

Lesson 5

David-He repented and was Forgiven

“Save me, O God, from bloodguilt!” King David prayed, “Deliver me from the guilt of murder!”

A king was confessing to murder? Here was David crying forth his guilt for all to hear. He put it into writing, even; his guilt is forever on record.

Do not men hide their evil deeds, and flee from the accusation of murder? Do they not make excuses, insisting they are not guilty? Yes, it is usual for them to do so. Surely it would be usual for a king to cover his weaknesses in order to remain in control of the people. But David was very different from most kings. He was a man “after God’s own heart,” that is, a man with the sort of character which pleases God. He knew that sin cannot escape the eye of God and that sin brings grief to his Lord.

David’s character was pleasing to God in these ways:

He was bold in his deeds, but humble in his attitudes. He recognized and admitted his sin.

He not only confessed his guilt but was truly and deeply repentant.

He not only asked God to forgive him, but he believed that God heard his prayers.

He thanked and praised God, Lord of the Universe and Knower of all things.

He remained in close communion with his Lord.

Now let's learn from David how we, too, can follow these steps, and be pleasing to God. Then we can say as David did, "My soul finds rest in God alone—my salvation comes from Him."

In this lesson you will . . .

Sin Against God Brings Separation

Repentance To God Brings Reconciliation

Communion With God Brings Joy

This lesson will help you . . .

Understand how man is responsible for sin.

Define the terms confession and repentance.

Explain how to receive God's forgiveness.

Experience communion with God.

SIN AGAINST GOD BRINGS SEPARATION

In order to understand the experiences of David and the wonderful psalms he wrote, we need to think back to the days when he was a shepherd boy. Since he was the youngest of eight sons, his father gave him the most ordinary tasks. When his brothers joined the army, he stayed with the sheep. He did errands for his father and brothers. We know by the accounts that he was faithful, obedient, efficient in his work. In addition, he had a

special talent in music and poetry. He played the harp and wrote songs. Yet to his family he was an ordinary boy. His position was that of the youngest brother in a common country home.

Therefore, it came as a surprise to his family and neighbors when God chose David to lead His people, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. "David is the one I want," God said to His servant, who had been sent to anoint the new King. "Anoint him with oil as a symbol that he is now chosen by God to be the king."

We can understand why the people were surprised. How could a young shepherd be King? How could he rule over the people whose leaders of the past were great men such as Abraham, Joseph, and Moses? We have seen in our previous lessons that God has been careful to guide and protect His people. He has chosen great men to be His prophets and has given them special tasks. Through them He has revealed Himself, His love, His power, His wisdom.

We have found that God chose Noah to save life on earth during the Flood. God led Abraham out of a land of idolatry and promised to make of his seed a great people. God saved this people from famine by sending Joseph to rule in Egypt. Then God called Moses to lead the people out of slavery and to receive His own written revelation.

Now we come to a time when God's people had indeed become great. God had blessed the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and sons of Jacob had

become the heads of powerful tribes. In the name of God they were fighting holy wars against surrounding nations which served idols and mocked God. Once again there was need for a strong and wise leader. That is why the people were surprised when God chose a shepherd boy to be their king. But soon they understood the reason. They found that David was a person who trusted and loved God, and God filled him with strength and wisdom. Yes, soon this shepherd boy became known as the most courageous and successful soldier in all the land.

Even though he had been anointed king, David was to remain with his family until God prepared the way for him to take his throne. He continued to tend the sheep and do errands for his father. One day his father sent him with food for his brothers who were in the army. When he came to the place of battle he saw that there was no fighting. Instead, all the soldiers were standing, facing each other across a small valley. At the front of the enemy line there stood a giant soldier, mocking and shouting challenges.

“Come fight with me. Send a man to fight with me,” he demanded. He was about three meters tall, dressed in heavy bronze armor, holding a huge spear. He was insulting in his manner, speaking in defiance of God. All the soldiers were terrified.

“Who is this ungodly fellow, that he should defy the armies of the Lord?” asked David. “I will go and fight him.”

