

Psalm 32, 51, 143

“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.” Ps. 32:1

Day 1

Read Psalm 32:1-6

FYI: “*Maskil* is a transliterated Hebrew word that appears before thirteen of the [Psalms]. Most likely it is from *sakal*, a Hebrew verb meaning ‘to be prudent, circumspect, wise - to have insight;’ it has to do with intelligent knowledge gained through reason....The Thirty-second Psalm is designed to give its readers wisdom and insight when dealing with certain situations. The situation in this case is the grind that accompanies a guilt-ridden conscience. Psalm 51 should be considered along with Psalm 32. Both were written after David’s adultery with Bathsheba and his attempt to cover up his sin by arranging her husband’s death on the battlefield.”
- Charles Swindoll (108)

Sin and forgiveness

1. List the reasons David gave for “*blessedness/happiness.*” 32:1,2 (Which of the actions: “*forgiven, covered, does not count/impute*” do you find most meaningful?)

- How does Romans 4:4-8 explain the meaning of these verses?

IT’S HEBREW TO ME: “*Transgression*’... ‘to rebel, revolt.’ It describes a willful act of disobedience...*Sin*’...‘to miss the mark, to miss the way, go wrong.’ It has to do with deviating from the path which pleases God, whether wilfully or by error...*Iniquity*’...this term paints a dark picture of sin as ‘infracton, crooked behavior, perversion,’ suggesting it comes from a corrupted nature...*Deceit*’... ‘treachery, deception [and in some cases-as here], self-deception... It appears the songwriter traces the downward spiral of wrong-doing, using increasingly strong terms for sin” - Charles Swindoll (110)

2. From Psalm 130:3, what would our condition be if God kept a record of our sins or counted our sins against us?

- What is our only hope? Ps. 130:4

3. Underline the phrases that describe how this forgiveness was made possible.

- 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them... NIV
- Acts 13:38-39 “Therefore, my brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is justified from everything you could not be justified from by the law of Moses. NIV
- Ephesians 2:4-6 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions-it is by grace you have been saved. NIV
- 1 Peter 3:18 For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. NIV

4. Underline what God does with our sins.

- Psalm 103:10-12 he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. 11 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; 12 as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. NIV
- Isaiah 38:17 In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back. NIV
- Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more." NIV
- Isaiah 44:22 "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you." NIV
- John 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" NIV

5. At first, what was David unwilling to do? 32:3a (What do you think are common barriers to acknowledging sin?)

- How did it affect him? 32:3,4b (See Proverbs 28:13)

6. Besides a troubled conscience, what else disturbed David? 32:4 (See Hebrews 12:5,10)

FYI: *Selah* - "Selah (from *Sala!*, 'to lift up') appears at the end of 71 lines of psalms...It usually occurs where a significant statement has just been made. Its meaning or purpose is unknown. Various suggestions have been made:
 1. a musical or liturgical sign to the singers and/or instrument to lift up (e.g. in crescendo) the sound;
 2. the equivalent of an Amen or Hallelujah;
 3. a signal for the singing of a doxology or benediction;
 4. a mark to lift up the voice or hands in prayer;
 5. a signal to lift up the eyes to repeat the significant statement just made." - Irving Jensen (12)

7. What finally brought relief? 32:5 (List the phrases that describe what David did.)

- What was the result? 32:5c (See 1 John 1:9)

FYI: "God's forgiveness washed away not only David's sins but also silenced his tormenting guilt. The Lord penetrated into the depths of the poet's inner being to provide that magnificent relief only He can bring: PEACE...There is an unspoken principle that runs through the pages of Scripture like a scarlet thread: Secret sin cannot coexist with inner peace." - Charles Swindoll (113)

Applying the Word: What conditions are you prone to attach to God's forgiveness.

