest truth in

the inward parts. Reality, sincerity, true holiness, heart fidelity, these are the demands of God. He cares not for the pretence of purity, he looks to the mind, heart, and soul. Always has the Holy One of Israel estimated men by their inner nature, and not by their outward professions; to him the inward is as visible as the outward, and he rightly judges that the essential character of an action lies in the motive of him who works it. ([Psalm - 51 - Verse 6 - Treasury of David](#))

Constable comments...David also realized God wanted him to be completely honest, not just to offer an offering. He needed to get his heart right with God. His confession had to be genuine rather than the superficial repetition of some words. Wisdom in the Old Testament refers to living life in the light of God's presence and revelation. God wants people to be completely honest with Him and to deal with reality. David acknowledged this. ([Psalms Expository Notes](#))

Charles Horne comments that...The force of "**Behold**," is—"It is too plain; I feel it but too sensibly; the punishment I suffer is evidence sufficient, that thou art not contented with a superficial appearance of goodness; You love truth and sincerity in the bottom of the heart." This God was now teaching him, by the correction He made him suffer. The punishment inflicted tended to give him a right understanding of things, and to work it deep into him.—Mudge. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Desire ([02654](#)) (**chaphets**) originally meant "to bend" (cp Job 40:17) and hence "incline to" and then to "take pleasure in." The basic idea is feel great favor towards something. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **chaphets** with the Greek word **agapao** which means to love, expressing the purest, noblest form of love, a love which springs from an apprehension of the preciousness of an object.

Truth ([0571](#)) ('**emeth** from **aman** = conveys the idea of certainty) means that which is true, certain, sure, which conforms to reality, and is so certain not to be false. It can convey the idea of faithfulness (Neh 7:2). The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates 'emeth with the Greek word **aletheia** [**word study**] which describes the quality of being in accord with what is true, truthfulness, dependability, uprightness in thought and deed

Thomas Watson writes...Sincerity is of universal importance to a Christian. It is the sauce which seasons piety and makes it savory. Sincerity is the jewel which God is most delighted with, Psalm 51:6. "Behold you desire truth in the inward parts." To speak plainly--all our pompous show of holiness, without this soul of sincerity to enliven it—it is but 'pious folly'. It is but going to hell in a more devout manner than others! ([The Upright Mans Character](#))

J R Miller...Notice David's thought about the renewal which comes with God's forgiveness. It is inward renewal. When the love of God streamed into his soul—he saw how much he needed to have done in him to make him what God would have him to be. First, he had a new conception of the divine requirement. "**You desire truth in the inward parts.**" Truth is genuineness, sincerity, righteousness. God despises hypocrisy. No mere external reformation will avail—while the heart remains wrong. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Innermost ([02910](#)) (**tuchah**) describes an object covered over, hidden, or concealed. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **tuchah** with the Greek word **adelos** meaning not manifest, unseen

God desires truth on the inside where He alone sees, not just a veneer of "truth" on the outside which men see (that's called hypocrisy!). God knows our character. Men know our reputation. Truth on the outside that corresponds to truth on the inside is a description of a character of integrity (the idea of "integer" or oneness - there is a "one to one" correlation between our actions and our heart.) Unconfessed sin prevents that one to one correlation.

Hidden part ([05640](#)) (**catham**) means that which is concealed (cp Da 12:4, Da 12:9), that which is secret (Da 8:26) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **catham** with the Greek word **kruphios** meaning hidden or secret (Mt 6:18)..

You will make me know wisdom - Clearly the wisdom God desires in His children is the wisdom He provides for us.

Know ([03045](#))(**yada**) does not mean simply to have knowledge of something. To know by experiencing. Describes an intimate knowing (used of a man knowing a woman).

Wisdom ([02451](#)) (**chokmah/hokma**) is the ability to see something from God's viewpoint. It is not just theoretical knowledge but shows itself practical in a proper discernment between good and evil or right and wrong. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **catham** with the Greek word **sophia** meaning is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. **Sophia** emphasizes understanding of ultimate things—such as life and death, God and man, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time.

Wisdom is the know how to apply God's truth to our life. **Wisdom** is proper use of knowledge in daily living. **Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and follow the best course of action. Wisdom is application of knowledge. Wisdom is the ability to respond correctly to life's situations. Knowledge is the mental possession of powers of perceiving objects, **wisdom** is the power of right reasoning concerning them and forming right decisions accordingly. **Wisdom** is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of

action, based on knowledge and understanding.