Everyone thought David was too young and too small to fight the giant. Still he insisted that God would give him strength. “God helped me to kill a lion and a bear when they attacked the sheep, and I know He will give me power to defeat this giant.” So he went out to meet the giant, taking in his hand only his shepherd’s sling and some stones.

“You come against me with sword and spear,” David called out as he advanced, “But I come against you in the name of the Lord, whom you have defied. This is God’s battle!” With this he let fly the stone from his sling and the giant fell to the ground. The enemy soldiers ran away in fright, for they knew that David fought in the power of the one true God.

FOR YOU TO DO

1 David was chosen to be king because he had the qualities which God required of those whom he called for special tasks. We found that each of the prophets had these qualities. All of us need these qualities in order to be close to God and know His will for our lives. Circle the letters of those sentences which show qualities shared by David and the other prophets.

- a) They were obedient.
- b) They believed and trusted God.
- c) They wrote poetry.
- d) They put their faith into action.
- e) They were humble and yet brave.

After David killed the giant he was appointed to a high position in the army. He led God's people in victory over the idolatrous nations which tried to conquer them. God prepared the way so that he was able to take his place as king. For forty years he reigned by God's power. He destroyed idols and organized the worship of the one true God. He established the city of Jerusalem as the Holy City, where the name of God was honored. Faithful people came in throngs to worship there. They performed the pilgrimage to the Holy City.

In all his victories David continually gave God the credit for success. He praised and thanked God in the strong and graceful words which have come to us in the Book of the Psalms of David.

"All the nations surrounded me," David declared in one of his psalms, "but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. They surrounded me on every side, but in the name of the Lord I cut them off. I was pushed back and about to fall, but the Lord helped me. The Lord is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation."

"I will exalt you, my Lord," said David in his words of poetry, "I will praise your name for ever. Every day I will praise you. How good it is to sing praises to our Lord. Give thanks to God, sing praise to Him, tell of all of His wonderful acts."

Few human beings have ever expressed love and devotion to God so fully and so beautifully in words as David did. He had a close relationship with God and a deep understanding of the nature of

God. When we feel a need for more personal knowledge of God, we can learn much from the psalms of David. When our hearts yearn to draw near to God and know His truth, and understand His revelation, we should read and ponder the precious words of David.

FOR YOU TO DO

2 Memorize these words from a psalm of David. You may wish to repeat them in a personal way as a prayer of your own to God.

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Teach me your way, O Lord,

and I will walk in your truth. I will praise you, my Lord,

with all my heart.

It may be hard for us to believe that this same King David caused an innocent man to be killed, and feeling like a murderer, cried, in dire anguish, "Save me, O God, from bloodguilt." What happened to spoil the perfection of this great man?

The answer is, of course, that David was not really perfect. There is only One who is perfect; only One who commits no wrong. Beside God, there is no other! David was strong, talented, intelligent, brave, religious, faithful in worship, and submissive to the will of God. But he was a human being and had in him the tendency to sin, just as all human beings do. He was tempted by Satan as we all are, and he yielded to that temptation.

On the roof of the king's palace there was a place for walking in the cool of the evening, to breathe the fresh air and to view the city. One evening as David walked there he saw a woman bathing. She was beautiful. Desire for her grew in his mind. "Who is she?" he asked.

"She is Bathsheba, the wife of the soldier, Uriah," answered the servant.

Now, tempted by Satan, David's longing for the woman grew. He decided to have Uriah killed. Then he could take Bathsheba to be his own wife. Uriah is a soldier, thought David, he can be killed in the fighting.

Any soldier might be killed. But David was not content to take a chance that Uriah might die in a battle. He decided to make sure. He told the captain of the army to put Uriah in the most dangerous place, in the front line of attack. The plan worked. Uriah was killed in the battle.

For a time David tried to pretend that nothing wrong had been done. "Don't let this upset you," he said to the soldier who told him of Uriah's death. "The sword devours one as well as another. Say this to encourage the captain."