Day 2

Read Psalm 32:7-11

Trouble and deliverance

8. Because of his own experience, what did David urge others to do? 32:6a (Compare 1 Peter 5:6,7)

9. What warning do you think the phrase "*while He may be found*" gives? (Compare Luke 19:42)

- What kind of deliverance would there be? 32:6b What picture does "*a flood of great waters*" convey? (Ps. 18:16,17; 69:1,2; 144:7,8 contain the same imagery.)

10. List the phrases in 32:7 that David used to describe God's protection. How do these descriptions make you feel? (Compare David's petition in Psalm 17:7-9.)

- What protection are we given in Christ? Romans 8:31-39; Ephesians 3:20

FYI: Thou art my hiding place. "Terse, short sentences make up this verse, but they contain a world of meaning. Personal claims upon our God are the joy of spiritual life."
- Charles Spurgeon

"Verse 7 places full attention on God. He is the One who protects us, preserves us, surrounds us, and even gives us a song...A guilt-ridden conscience casts God as a cruel deity, walking around with a club, looking for sinners to smash. That's because sin distorts the truth. Look again at verse 7, David breaks out into songs of deliverance!... What a comforting picture, especially to those who have been in deep sin and seek forgiveness!"

- Charles Swindoll (115)

Instruction and trust

11. Who is speaking in 32:8? List the things He promises. What do these say about the relationship He wants to have with us?

12. What attitude does God want from us? 32:9 (See also Jeremiah 17:23; Acts 7:51)
13. What two groups are named in 32:10?. What are the results of the different paths they take? (Note the two things that God surrounds us with in vv. 7 & 10.)

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: "**Wicked** *rasha* OT:7563, wicked; ungodly; guilty. The narrow meaning of *rasha* lies in the concept of 'wrongdoing' or 'being in the wrong.' It is a legal term....
Rasha also denotes the category of people who have done wrong, are still living in sin, and are intent on continuing with wrongdoing. This is the more general meaning of the word." - Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words

14. What attitude should we have even during times of difficulty? 32:11 (Cf. Philippians 4:4)
 (Compare the beginning and ending tone of this Psalm.)

Food for Thought: "If you have been struggling with a secret sin, write a letter to yourself naming the sinful activity, describing its effect on your life, and anticipating potential consequences to the future if it continues. Then, in prayer, present it to God."
 - Charles Swindoll (114)

Applying the Word: *What has or even now keeps you from confessing your sins to God? What do you fear? What does this psalm say to you?*

Day 3

Read Psalm 51

Food for Thought: "This is a psalm that expresses the terrible reality of our human sinfulness, the marvelous reality of God's pardon, and the life of thankfulness and humble but courageous witness that the pardoned sinner should live."
 - The Africa Bible Commentary (655)

David's plea and confession

15. What does the setting, given in the title for this Psalm, say about David's state of mind? (See 2 Samuel 11 and 12 for the account of these events.)

Psalm 32, 51, 143

16. List what David asked God to do with his sins. 51:1-2 (Note the different words used for sin.)

- 51:1b (see Colossians 2:13-15)
- 51:2a
- 51:2b

FYI: "*Transgression* speaks of sin as rebellion against God; *iniquity* speaks of sin as turning from the right path, the corrupt inclination of the human heart; and the third word, *sin* has the meaning of missing what should be one's aim in life."
- The Africa Bible Commentary (655)

17. On what basis did David ask for these things? 51:1 (Compare Ephesians 2:4-6; Titus 3:4-5)

18. What is one of the problems with sin? 51:3 (Compare Isaiah 59:12)

Food for Thought: "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 forever; 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."
- Charles Spurgeon

19. At its core, what is sin about? 51:4 (See David's confession in 2 Samuel 12:9)

FYI: "There is no sin that injures only the sinner, and/or those he has wronged, for all sin is against God's holy purpose for one's life. David had certainly sinned against both Bathsheba and Uriah, but it was even a greater sin against God. This sin had "given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (II Samuel 12:14)." - Henry Morris
"Sin can be against oneself (1 Cor. 6:18) and against one's neighbor; but the flouting of God is always the length and breadth of it...Our bodies are not our own, and our neighbours are made in God's image." [Gen. 9:6]- Derek Kidner (208)