Spurgeon...And in the hidden parts thou shalt make me to know wisdom. The penitent feels that God is teaching him truth concerning his nature, which he had not before perceived. The love of the heart, the mystery of its fall, and the way of its purification -- this hidden wisdom we must all attain; and it is a great blessing to be able to believe that the Lord will "make us to know it." No one can teach our innermost nature but the Lord, but he can instruct us to profit. The Holy Spirit can write the law on our heart, and that is the sum of practical wisdom. He can put the fear of the Lord within, and that is the beginning of wisdom. He can reveal Christ in us, and he is essential wisdom. Such poor, foolish, disarranged souls as ours, shall yet be ordered aright, and truth and wisdom shall reign within us. ([Psalm - 51 - Verse 6 - Treasury of David](#))

Barnes explains this as follows...God only can enable me to understand what is truly wise. This wisdom, this cleansing, this knowledge of the way in which a guilty man can be restored to favor, can be imparted only by God; and "You will do it." There is here, therefore, at the same time a recognition of the truth that this "must" come from God, and an act of faith, or a strong assurance that God "would" impart this. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

Plausible Deniability - Answering media charges of scandal and impropriety, the guilty politician responded with the plea, "I have no recollection of those events." It was yet another attempt of a public figure to apply a strategy called "plausible deniability." This is when individuals try to create a personal safety net for themselves by seeking to convince others that they had no knowledge of the events in question. Someone else gets blamed and becomes the scapegoat for the guilty person's wrongs.

Sometimes Christians have their own kind of plausible deniability. We claim ignorance of our wrong behavior, rationalize, or blame others—but God knows the truth. The Bible tells us: "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1Sa 16:7). This is true whether the heart is pure or if it's a corrupt heart robed in false claims of innocence. We may fool others who see us only on the outside, but God sees the reality of our hearts—whether good or bad.

It is wise, therefore, to humbly confess our faults to the Lord. He desires that we admit the truth (Ps 51:6). The only way to escape the sin and restore our fellowship with God is to acknowledge and confess it to Him (Ps 51:3, 4). — by Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, be merciful to me;
My sin has grieved Your heart;
And strengthen my resolve, O Lord,
From evil to depart. —D. De Haan

**We may successfully fool others,
but God knows our hearts**

Honest With God - The editors of the newspaper admitted they had not reported the facts accurately. In a correction, they cleared the name of a person they had linked to a criminal case.

Truth is as basic to life as it is to news reporting. Without it, there is moral confusion. Without truth, good things are called bad, and bad things good. Without truth, criminals receive credit for being honorable, and honorable persons are treated as criminals.

It shouldn't be any surprise, therefore, that God wants us to be truthful. And it shouldn't be a surprise that the Lord was pleased with David when he confessed his adultery, his conspiracy to kill, and his coverup. It was right for David to tell the truth—to call wrong "wrong." Only then could he be rightly concerned about how his sin had reflected on the name and reputation of God.

What about us? Have we been honest with God? Have we pleased Him by setting the record straight about our sin? Have we, like David, confessed it to the Father? Only when we do this can we recover our honor and once again enjoy the blessings of our salvation (Ps. 51:12). God desires "truth in the inward parts" (Ps 51:6)—and that means calling wrong "**wrong**." — by Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Don't hide your sin and cover up,
Pretending that there's nothing wrong;
Instead, confess it and repent
And God will fill your heart with song.
—Sper

**We have to face our sins
before we can put them behind us.**

><>><>><>

We Can't Fool God - What sin did Jesus condemn more than any other sin? Hypocrisy—especially the flagrant, self-congratulatory kind practiced by the religious leaders of His day.

Religious hypocrites are unspiritual shams. They are trying to gain a reputation for spirituality by playing the role of God-lovers intent on obeying His law. They are unholy fakes who try to fool people—but they can't fool God.

In a convocation address, Luther Smith, a professor at Emory University's Candler School of Theology, warned against the danger of "faking it"—pretending to be something we are not. He mentioned that he had seen a bumper sticker that read, "Jesus is coming. Look busy."

Although we may look busy, we can't fool God about our faith, our character, or our service. Like the Pharisees, whom Jesus denounced (Mt. 23:13-28), we may appear to be sincerely religious. But the Lord knows if our profession is merely a facade without saving trust or genuine devotion.

Are you a churchgoing hypocrite, depending on your own good works to gain entrance into heaven? Or are you trusting God's grace and relying on Christ?

You can't fool God. It's not enough to look busy.

God sees our ways and knows our hearts,
From Him we cannot hide;
External righteousness can't save,
For He knows what's inside.
—Sper

A hypocrite is a person who is not himself on Sunday.

