



## Week 27: Psalms 51-60

### Study Guide for the week of June 29 - July 5

#### Personal reflection / journaling exercise

This week, spend time with Ps 51, a psalm of confession.

Circle or highlight the various words used to depict sin in verses 1-5. How many words are used? Now circle or highlight in a different color the words and phrases for God's actions in verses 1-19. Is God more creative in his actions than humans are in their sin? Did you ever consider sin to be dull and boring?

How can we experience repentant and contrite hearts? How often does your own self-justification get in the way of repentance? CS Lewis wrote, "The Puritans felt that 'the true Christian's nostril is to be continually attentive to the inner cesspool.'" A contrite heart leaves no room for excuses. Spend time in confessing your sins, as boring as they are.

In our human situation, sin is pervasive (verse 5). But God's fundamental character is to restore, rehabilitate, and recreate sinners (verses 10, 12). Read 2 Cor 5:17-20. Spend time thanking God for making you a new creation.

#### Discussion starters

1. You will have noticed many of the psalms this week refer to incidents in David's life. Read the stories that inspired these psalms:

Ps 51: 2 Sam 11-12:24

Ps 52: 1 Sam 21:1-8, 22:6-19

Ps 54: 1 Sam 23:19

Ps 56: 1 Sam 21:11-15

Ps 57: 1 Sam 22-24

Ps 59: 1 Sam 19:11-17

Ps 60: 2 Sam 8:3-8, 10:6-18, 8:13

The David stories show us David's life from the outside while the psalms show us David's life from the inside. How congruent are your inner and outer stories?

2. Ps 51 belongs to a group of psalms called the penitential psalms. Are these psalms prayed by people who have it all together or who live lives of imperfection? Do you have perfectionist expectations? Perfectionist pretensions? Perfectionist illusions? How can this psalm help guard against perfectionist tendencies?
3. Do people sometimes mistake accomplishments for goodness? Share some examples (skillful liars, etc). Can you share other examples of boasting about sin? What is the warning about this found in Ps 52? Where should our trust be placed?
4. What is the psalmist lamenting in Ps 56:12-14? How does it feel to be betrayed by a friend? What should you do if you find yourself in this situation (Ps 55:22)? What kind of friend are you?

#### Bible verse to memorize: Ps 51:10