20. What is the problem with mankind? 51:5 (Cf. Ecclesiastes 7:20; Romans 5:12)

FYI: "*conceive*. There is no sin in the act of conception itself when carried out in the bond of marriage (Hebrews 13:4). This testimony refers rather to "original sin," the sin-nature inherited from Adam and Eve." - Henry Morris

- How does that compare to God's desire for us? 51:6 (See also Colossians 1:9; 2:2,3)

FYI: "*Inward parts*, a rare word in the Hebrew Bible, indicates something clouded over, difficult for anyone but God to see. The Lord's penetrating gaze searches the innermost recesses of a person's mind and heart."
- The Nelson Study Bible (930)

21. Underline what Jesus associated with truth.

- John 8:31-32 To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." NIV
- John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. NIV
- John 15:26 "When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. NIV
- John 17:17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. NIV
- John 18:37 ...for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." NIV

David's requests

22. From Psalm 51:7-10, list David's requests and the results they would bring. (Cf. Isaiah 1:18; See 1 Corinthians 6:11)

FYI: "*hyssop*. Hyssop was a small shrub used to sprinkle blood and water over the cleansed leper, symbolizing his purification and cleansing (Leviticus 14:4-7)."

- Henry Morris

"The verb *create* is the same one used in Gen. 1:1 and refers to what only God can do. David was asking that his heart be renewed, restored, and transformed. God is the only source of such a renewal." - The Nelson Study Bible (930)

23. What fear did David have? 51:11

FYI: "Before Christ, the Holy Spirit would come upon individuals for specific empowerment for service and could as easily leave, as in the case of Saul (1 Samuel 11:6; 16:14)."

- Henry Morris

24. By contrast, underline the confidence we have because of Christ.

- John 10:28-30 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. NIV
- 2 Corinthians 1:22 set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. NIV
- Romans 8:39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. NIV
- Hebrews 13:5 Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." NIV

David's prayer for service

25. What requests did David make in 51:12?

FYI: "Restore unto me. Once a believer has truly been saved, either before or after Christ, he can never become unsaved (John 10:28; Romans 8:35; etc.). However, through overt sin, a believer may lose the *joy* of his salvation."
- Henry Morris

26. What *fruit* did David want God's forgiveness and restoration in his life to produce?

- 51:13 (*Compare Peter's restoration: Luke 22:31-32*)

- 51:14b

- 51:15

Food for Thought: "This is a psalm that expresses the terrible reality of our human sinfulness, the marvelous reality of God's pardon, and the life of thankfulness and humble but courageous witness that the pardoned sinner should live."
- The Africa Bible Commentary (655)

27. What did David recognize about the kind of relationship God desired of him? 53:16,17
(Compare Isaiah 1:12-20; Philippians 3:8-9)

IT'S HEBREW TO ME: "*contrite* OT:1794 *dakah*; to collapse (phys. or mentally)" - Strong's Concordance

"God's pleasure is not in the sacrificed animal, but in the restored person. He demanded sacrifices, even from David; but His pleasure is in the person who comes obediently to Him (...Romans 12:1,2)." - The Nelson Study Bible (930)

"The deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart, is therefore the best thank offering. *J. J. Stewart Perowne*"
- Charles Spurgeon

28. What prayer did David make for the people? 15:18,19 (Compare Ephesians 2:22; 5:2)

Applying the Word: *How boldly do you pray for your needs...for forgiveness...for your service...for others? How does your approach compare to David's?*

Day 4**Read Psalm 143****David's plea for mercy**

29. From 143:1,2a, list the things that David asked God to do.

- How did he want God to answer? 143:1b
- Why didn't David ask for justice? 143:2

Digging Deeper

From Psalm 142:1,2, how did David describe his prayers?

