



Show Me Your Ways Through Grace (Psalm 51)

Grace - one of the fundamental building blocks of Christianity. It is a gift given to us even though we don't deserve to have it. Our salvation is not based upon how good we are, nor is it prohibited by how sinful we have been. Well, thank goodness for that! We have all sinned, we are all less than perfect, but with the gift of grace, God places us all on level ground.

Psalm 51 presents to us one of the best examples of true repentance in all of Scripture. In it, David expresses his deep need for God's mercy and forgiveness. Can't we all identify with that need? The words of the Psalm lead us to the place of hope within confession: God can and will forgive us of ANY sin, great or small. No sin is too great to be forgiven.

In verse ten, David asks God to "create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." Here David illustrates a fundamental key to repentance. Sin is not first a matter of behavior; it is first a matter of the heart. Although our situation and relationships in our lives that lead us to sin often are in need of a transformation, what really needs to be transformed is our hearts. We need hearts that are clean and focused on the glory of God. We need grace to shape and transform what we love, what we crave, and what we serve. Although we will succumb to our sinful ways again and again, God never turns His back to us. Again and again God will wrap His loving arms around us and bestow this gift to us, transforming our hearts to be pure for His glory. The gift of grace should encourage us and lead us to follow Christ and His ways with all that we have and all that we are.

Grace is a gift we have been given with no strings attached. We have done nothing to deserve such a wondrous and loving gift. We should respond to that gift by allowing grace to become the dominant theme in our lives. This gift of grace should lead us to strive to show grace to others just as God has been gracious to us. As we see in verse 13, David responds to God's grace by saying, "Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you." The more we experience God's forgiveness, the more we will desire to share it with others. Thanks be to God!

Discussion Questions and Reflection Activities

Prayer Psalm

Have copies of Psalm 51 and pens or pencils available for everyone in your group. Tell the group that you will be reading the psalm to them. Have them listen closely to the words and imagine what David must have been experiencing as he wrote this prayer.

Read the psalm slowly, giving the group time to hear with new ears what the psalm is saying. When you are done reading, discuss the following questions:

1. How do you think David felt as he wrote Psalm 51?
2. What do you think stirred within him to inspire these words?
3. What does this psalm tell us that David believed about God?

Now give each member a copy of Psalm 51 along with a pen or a pencil. Read the psalm again slowly and have the group follow along, circling any words or phrases that stand out to them.

After you have finished reading, have the participants make a list of the words and phrases they selected. Using those words, have them write a prayer of confession, creating their own psalm.

Using the word **GRACE**, have the group write an acrostic poem that helps define the word in the context of our lesson for today.

Prayer:

Close with prayer by allowing some of the participants to read their psalms. Close the readings/prayer by singing "Amazing Grace" together.