Psalm 51: 7 Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow: (Purge: Lev 14:4-7,49-52 Nu 19:18-20 Heb 9:19) (and: Heb 9:13,14 1Jn 1:7 Rev 1:5) (whiter: Isa 1:18 Eph 5:26,27 Rev 7:13,14)

SIN LIKE LEPROSY NEEDS CLEANSING

Purify ([02398](#)) (**chata'**) means to to sin or miss the way, but here means to purify from uncleanness or from sin.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the verb **rhantizo** in this verse for the Hebrew verb **chata'**. **Rhantizo** means to sprinkle a liquid on something or someone and was used by the writer of Hebrews in his allusions to the OT rituals (in Heb 9:13-note. The related word "**rhantismos**" is used in Heb 9:19-note and Heb 9:21-note)

Purify me with hyssop - This picture suggests that David is alluding to the OT practice describing the law dealing with the cleansing of lepers. Moses records this ritual in Leviticus 14...

Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and [hyssop](#) for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6 As for the live bird, he shall take it, together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the [hyssop](#), and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. 7 **He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean**, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. 8 The one to be cleansed shall then wash (kabac) his clothes and shave off all his hair, and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. (Lev 14:1-8)

Brug comments: The application of blood with hyssop symbolized the cleansing that David received in reality

by the application of the blood of Christ to him before the throne of God. (The People's Bible)

David may also have been alluding to the OT practice of purification of anyone who had touched a dead body

Also, anyone who in the open field touches one who has been slain with a sword or who has died naturally, or a human bone or a grave, shall be unclean for seven days. 'Then for the unclean person they shall take some of the ashes of the burnt purification from sin and flowing water shall be added to them in a vessel. 'A clean person shall take [hyssop](#) and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it on the tent and on all the furnishings and on the persons who were there, and on the one who touched the bone or the one slain or the one dying naturally or the grave. 'Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and **shall be clean** by evening. (Nu 19:16-19)

Note that the effect of hyssop on the leper and the one who had touched a dead body was that both were considered clean thereafter. This is the sum and substance of what David so deeply desired from God. And while he may not have fully understood it, these OT rituals were pale pictures of the purifying power of the blood of Christ (Col 2:16, 17-note), Who would one day come from the line of David (Mt 1:1) and provide the once for all sacrifice (Heb 9:28-note, Heb 10:10-note). We see this concept that OT sins like those of David (which otherwise warranted his death) were atoned for on Calvary. It was as if David received cleansing on credit, with Christ's blood ultimately paying the bill. (see Ro 3:25-note, Heb 9:15-note)

Hyssop - 10 v in OT - Ex. 12:22; Lev. 14:4, 6, 49, 51f; Nu 19:6, 18; 1Ki 4:33; Ps. 51:7

David Jeremiah commenting on **hyssop** notes that...

Purity, as we know, was a crucial issue to the Jews. The law required that when a person came into contact with a corpse, he had to be ceremoniously cleansed with hyssop. David is thinking of Uriah. He has been dealing in death, and he must be cleaned to satisfy the fullest demands of the law. ([Slaying the Giants in Your Life](#))

Chuck Smith...

When in Egypt they were to sprinkle the blood upon the lintels of the doorposts of the house, they used the hyssop bush in the sprinkling of the blood. And so, because it was the little bush that was used to sprinkle the blood, he said, "Purge me with hyssop." That would be referring to the blood of the sacrifice. "And I shall be clean." ([Chuck Smith](#))

Barrick adds that...

Hyssop was a small plant that grew in rocky crevices in Palestine. Perhaps the Syrian marjoram (*Origanum syriacum*), a fragrant grey-leaved wiry-stemmed herb, 7-12 inches high, with small white flowers. The plant was employed like a brush in various purification ceremonies in the Old Testament: Exodus 12:22, Leviticus 14:4-6, Numbers 19:18. ([Ps 51 Notes](#))

Charles Horne comments that...

He therefore petitions, in this verse, for the purification which comes from God only, through the one great propitiatory sacrifice, by the Holy Spirit; and which was foreshown under the law, by the ceremony of sprinkling the unclean person with a bunch of hyssop, dipped in the "water of separation." This rite is described, Nu 19 and explained, Heb 9:13,14. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God."

From the latter part of the verse (**whiter than snow**) we learn, that, by grace and mercy, the pardoned penitent is arrayed in garments no less pure and splendid than those of innocence itself. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

J N Darby comments regarding **purify me**...

There is the blessed consciousness, that, when the Lord washes us, we are clean every whit, whiter than snow. A blessed thought to be clean before His eyes: how little believed, because men do not believe in His washing! ([Practical Reflections on the Psalms - Book 2](#))

J R Miller...

"Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow." In certain ancient

ceremonies, the blood was sprinkled with a hyssop branch. We may not be able to read into this prayer all the New Testament teaching about Christ's sacrifice, and yet the idea is certainly present, and for us means cleansing of Christ's blood. ([Devotional Hours with the Bible](#))

Clean (same verb Ps 51:2) (02891) (taher) means to make pure and is found most often in Leviticus where it describes ritual cleansing of either things or persons (Lev 14:48, 16:19, 22:7).

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** uses the verb **katharizo (word study)** in this verse for the Hebrew verb **taher**.. **Katharizo** is from **katharos** = pure, clean, without stain or spot and gives us our English words catharsis (emotional or physical purging), cathartic (substance used to induce a purging) and Cathar (member of a medieval sect which sought the purging of evil from its members). **Katharizo** means to make clean by taking away an undesirable part. To cleanse from filth or impurity. Figuratively **katharizo** refers to cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity as in (Acts 10:15). In a similar sense **katharizo** is used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (Mt 8:2-3, et al) Another figurative use in 1John 1:9 (cf James 4:8, Hebrews 10:2) describes the purifying or cleansing from sin and a guilty conscience thus making one acceptable to God and reestablishing fellowship. To cause to become clean as from physical stains and dirt (Mt 23:25). This word group conveys the idea of physical, religious, and moral cleanness or purity in such senses as clean, free from stains or shame, and free from adulteration.

Wash (same verb Ps 51:2) (03526) (kabac/kabas) means to wash (especially clothes), to make clean and soft by trampling (this is the root meaning of **kabac**), by treading, by kneading or by beating clothes in cold water. **Kabac** was always used of clothing, "to launder" and never of "washing" the body. Most uses of **kabac** have to do with washing of clothes which have become contaminated in one way or another (28x). Particularly important contaminants would be leprosy. **Kabac** is found first time in Ge 49:11 as part of Jacob's blessing on Judah "He washes his garments in wine" (This is a prophecy related to the "lion of the tribe of Judah", the Messiah, Who will rule over kingdom during the Millennium [description of this golden age to come], which will be such a prosperous time that wine [a symbol of prosperity and blessing in this passage] will be as commonplace as wash water!)

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **kabac/kabas** with the verb **pluno** which means to wash something other than a body part, such as washing of clothes. **Pluno** for example describes the saints in heaven as those who "have **washed** their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Rev 7:14-[note](#)) clearly speaking of spiritual cleansing which is David's desire also.

Whiter than snow - It is interesting that although snow is wonderfully white, at the center of each snowflake is a grain of dirt. David desires to be whiter than a snowflake! Whiteness symbolizes moral purity that results from divine forgiveness (Isa 1:18-note).

Kidner sees these words of David as

a flash of realization that with God there are no half-measures (Ed: That is, snow is about as white as one can achieve but David wants cleansing that surpasses that whiteness!). ([Psalms 1-72 Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries](#) or [Logos](#))

Spurgeon...None but thyself can whiten me, but thou canst in grace outdo nature itself in its purest state. Snow soon gathers smoke and dust, it melts and disappears; thou canst give me an enduring purity. Though snow is white below as well as on the outer surface, thou canst work the like inward purity in me, and make me so clean that only an hyperbole can set forth my immaculate condition. Lord, do this; my faith believes thou wilt, and well she knows thou canst. Scarcely does Holy Scripture contain a verse more full of faith than this. Considering the nature of the sin, and the deep sense the psalmist had of it, it is a glorious faith to be able to see in the blood sufficient, nay, all sufficient merit entirely to purge it away. Considering also the deep natural inbred corruption which David saw and experienced within, it is a miracle of faith that he could rejoice in the hope of perfect purity in his inward parts. Yet, be it added, the faith is no more than the word warrants, than the blood of atonement encourages, than the promise of God deserves. O that some reader may take heart, even now while smarting under sin, to do the Lord the honour to rely thus confidently on the finished sacrifice of Calvary and the infinite mercy there revealed. ([Psalm 51 - Verse 7 - Treasury of David](#))

David felt that sin was a very great defilement, — that he was black and filthy; but he knew how he himself had often, when hunted like a wild goat among the mountains, stooped down to a cooling brook, and washed away the dust and stain of travel in the running water, and his face and hands had been clean again; and so, bowing down before God, he sees, in the sacrifice of Christ, a cleansing flood, and his desire is expressed in these words, "Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The words do not require any exposition; they require application. They do not need to be explained; they need to be offered up to God in prayer by brokenhearted suppliants. (**Psalm 51:7 The Guilt and the Cleansing**)

James L Nicholson put the cry of David's heart to music in his great hymn...