Food for Thought: "David's prayer teaches us that we will not pray as we ought unless we recognize our weakness and need and, therefore, our total dependence on God."
- Steven Cole

David's plea for protection

30. How was David affected by the battle he was facing? 143:3,4
(See also Ps. 142:4; 1 Samuel 20:3)

Digging Deeper

David faced stress, threats, and battles throughout his life. For examples see: (from Saul) 1 Sam. 19:1-3; 23:14; 24:1,2. (from the Philistines) 1 Sam. 19:8; 2 Sam. 5:17; (from his own son Absalom) 2 Sam. 15:13-15.

FYI: David "was so discouraged and depressed that he felt he counted in the world no more than those who had died long before and were forgotten. (vs. 3)"
- The Africa Bible Commentary (741)

Therefore my spirit is overwhelmed within me; my heart is appalled within me (143:4) "Every phrase here is so heavy with distress, that no sufferer need feel unique in what he experiences. And the similarity of these terms to those that describe our Lord's emotions (*cf.* Mt. 26:37 ff.; Heb. 4:15 ff.) remind us that none need feel himself alone, or less than fully understood."
- Derek Kidner (512)

31. What was David's next response to difficulties? 143:5,6 (See also Psalm 42:6)

- In what ways do you think grateful remembering helps?

32. What do the phrases in 143:6 indicate about David?
(Compare 42:1,2)

Digging Deeper

What did Jesus promise?

John 6:35,37

John 7:37-39

Matthew 11:28

David's plea for guidance

33. List the petitions David made in 143:7-12 and the basis/reasons for those petitions.

	Petition	Basis/reason for asking
143:7a	<i>"Answer me quickly"</i>	<i>"or my spirit fails"</i>
143:7b		(Cp. 142:6)
143:8a		
143:8b		
143:9		
143:10a	Compare Philippians 2:13	
143:10b		
143:11a		
143:11b		
143:12a		
143:12b		

FYI: v. 7 "the pit: without a renewed sense of God's presence, described by the words, **your face**, David believes that he is as good as dead."

- The Nelson Study Bible (1023)

v. 10 **"Teach me to do Your will:** He does not just want to 'see' or 'know' God's will, but also to 'do' it."

- The Africa Bible Commentary (741)

v. 11 "for your name's sake: The requests of the psalmists are often tied to various character traits of God. When we pray 'in Jesus' name,' we pray both in the authority of His name and in the character it represents.

v. 12 *I am your servant.* Since there is no greater Lord, there is no greater position than to be aligned with His purposes."

- Nelson Study Bible (1023,1024)

"He appeals to the attributes of God (**His name**). We don't pray on the basis of our merits or good deeds." - Steven Cole

34. As you look through the above chart, is there anything that surprises you about David's requests or reasons for asking? How would you describe his confidence in the Lord?

35. David began his prayer on the basis of God's "faithfulness and righteousness!" (vs.1). What other attributes of God did David appeal to in his prayer?

Digging Deeper

What does Hebrews 11:6 say about the belief we should have when we pray?

36. Underline the words that describe what God was to the Psalmist.

- Ps 16:2 I said to the LORD, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing." NIV
- Ps 31:3 Since you are my rock and my fortress, NIV
- Ps 31:4 You will pull me out of the net which they have secretly laid for me, For You are my strength. NASU
- Ps 31:14 But as for me, I trust in You, O LORD, I say, "You are my God." NASU
- Ps 40:17 You are my help and my deliverer; NIV
- Ps 44:4 You are my King, O God; NASU
- Ps 63:7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. NIV
- Ps 71:5 For You are my hope; O Lord GOD, You are my confidence from my youth. NASU
- Ps 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I wait for Your word. NASU
- Ps 142:5 I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living. NASU

37. Underline what we are we encouraged to do with our problems.

- Psalm 27:14 Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD. NIV
- Psalm 37:5 Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: NIV
- Psalm 55:22 Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. NIV
- Psalm 56:3 When I am afraid, I will trust in you. NIV
- Philippians 4:6-7 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. NIV
- 1 Peter 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. NIV

Applying the Word: What have you learned from David's example about praying in the midst of a difficult time?