But it was David who was upset. He was trying to encourage himself. He knew he had done wrong and that God was displeased. He had lived very near to God, but now his sin made him feel far away. He learned at this point a most serious truth: Sin separates man from God. We cannot be close to God and feel His friendship if we allow evil

temptations to influence our thoughts and actions and cause us to sin. Sin contaminates our lives, and God, who is holy and pure, cannot remain with that which is unholy. David could not sleep. He said that he felt God's hand upon him, day and night, . "and my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer."

Many of us know what it is like to feel that God is far away from us. Sometimes, like David, we try to tell ourselves that nothing is wrong. But in our hearts we feel a longing, an emptiness, a separation. This is God's way of making us aware of the reality of sin, and of our need to seek His holiness.

FOR YOU TO DO

3 Circle the letters of the TRUE statements. Write a correction for the FALSE statement

a Religious acts protected David from temptation.

b David had been strong, but sin made him feel weak.

c David's experience shows us that we can know when God is displeased with us.

d David felt separated from God because of sin.

REPENTANCE TO GOD BRINGS RECONCILIATION

A person feels unhappy and fearful when he is separated from God. Of course God is unhappy, also. Remember, He created man to be His friend.

Remember how in the time of Noah God felt displeasure and grief when He looked upon the sinful condition of the earth. The sin of David, too, brought grief to God. God loved David and would not forsake him. It is not the intention of God simply to punish people for sin. His plan is to cleanse them from sin so that God and man may walk closely together and fulfil the purpose of creation.

For this reason God did not strike out in physical punishment upon David. Rather, He spoke to his heart in a way that would bring true repentance. He arranged that David would hear a story which would remind him of the sin in his life.

The story concerned a rich man, who owned a large number of sheep and cattle, and a poor man who had nothing except one little ewe lamb. The poor man loved the lamb and raised it up like a child in his house.

One day a traveler came to visit the rich man. Naturally it was the duty of the rich man to prepare a meal for his guest. But he did not wish to use one of his sheep. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it to serve for his guest's dinner.

“What a terrible thing,” said David, “the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.”

Then the word of God came to David, “You are the man! I anointed you king and delivered you

from your enemies. You could have had many different women. But you struck down Uriah with the sword in battle and took his wife to be your own.”

“I have sinned,” David admitted in great sorrow and humility, “I have sinned against God.”

Since he was the great king, David could have reasoned that everything in the kingdom rightfully belonged to him, including beautiful Bathsheba. Yet David knew in his heart that it is God who is truly the Great King, and it is to Him that all things belong.

David realized that not only had he done a sinful act against a person much weaker and poorer than he, but his greatest sin was against his Lord. He no longer tried to pretend that there was no sin. He knew the condition of his own heart. He accepted full responsibility. He realized that he was worthy to die, just as he had said of the rich man. The sword of his conscience haunted his soul day and night. He cried out in anguish, “I have sinned, and I deserve to die.”

David knew that there was nothing he could do in his own power to cleanse the sin from his life. The thought of separation from God was terrible to him. “I acknowledge my transgressions,” he said, in complete confession of guilt. “Wash me... cleanse me... create in me a new heart,” he prayed, asking God to forgive him.

David thought about offering the Lord a sacrifice of burnt offerings. It was his custom to

offer the ritual sacrifices as instructed in the writings of Moses. However, he knew that the offering up of an animal sacrifice itself did not point to man's goodness in performing a religious duty. The sacrifice pointed not to man's goodness, but to God's mercy. We find in the thoughts of David another reference of the wonderful mystery which we have mentioned before. The ritual sacrifice was a beautiful picture of One that would come to dwell among men to reveal the deep compassion of God to mankind. We shall learn more about this in another lesson.

But now let's hear how David expressed these thoughts of his heart. "I would bring sacrifices of burnt offerings," he declared, "but this is not what God desires of me. God prefers the sacrifice of a heart that is sincerely sorry for sin. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."

David was never reluctant to speak directly to the Lord. He said, "Behold, you desire truth in the inner parts. Do not cast me from your presence. Restore to me the joy of your salvation."

All of these words come from psalms of David, which were in reality prayers to God. David spoke in an honest and intimate way and had the ability, as the Lord inspired him, to record his thoughts in very plain words. We can understand these psalms and apply them in our own lives. As we study them we find a set of principles concerning our relationships with God.