WHITER THAN SNOW

([Play hymn](#)) ([Play vocal version](#))

Lord Jesus, I long to be perfectly whole;
I want Thee forever to live in my soul.
Break down every idol, cast out every foe;
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

***Whiter than snow, yes, whiter than snow.
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.***

Lord Jesus, let nothing unholy remain,
Apply Thine own blood and extract ev'ry stain;
To get this blest cleansing, I all things forego—
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, look down from Thy throne in the skies,
And help me to make a complete sacrifice.
I give up myself, and whatever I know,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, for this I most humbly entreat,
I wait, blessed Lord, at Thy crucified feet.
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

Lord Jesus, Thou seest I patiently wait,
Come now, and within me a new heart create;
To those who have sought Thee, Thou never saidst "No,"
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Refrain

The blessing by faith, I receive from above;
O glory! my soul is made perfect in love;
My prayer has prevailed, and this moment I know,
The blood is applied, I am whiter than snow.

Refrain

Play the Youtube song [Whiter than the snow](#)

Whiter than the snow
Purer than the clearest stream
Wash me and I'll be
Bathed in purity
I long to feel clean

A robe of righteousness
A robe that I could not afford
My Lord you paid the sacrifice
Your perfect sacrifice
Has covered up my shame

And so I thank You Jesus
For the sweet forgiveness of the Cross
It's a mystery
To amaze even angels
That when Father looks into my heart

He sees me now as whiter than snow.

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David's Lament - You may already know the story. King David, Israel's most illustrious ruler, the man after God's own heart, became the seducer, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer—utterly pitiless and unmoved by his monstrous misdeeds. Israel's ruler was now ruled by sin.

A year had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband. David deteriorated physically and emotionally. His gnawing conscience kept him restless and melancholy. At night he tossed and turned.

When David was brought face to face with his corruption, his defenses crumbled. He cried, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2Samuel 12:13). And Nathan the prophet replied, "The Lord also has put away your sin." Despite the devastating consequences of David's sin, he was assured of God's forgiveness.

After realizing the extent of his sin and its consequences, David penned Psalm 51, a song of repentance and pleading for God's forgiveness. "I acknowledge my transgressions... Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps 51:3,7).

Are you suffering the consequences of sin? Admit your wrongs and ask God to cleanse your heart. He will show mercy and restore your joy if you turn to Him. — by David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our sinfulness can sap our joy
And make us feel far from the Lord;
Confession and repentance, though,
Provide the way to be restored.
—Sper

Repentance means hating sin enough to turn from it.

Psalm 51:8 Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice (Make: Ps 13:5 30:11 119:81,82 126:5,6 Mt 5:4)(bones: Ps 6:2,3 38:3 Job 5:17,18 Isa 57:15-18 Ho 6:1,2 Lk 4:18 Ac 2:37-41 16:29-34)

Kidner notes that Ps 51:8 "with its echo of verse 1, completes the first part of the psalm, in which the emphasis has been mostly on guilt and its cleansing. Now the centre of gravity will move to salvation.

Make me to hear ([08085](#)) (**shama'** used >1000x in OT) conveys the basic idea of perceiving a message or a sound.

David's plea clearly indicates that unless God does a work of grace in our heart we cannot hear true **joy** and **gladness**. The result of full forgiveness by God is joy and gladness which takes the place of the fear and guilt (and the sense of estrangement from God) caused by unconfessed sin. As an aside while you cannot lose your salvation, you can sure lose your joy which serves. If you've lost your joy, consider the possibility of some unconfessed sin. Remember joy is supernatural fruit borne by the Spirit, so if the Spirit is not grieved or quenched, you should be experiencing joy. If not a good prayer to pray is...

Search (imperative as are all verbs in red) me, O God, and **know** my heart; **try** me and **know** my anxious thoughts; and **see** if there be any hurtful way in me, and **lead** me in the everlasting way. (Ps 139:23, 24-[note](#))

Comment: If your ears are not hearing **joy and gladness**, the problem may not be *around* you but *within* you. Your heart may need to be cleansed and tuned once again to the music of God and the harmony of heaven, so that everything you hear reminds you of the Lord.

NET note on joy and gladness...

