

A Heart After God

Psalms 51:1-19 David is described as a man after God's own heart. He was not perfect by any means, but there was something in him that attracted God. It was his heart. David had a contrite and humble heart. The Bible tells us that God will not despise a contrite heart. David had just committed adultery when he wrote this psalm, and this psalm instructs us how to confess our sins. First John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (KJV). We have another scripture in James 5:16: "Confess your faults [shortcomings and sins] one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (KJV).

Since the Protestant Reformation, there has almost been a neglect of the power of confession. The Catholic Church requires that confession be made to a priest for one's sins. Just because we consider ourselves mature Christians does not negate our need for a daily time of confession. Remember the form of prayer suggested previously called ACTS. Our private and group prayer times would be much more effective if we followed this little outline:

Adore the Lord; spend time in telling the Lord how much you love Him.

Confess your sins; ask the Holy Spirit if there is anything you need to confess.

Thank the Lord and enter into praise.

Supplicate and make your requests known unto God with thanksgiving.

David knew the power of confession, and he gives us an outline that includes the major ingredients of confession in Psalm 51:

1. Have mercy on me—appeal to God’s mercy (v. 1)
2. Blot out my transgressions—acknowledge the loving kindness of the Lord (v. 1)
3. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity—iniquity is “the want to or desire to sin” (v. 2)
4. Cleanse me from my sin—we are cleansed by the blood of Jesus (v. 2)
5. I acknowledge my transgression—transgression is how we have hurt others (v. 3)
6. Against You only have I sinned—when we sin we grieve God (v. 4)
7. Behold, You desire truth—we need to be honest with God concerning our sin (v. 6)
8. Make me to know wisdom—wisdom is what keeps us from sinning (v. 6)
9. Purge me with hyssop—hyssop was used to apply the blood to the door post (v. 7)
10. Make me to hear joy and gladness—restore the joy of my salvation (v. 8)
11. Create within me a clean heart and renew a right spirit—restore my spirit (v. 10)
12. Open my lips to praise You and tell of Your wonders—restore my witness (v. 15)

We see in this psalm that the sacrifice God is pleased with is a broken, contrite heart. Such a heart always attracts God, and He always is willing to cleanse and restore us if we will only confess our sins to Him. Spend a little time in confession this morning.

**READ: Numbers 10:1-11:23; Mark 14:1-21; Psalm 51:1-19;
Proverbs 10:31-32**