



# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Through the Bible*

*June 2 - 8*

*Psalm 51*

## *Things to Know*

### **See Other Sermons Here**

[Click Here to Watch](#)

### **VBS MAX Simpsonville Volunteers Needed**

June 23 -26, 2025 - [Click Here to Volunteer!](#)

### **VBS MAX Haywood Volunteers Needed**

June 23 -26, 2025 - [Click Here to Volunteer!](#)

### **Gospel Connections and Conversations**

[Click Here to report your Gospel Connections & Conversations](#)

---

## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder. Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

---

# Sermon Recap

## 1. Mercy, Not Merit, Is Our Only Hope

David didn't bargain with God—he begged for mercy. The good news is that God doesn't meet us with condemnation but with compassion. Our confidence in repentance isn't in how sorry we are—it's in how steadfast His love is.

## 2. God Doesn't Want Your Performance—He Wants Your Heart

You can't impress God with effort, but you can move His heart with honesty. A broken spirit and a contrite heart are not disqualifiers—they're invitations. God draws near to the humble.

## Forgiven People Become Joyful Witnesses

David doesn't just want to be clean—he wants to sing again. True repentance doesn't lead to shame; it leads to mission. When God restores your soul, He also renews your voice.

---

# Discussion Questions

## 1. Psalm 51:1 – “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love...”

Question: Why does David appeal to God's “steadfast love” instead of trying to justify himself? What does this show us about the foundation of true repentance?

## 2. Psalm 51:4 – “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...”

Question: How can David say he sinned “only” against God when his actions hurt Bathsheba, Uriah, and others? What does this teach us about the vertical nature of all sin?

## 3. Psalm 51:7 – “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Question: What is David asking for here, and why does he use imagery of cleansing? How does this verse connect to the cleansing we receive in Christ?

## 4. Psalm 51:12 – “Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.”

Question: Have you ever experienced a loss of joy in your relationship with

God? What does this verse teach us about how repentance leads to restored joy?

5. Psalm 51:17 – “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.”

Question: Why does God value a “broken and contrite heart” more than religious rituals? What does this look like practically in our lives today

---

## Read

**Read Psalm 51 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
- 

## Scripture

### Psalm 51

#### Create in Me a Clean Heart, O God

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

**1** Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
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, have I sinned  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you may be justified in your words  
and blameless in your judgment.

---

- 5** Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,  
and in sin did my mother conceive me.
- 6** Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,  
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.
- 7** Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
- 8** Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.
- 9** Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.
- 10** Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.
- 11** Cast me not away from your presence,  
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.
- 12** Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and uphold me with a willing spirit.
- 13** Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.
- 14** Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.
- 15** O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.
- 16** For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;  
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.
- 17** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.
- 18** Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;  
build up the walls of Jerusalem;
- 19** then will you delight in right sacrifices,  
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;  
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

[The Holy Bible, English Standard Version](#). ESV® Text Edition: 2016. Copyright © 2001  
by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

Psalm 51

# Living on Mission In Community

Psalm 51 reminds us that no sin is too great, no failure too final, and no heart too far gone for God to redeem. David was not a small sinner—he was an adulterer, a deceiver, and a murderer. Yet he ran to God, not away from Him. He didn't try to clean himself up first or offer empty sacrifices. He brought God what He truly desired: a broken and contrite heart. And God received him. The gospel assures us that through Christ, who became sin for us, we can be made clean, restored, and renewed. Like David, we don't need to hide our guilt—we need to bring it to the cross.

So where in your life is God inviting you to stop covering your sin and start confessing it to Him?

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

---

## Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
    - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
  2. How did you feed others?
    - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
  3. How did you feed your flesh?
    - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*
-

# *Leader Resources*

## **Small Group Curriculum: Psalm 51 – A Prayer of Repentance**

### **1. Session Overview**

Theme: God’s mercy is greater than our sin. True repentance brings restoration and joy.

Main Idea: Psalm 51 is David’s heartfelt confession following his sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11–12). Rather than hiding, David runs to God with a broken heart. In this psalm, we find a model for honest repentance, dependence on God’s cleansing, and hope for renewal.

### **2. Opening (Prayer & Icebreaker)**

Icebreaker:

Break into groups of 2–3 and answer:

“What’s one area where you’re asking God for a fresh start right now?”

Prayer Prompt:

Begin the group with a minute of silence, then pray:

“God, show us our hearts tonight—and remind us of your mercy.”

### **3. Scripture Reading**

Read Psalm 51:1–19 aloud.

Ask: What word or phrase stands out to you, and why?

## **4. Teaching Points with Commentary and Quotes**

### **1. God's Mercy Is the Foundation of Repentance**

Text: Psalm 51:1–2

“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.”

David appeals not to God's fairness but to God's *hesed*—His loyal, covenant-keeping love. Repentance is rooted not in fear of punishment but in confidence in God's mercy.