Heb "cause me to hear happiness and joy." The language is metonymic: the effect of forgiveness (joy) has been substituted for its cause. The psalmist probably alludes here to an assuring word from God announcing that his sins are forgiven (a so-called oracle of forgiveness). The imperfect verbal form is used here to express the psalmist's wish or request. The synonyms "happiness" and "joy" are joined together as a hendiadys to emphasize the degree of joy he anticipates.

Joy ([08342](#)) (**sason**) almost universally it speaks of human happiness and abounding delight. The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sason** with the Greek word **agalliasis** (see study of **agalliao**) which describes great exultation or extreme joy (He 1:9-note).

Sason - 22x - Esther 8:16f; Ps 45:7; 51:8, 12; 105:43; 119:111; Isa 12:3; 22:13; 35:10; 51:3, 11; 61:3; Jer 7:34; 15:16; 16:9; 25:10; 31:13; 33:9, 11; Joel 1:12; Zech 8:19. **NAS** = gaiety(1), gladness(3), joy(15), joyously(1), rejoicing(2).

Gladness ([08057](#)) (**simchah**) is from a root **s-m-h** and denotes being glad or joyful with the whole disposition as indicated by its association with the heart (Ex 4:14; Ps 19:8; 104:15; 105:3), with the soul (Ps 86:4), with the lighting up of the eyes (Pr 15:30). It should not surprise us to discover that the Lord and his salvation is cited most frequently as the reason for joy (2Chr 20:27; Ps 5:11; 9:2; 16:9; 32:11; 40:16 63:11 64:10 ; 86:4; 90:15; 92:4) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **sason** with the Greek word **euphrosune** (from **eu** = well + **phren** = mind) which means joy or gladness.

Simchah - 87x - Gen 31:27; Num 10:10; Deut 28:47; Jdg 16:23; 1 Sam 18:6; 2 Sam 6:12; 1 Kgs 1:40; 1 Chr 12:40; 15:16, 25; 29:17, 22; 2Chr 20:27; 23:18; 29:30; 30:21, 23, 26; Ezra 3:12f; 6:22; Neh 8:12, 17; 12:27, 43f; Esther 8:16f; 9:17ff, 22; Job 20:5; Ps 4:7; 16:11; 21:6; 30:11; 43:4; 45:15; 51:8; 68:3; 97:11; 100:2; 106:5; 137:3, 6; Pr 10:28; 12:20; 14:10, 13; 15:21, 23; 21:15, 17; Eccl 2:1f, 10, 26; 5:20; 7:4; 8:15; 9:7; Song 3:11; Isa 9:3; 16:10; 22:13; 24:11; 29:19; 30:29; 35:10; 51:3, 11; 55:12; 61:7; 66:5; Jer 7:34; 15:16; 16:9; 25:10; 31:7; 33:11; 48:33; Ezek 36:5; Joel 1:16; Jonah 4:6; Zeph 3:17; Zech 8:19. **NAS** = delight(1), exceeding joy(1), extremely*(1), festival(1), gladness(34), happiness(1), joy(38), mirth(1), pleasure(6), rejoice(1), rejoiced(1), rejoicing(6).

Broken ([01794](#)) (**dakah**) means to crush, break in pieces, smash or crush down into pieces; to hammer or beat out, such as metal into thin pieces. **Dakah** is used figuratively in this passage to describe David as crushed, beaten down, bruised emotionally and spiritually as is proper in one who is weighed down by sin or in one who senses his guilt and recognizes that his sin is clearly against a holy and loving God. This same verb describes a **broken... heart** in Ps 51:17.

MY BROKEN LEFT HIP MY BROKEN HEART

As I was writing these notes God literally broke my left hip and almost immediately I recognized that what He wanted to do (was doing) was to break my heart. "Little sins" had begun to creep into my life so that I had slowly drifted from the intimate fellowship I once experienced with God. At age 65, He was saying to me in essence "I love you so much, that I am going to give you physical brokenness, that it might bring about spiritual brokenness." Twenty five years earlier He had given me severe arthritis in the same left hip in order to cause me to bow my knee to Him as my Lord and Savior. And now as I entered the last leg of my race, He struck a deeply painful blow to that same left hip, because He wanted to sanctify me. He does not want me to continue to "toy" with "little sins" but to confess them and to walk before Him in holiness, with a heart that is wholly His (cp 2Chr 16:9). This is June, 2011 and I am hearing His voice clearly now, but my greatest fear is that as I recuperate (which will take 90 more days at least to heal the left femoral head) and become physically stronger, I might begin to forget His kindness that has led me to this point of repentance (Ro 2:4-note), and that I might drift into complacency in my daily walk with Him. I pray not. I covet your prayers along that same line. Thank you.