We see clearly from these words of David that he felt separated from God as a result of his sin. The first principle we learn from this experience is that when he felt that separation it troubled him greatly. He desired very much to be close to God. Then, he confessed his sin and accepted full responsibility for it. He repented. That is, he felt truly sorry for his sin, and he told God that he was sorry. Some people say, "I'm sorry," in a casual way. They may pull their ears and droop their eyes. But David had agony in his heart when he cried, "I confess my iniquity. I am troubled by my sin.,,

Next, David realized that he could not cleanse himself. There were no good deeds which could cleanse him. No special religious practice would make him pure in the sight of God.

Finally, he simply trusted in the mercy of God and asked Him for forgiveness. He believed that only in this way could he enjoy the presence of God and the assurance of salvation. He prayed these words, "Have mercy according to your loving kindness."

The experiences of David are extremely important to us because we have not only the facts of the events which we know to be true historically, but David left for us his own interpretation of those facts. He shared with us the feelings of his heart concerning them. We do not have to guess or wonder. We know how he felt about sin and separation from God. We know the meaning of guilt, responsibility for sin, confession, repentance, and the merciful forgiveness of God. We know

because God has preserved for us these marvelous psalms of David.

FOR YOU TO DO

4 Following are words which David wrote after his experience in the matter of Uriah. Read them and think of their meaning. Memorize them. You may wish to use them as a prayer of your own.

Have mercy on me, O God

according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion

wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.

Create in me a pure heart, O God

Do not cast me from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation.

COMMUNION WITH GOD BRINGS JOY

God's message of forgiveness came to David in clear words: *God has taken away your sin. You will not die.* David was grateful and gave thanks to God for His mercy and compassion. He said, "I will present my thank offerings to you, for you have delivered my soul from death."

But this was not the end of David's experience. The fact that God is compassionate and forgiving does not mean that sin will go unpunished. Sin always brings judgment. The baby born to David as a result of his sinful union with Bathsheba was

taken in death. David grieved and was very sorry. Still, he understood God's ways and accepted the judgment with humility. After that God sent him another son, Solomon, who became one of the wisest persons in all history. So through David's life God speaks to us, showing us again how terrible is sin, how sure is judgment, and how great is the mercy of God.

David was restored to full communion with God. He continued to write the matchless psalms which give us some of the most important messages God has ever sent to mankind. We will examine briefly here one more of those important messages. It is that message which tells us of the nature and value of prayer. It tells us that communion with God brings joy to our hearts. It tells us that God wants us, we need Him, and there is great hope for those who call upon Him. There is great hope now and in the future for all those who wish to serve God according to His will.

The writings of David show us that the heart of man can truly commune with the heart of God through prayer. God desires to speak to His people, and He desires that people speak to Him. The communion between God and man is similar to the fellowship between a loving father and son. They enjoy being together. Like a concerned father, God is always ready to listen to us. He wants us to come to Him with our problems and thoughts. He has created us for the purpose of having fellowship with Him and giving Him our praise and love.

Prayer is something like a pilgrimage. Man desires to know God more intimately. He walks deeper and deeper into a spiritual relationship with His creator. David expressed these ideas often in his psalms. He said, for example, "As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?" David had assurance that God would respond to him and to all the faithful: "They shall be abundantly satisfied. You will make them drink of the river of your pleasure; for with you is the fountain of life."

The Psalms encourage us to pray for our personal needs, as David did, for forgiveness, and for a deeper relationship. "Trust in Him at all times. Pour out your heart before Him."

Prayer is an expression of true reliance upon God. It is not simply a form or ceremony. It is a real act which shows that we need God and trust Him to guide us into truth and joy. It is the pilgrimage which leads to the fountain of life.

"You have made known to me the path of life," sang David, "You will fill me with joy in your presence."

Perhaps you, too, are ready to confess that you have sinned against God. Because you know that nothing can escape the eye of God, you are struggling with inner guilt and agony. You are searching in the night for peace but have not found it. You have observed all the religious law, but still there is no rest. You struggle to sleep in the tears of

your remorse. You are broken in your heart, and the heart of God has been broken for you. .