Commentary:

David knows that if God dealt with him according to justice alone, he would be undone. His only hope is the compassionate heart of God.

“The only way to deal with guilt is to bring it into the light of God's mercy.” —Tim Keller

“Grace is when God gives us what we don't deserve. Mercy is when God doesn't give us what we do deserve.” —Adrian Rogers

### **2. Sin Is First and Foremost Against God**

Text: Psalm 51:3–6

“Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...”

This is not to say others weren't hurt (Bathsheba, Uriah, the nation). But David recognizes that all sin is rebellion against the holiness of God.

Commentary:

We tend to view sin horizontally—how it affects people—but David sees vertically. Until we feel the weight of sin before a holy God, we won't grasp the beauty of His mercy.

“When God is not taken seriously, sin is not taken seriously.” — Derek Kidner

“Repentance must begin with the recognition that our greatest offense is not against others, but against our Creator.” —Charles Spurgeon

### **3. Only God Can Cleanse and Renew the Heart**

Text: Psalm 51:7–12

“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me...”

The Hebrew for “create” (bara) is the same word used in Genesis 1—it denotes something only God can do. David doesn't ask for improvement—he pleads for spiritual rebirth.

Commentary:

This is the heart of repentance—not self-help but divine intervention. Only God can scrub the soul clean and breathe new life into dead places.

“You cannot repent too soon, because you do not know how



soon it may be too late.” —Thomas Fuller

“The gospel is not a self-improvement plan. It is a resurrection.” —J.D. Greear

“Purge me with hyssop” (v. 7) refers to the ceremonial cleansing of a leper. David sees himself as spiritually unclean and outside the camp, needing the cleansing that only God can bring.

#### **4. Forgiveness Leads to Worship and Witness**

Text: Psalm 51:13–17

“Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you...”

Restoration doesn’t end with us—it overflows to others. God doesn’t just clean David up; He commissions him. Grace turns wreckage into witness.

Commentary:

Guilt makes us silent; grace opens our mouths. Once forgiven, David can sing again—and he can help others repent.

“God uses sinners, not because of their sin, but in spite of it. And often, He uses the forgiven most powerfully.” —Matt Chandler

“A broken heart is the best preacher.” —Charles Spurgeon

“Open my lips” (v. 15) is the prayer of a man who once kept silent and suffered for it (see Psalm 32:3). Now, forgiven, he longs to praise and proclaim.

## **5. God Desires the Heart, Not Empty Ritual**

Text: Psalm 51:16–19

“For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering...”

God isn’t after performance—He’s after the posture of the heart. Sacrifices only please God when they flow from a broken and repentant spirit.

Commentary:

True worship is not going through the motions; it’s laying your heart bare. God doesn’t despise weakness—He draws near to it.

“There is no safe hiding place from God—only safe surrender to God.” —Dane Ortlund

“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” That’s a promise. God will always meet the humble with mercy.

## **5. Discussion Questions**

1. (vv. 1–2) Why does David appeal to God’s love and mercy first? What does this teach us about the heart of repentance?
2. (v. 4) How do we reconcile David saying “against you only have I sinned” when others were clearly harmed?

3. (vv. 10–12) What do you think it means to ask God to “create a clean heart”? Have you ever felt spiritually renewed in this way?
4. (v. 13) How might God want to use your story of brokenness to help others?
5. (vv. 16–17) What does true repentance look like in real life—not just words, but in the posture of our hearts?

## 6. Application Points

1. Confess Honestly.  
David didn’t excuse, spin, or delay his confession. Neither should we.  
➡ Ask God: “What am I hiding or justifying that needs to be surrendered?”
2. Receive Fully.  
Don’t just confess—receive cleansing. Repentance is not groveling; it’s returning to joy.  
➡ Meditate this week on Psalm 51:12: “Restore to me the joy of your salvation.”
3. Witness Boldly.  
Your story of failure + God’s mercy can bring hope to someone else.  
➡ Who needs to hear how God has met you in your mess?

## 7. Closing Reflection and Prayer

Read aloud Psalm 51:10–12.

Silent prayer:

“Lord, here is my broken heart. Cleanse me. Renew me. Restore joy to me.”

Close with a few group members praying out loud, thanking God for His mercy and asking Him to continue His renewing work.

## 8. Memory Verse

Psalm 51:10 – “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

## 9. Leader's Notes

- Be vulnerable first. Set the tone by sharing personally. Let the group see your need for mercy.
- Don't rush. This session may stir deep conviction or tears. That's okay. Let the Holy Spirit work.
- Offer grace. If someone confesses a burden, affirm them: “God will not despise a broken heart.”
- Use Psalm 32 as a follow-up resource—David's testimony after forgiveness.