Let the bones which You have broken rejoice- The New English Bible gives us a sense of what David is saying = 'let the bones dance which thou hast broken.'

Rejoice ([01523](#)) (**gil**) is an interesting Hebrew verb for the basic idea is to spin or circle around (under influence of any violent emotion) , from which such ideas as "to circle in joy" are readily derived. It pictures vigorous, enthusiastic expressions of joy.

The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates **gil** with the Greek verb **agalliao [word study]**, (**agalliao** is from **agan** = much + **hallomai** = jump; gush, leap, spring up), means literally to "jump much", "leap for joy", skip and jump with happy excitement and so to be exceedingly joyful, overjoyed or exuberantly happy. The idea is this person shows their excessive, ecstatic joy by leaping and skipping. It describes jubilant exultation, a quality of joy that remains unhindered and unchanged by what happens. In the NT, **agalliao** describes an exceeding joy (independent of circumstances that might otherwise not be associated with joy) which is initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit. **Agalliao** appears to be used always with the connotation of a religious joy, a joy that springs from the contemplation of God or God's salvation. **Agalliao** includes not just the experiencing of a state of great joy and gladness, but often is accompanied by audible, verbal expression and appropriate visible body movement (i.e., "jump for joy") Another verb meaning to **rejoice** (**chairo**) is more expressive of the inward feeling of joy.

Matthew Henry comments that this "Great rejoicing contains more than an inward placid serenity of mind or sensation of comfort. It will show itself in the countenance and conduct, but especially in praise and gratitude.

Barclay writes that **agalliao** - is the joy which leaps for joy. As it has been put, it is the joy of the climber who has reached the summit, and who leaps for joy that the mountain path is conquered. (Barclay, W: [The New Daily Study Bible Westminster John Knox Press](#))

What would bring joy and gladness? Clearly in context it would be God's forgiveness, which is worth "jumping for joy!"

Wiersbe...David's ears were open to the music of heaven--but not in this psalm. David heard sorrow and sadness. The choir was off-key. Everything he heard was wrong. We, too, have days like that. When we are not right on the inside, nothing is going to be right on the outside.

Charles Horne comments...Next to the blessing of forgiveness, is to be desired that joy and comfort in the conscience, which forgiveness only can inspire: the effect of this, in repairing the vigour of the spirit, decayed through sorrow and anguish, is compared to setting broken bones, and restoring them again to perfect strength. At the resurrection of the body, this petition will be granted in a literal sense, when the " bones" that are mouldered into dust, shall " rejoice and flourish as an herb." —Isa. lxvi. 14 ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

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Repenting And Rejoicing - A Christian woman asked another believer how he was doing. With a broad smile he replied, "Repenting and rejoicing, sister!"

I believe this man was walking in a spirit of repentance—daily confessing and turning from sins and rejoicing in God's forgiveness.

Because honest repentance involves sorrow, we may forget that repenting leads to rejoicing. When we first repent and become new believers, we experience great joy. But if we then choose to live with unconfessed sin, our joy is lost.

David believed his joy could be restored. After pouring out his prayer of repentance to God, he made this humble plea: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (Psalm 51:12). As David turned back to the Lord, his sense of purpose returned: "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You" (Ps 51:13). Through his faith in a forgiving and merciful God, David began rejoicing again in his salvation (Ps 51:14, 15).

Do you sometimes lose the joy of your salvation because you fail to deal with your sins? If you'll confess them, God will forgive you (1Jn 1:9). He'll restore your joy and help you overcome sins that trouble you. That's what it means to be a "repenting and rejoicing" Christian. — by Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When we confess our sins to God,
We're washed as white as snow,
And He keeps on forgiving us
Each time to Him we go.
—Sper

**Conviction makes us sad—
confession makes us glad.**

Psalm 51: 9 **Hide** Your face from my sins **And blot out** all my iniquities: (**Hide:** Isa 38:17 Jer 16:17 Mic 7:18,19)(**blot:** Ps 51:1 Col 2:14)

Hide Your face from my sins - Note David does not want God to hide his face from him but from his sins. In Psalm 27 David wrote...