You need not suffer. You can come to know that God is your Heavenly Father. In love He desires to forgive you and fill your heart with joy. Confess to Him that sin you have committed. Ask forgiveness. Believe that He will forgive you and He will make provision for the justice of sin in His own way. Thank God, and continue to trust Him to guide you into further truth. He will reveal to you the beautiful mystery of His revelation of divine love to all mankind.

Now, in your own way, recite to God these words from the Psalms (Jabbur) and allow them to become your own personal prayer to God, the Beneficent, the Compassionate, the Lord of the Universe:

“Save me, O God . . . I sink in deep mire . . . I am weary of my crying.”

“The troubles of my heart are enlarged . . . look upon my pain . . . forgive all my sins.

“In my distress, I called upon the Lord He heard my voice.”

“Thou wilt show me the path of life.”

“Bless the Lord, O my soul, who forgives . . . who heals . . . who redeems . . . who crowns

CHECK YOUR ANSWERS

4 Repeat the words of David you have memorized.

- 1 a) They were obedient.
b) They believed and trusted God.
d) They put their faith in action.
e) They were humble and yet brave.

3 a Your answers. Some suggestions might be: All human beings are tempted at some time. Religious acts do not keep us from being tempted by Satan. The experience of David shows us that temptation comes to good people, but it can be resisted by the help of God.

- b True.
c True.
d True.

2 Repeat the words of David you have memorized.

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LESSON TEST

As you prepare to take the lesson test, please locate the *STUDENT REPORT ANSWER SHEET* in the back of your study guide for Lesson 5. Be sure to record your answers for multiple choice and true-false items in the spaces provided for them.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

If your answer to each of the following questions is

YES, blacken space A.

NO, blacken space B.

1 Have you carefully read Lesson 5?

2 Have you completed all the *For You to Do* sections in this lesson?

3 Have you checked the answers you gave in the *For You to Do* sections with those at the end of the lesson?

4 Have you reviewed the lesson objectives to see if you are able to do what they suggest?

5 Have you reviewed the material before taking this lesson test?

MULTIPLE CHOICE

6 The qualities the prophets had which enabled them to experience communion with God were

- a) boldness, bravery, royal status, and strength.
- b) piety, tenderness, and devotion to ritual.
- c) obedience, trust, humility, and faith.

7 David had in him the tendency to sin. When he was tempted, he failed and became responsible for sin because he

- a) had not performed enough righteous acts.
- b) yielded to temptation.
- c) didn't understand the nature of sin.

8 When a person, even a prophet, sins against God he finds that

- a) sin separates him from God.
- b) there is no way to restore friendship.
- c) fellowship with God is more difficult.

9 Feeling greatly troubled by his separation from God, David wanted to be restored; thus, he

- a) offered sacrifice and resumed his praying.
- b) attempted to hide his sins from his people.
- c) confessed his sin and accepted full responsibility for it.

10 The relationship God desires with man is like that of a

- a) king with his subject.
- b) teacher with a student
- c) loving father with his son.

TRUE OR FALSE

11 Although David's conscience bothered him greatly following his sin, he was grateful that his wrongdoing hadn't affected his relationship with God.

12 When the word of the Lord came to David in a story, he confessed his guilt, repented, and asked God for cleansing.

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13 David knew that the humiliation he suffered because his sins were known was all the sorrow God desired to see.

14 It is possible to be genuinely sorry for sins, have the assurance that God has forgiven them, and yet not escape the consequences of sin: judgment.

FILL IN

15 Man has the tendency to sin; therefore, when he _____ to temptation, he becomes _____ for sin.

16 Knowing the condition of his heart, David accepted full _____ for his sins and acknowledged that he was worthy of _____

17 When a person repents of his sins, he purposes to _____ sin in the future and to serve God with true devotion.

18 In order to obtain forgiveness, David had to trust in the _____ of God.

19 Through _____ the heart of man communes with the heart of God.

20 David's experience shows us that God will forgive our sins if we _____ them, repent of them, and ask for His forgiveness.