When Thou didst say, "**Seek My face,**" my heart said to Thee, "**Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek.**" **Do not hide Thy face from me,** Do not turn Thy servant away in anger; Thou hast been my help; Do not abandon me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation! (Ps 27:8, 9)

Comment: Not only does God see us, we also see Him. That is what gives us integrity: knowing that we're walking, living, thinking and speaking before the face of God. When we fear Him, we don't have to fear anything else. And when we walk in integrity and honesty, when we flee duplicity and hypocrisy, we can face anything. David was able to face all his foes because he had integrity. He prayed, "Unite my heart to fear Your name" (Ps. 86:11). Integrity unites, so it helps us put our lives together. Today, let's walk in integrity before the

face of God. Don't be so concerned with your reputation and conduct that you fail to look after your character, because you cannot hide that from God. How is your character? Are you unified--do you have one heart and one mind to serve one Master? (Warren Wiersbe. Prayer, Praise and Promises)

The idiom "**to hide the face**" can mean "to ignore" (see Ps 10:11; Ps 13:1; Ps 51:9) or carry the stronger idea of "to reject" (Ps 27:9; Ps 30:7; Ps 88:14).

After **Cain** murdered **Abel**, Cain said...

"Behold, Thou hast driven me this day from the face of the ground; and **from Thy face I shall be hidden**, and I shall be a vagrant and a wanderer on the earth, and it will come about that whoever finds me will kill me." (Ge 4:14)

Hide (imperative) ([05641](#)) (**cathar**) means to hide with the thought of protection, to hide by covering

Blot out (imperative) ([04229](#)) (**machah**) (Also used in Ps 51:1) means to stroke or rub, erase, abolish, destroy, wipe out. (First use = Ge 6:7) The **Septuagint (Lxx)** translates machah with the verb **exaleipho (word study)** which means literally to completely wipe off as when a blackboard is erased. Some of the uses in Scripture retain the literal meaning but most uses speak of a figurative blotting out or wiping off. The idea in all the uses is to cause something to cease by obliterating or eliminating any evidence. A number of uses in both OT (Septuagint) and the NT use this verb to describe the blotting out or wiping away of sins.

David asked God to apply His divine spot remover to his sins.

Through the prophet **Isaiah** God says...

I, even I, am the one who **wipes out** your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. (Isaiah 43:25)

I have **wiped out** your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you. (Isaiah 44:22)

Comment: God is always willing and waiting to forgive sins, to purge iniquities, and to blot out transgressions. Ultimately He is waiting for us to cry out like David for forgiveness.

David Jeremiah...Why blot? Most sins were handled in the manner of transactions. If you committed some offense, you could perform some kind of sacrifice to make atonement. But there were two sins with no remedy: adultery and murder. David had committed both of these, and they were written in God's great book in red letters. There was nothing David could do, no sacrifice to make, no atonement to seek. The accusing page was beyond his reach. All he could do was fall upon the mercy of God to blot out that red ink. Wipe it away completely, Lord! No priest, of course, could do that. Only God had the solvent, then and now. (Slaying the giants in your life)

My sins... my iniquities - Again David owns his sin as we all must do. **A W Pink** reminds us that...Now it is the duty of the Christian, and part of the task which God has set him, to see to it that this sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin be not lost. He is to labor daily that his heart be duly affected by the heinousness of self-will and self-love. He is steadfastly to resist every effort of Satan to make him pity himself, think lightly of wrongdoing, or excuse himself in the same. (Practical Christianity)

Spurgeon...Hide thy face from my sins. Do not look at them; be at pains not to see them. They thrust themselves in the way; but, Lord, refuse to behold them, lest if thou consider them, thine anger burn, and I die.

Blot out all mine iniquities. He repeats the prayer of the first verse with the enlargement of it by the word "all." All repetitions are not "vain repetitions." Souls in agony have no space to find variety of language: pain has to content itself with monotones. David's face was ashamed with looking on his sin, and no diverting thoughts could remove it from his memory; but he prays the Lord to do with his sin what he himself cannot. If God hide not his face from our sin, he must hide it forever from us; and if he blot not out our sins, he must blot our names out of his book of life.

Charles Horne comments...

The soul, still restless and uneasy, reiterates her request, that God would not only cease to behold her iniquity for the present, as a man who turneth away his face from a writing, but that he would not behold it more, as a man who blotteth out what is written, so that it can never be read again. ([Psalm 51 Commentary](#))

In Thy Great Loving-Kindness, Lord

In thy great loving-kindness, Lord,

Be merciful to me;
In thy compassions great blot out
All my iniquity.

Oh, wash me thoroughly from sin;
From all my guilt me cleanse:
For my transgressions I confess;
I ever see my sins.

All my iniquities blot out,
My sin hide from thy view.
Create a clean heart, Lord, in me
A spirit right renew.

And from thy gracious presence, Lord,
Oh, cast me not away;
Thy Holy Spirit utterly
Take not from me, I pray.

The joy which thy salvation brings
Again to me restore;
With thy free Spirit, oh, do thou
Upholds me evermore.