

Let us look at Step 7, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 7 – Petition – We humbly asked Him to cleanse us from all sin.

Tonight, in Step 7 we will be working through the exercise of humbly asking for God's help, in an ongoing basis, to cleanse us from our sin. We need to remember that forgiveness and cleansing from sin is something that God does in our lives each time we come to Him.

In the previous step we spent time looking at the need to serve others because we love God. That really gets us moving and working in the right direction. However, many of us recognize very quickly that in trying to do those things, we start exposing more sin in our own lives. This must be remedied. In honesty you must admit that your sin is too much for you to handle, and you need God's help to get beyond your selfishness.

A good example for us of a person committing and addressing their sin in the Old Testament is David (2 Samuel 11 & 12). When Israel's great king David was confronted about his sins of adultery and murder he said,

Psalm 51:2, *"Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin!"*

The interesting thing about David's words are how significant they are. In his prayer for God to *wash* him, David appears to be acknowledging that God's discipline may be hard and he may struggle with the consequences. The word *wash* that David used was when they would take a spotted garment, wet it, and then beat it against a large stone. They did not use any cleaning agents or soap, just force and extreme pressure. When we come to God and ask Him to clean up our lives, we must have a realistic picture of what that looks like. Because He loves us, He is willing to do whatever is necessary to curb or correct our bad behavior. The more sin saturated our lives are, the more it may hurt to correct.

Beyond his request to "wash me", David's plea was to be cleansed. This longing of his heart was to be totally free of sin...is that the longing of your heart? Here again, David probably did not understand the extent of His sinfulness, but his desire was that He would be pure for God. So, though a short prayer, Psalm 51:2 is a strong prayer acknowledging the pain that comes in correction, with the ultimate result being washed clean.

1 John 1:7-9, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. But if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Earlier in the chapter John establishes the basis for this discussion by telling us that God is light. In Him there is not darkness of immorality, evil, or sin. He is infinitely pure – something we have trouble imaging in our finite minds. His light stands in direct contrast to the darkness of sin in our lives or in this world where we live. However, to walk in His light provides opportunity for fellowship with Him because of the justification we have received in the blood shed by Jesus Christ on the cross. Ongoing fellowship with God can only be maintained on the basis of righteousness – with regular cleansing of our sins.

2 Corinthians 4:4, “in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.”

This verse clearly speaks to the world that we are living in and how someone living for God is effectively “swimming upstream”, against every aspect of the world. The “god of this world” is speaking about Satan specifically and generically about the current world mind-set expressed by the ideals, opinions, goals, hopes, and views that he fosters. This mind-set encompasses the philosophies, perspectives, and world-view of the majority of people. From Scripture, we also know that Satan blinds men to God’s truth through the world system he has created. Without Godly influence, man left to himself will follow that system, which panders to the depravity of unbelievers and deepens their moral darkness.

For us to be restored to cleanliness, it is important that we *confess* our sins. That is, we must acknowledge the truth about them. Some have said, “to confess is to agree with God about our sin.” We cannot maintain a right relationship with our God if we are trying to make excuses, self-justify, or rationalize our sin. That will not work. Righteousness only comes when we are honest about our departure from God’s perfect plan, ways, instruction and turn from our sin.

Consider and Confess:

1. What is your reaction when sin is exposed in your life?
2. How has God exposed sin in your life? (e.g. Bible study, confrontation by a friend, a guilty feeling, etc.)
3. What sins are you not confessing now? Why not? (Be honest)
4. What sins have you confessed?
5. David knew the clean-up process would be tough (the son Bathsheba bore him tragically died), but he desired to be clean. How hard has it been for God to clean you to this point?
6. Is the fear of God’s discipline what keeps you from confessing? What means of discipline do you fear the most?
7. Sometimes, God simply forgives us without any discipline. On what basis do you deserve forgiveness?

Looking Forward:

Our sin seldom affects only us. We can hurt those that are around us and we often sin against them by our selfish choices. In the next lesson we will be challenging you to think about those whom you have wronged so that we can restore damaged relationships.

They may not ever become the perfect relationships they could have been, but they can become treasures in our lives. These restored relationships can give us a reason to move ahead in our relationship with Christ, working on our sanctification, and rewarding us for our efforts in confession.

Nathan Rebukes David

12 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said,

“There were two men in a city, the one wealthy and the other poor.

² The wealthy man had a great many flocks and herds.

³ But the poor man had nothing at all except one little ewe lamb

Which he bought and nurtured;

And it grew up together with him and his children.

It would eat scraps from him and drink from his cup and lie in his lap,

And was like a daughter to him.

⁴ Now a visitor came to the wealthy man,

And he could not bring himself to take *any animal* from his own flock or his own herd,

To prepare for the traveler who had come to him;

So he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

⁵ Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the LORD lives, the man who has done this certainly deserves to die! ⁶ So he must make restitution for the lamb four times over, since he did this thing and had no compassion.”

⁷ Nathan then said to David, “You yourself are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel says: ‘It is I who anointed you as king over Israel, and it is I who rescued you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ I also gave you your master’s house and *put* your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, by doing evil in His sight? You have struck and killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, you have taken his wife as your wife, and you have slaughtered him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. ¹⁰ Now then, the sword shall never leave your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ ¹¹ This is what the LORD says: ‘Behold, I am going to raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give *them* to your companion, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² Indeed, you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and in open daylight.’” ¹³ Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has allowed your sin to pass; you shall not die. ¹⁴ However, since by this deed you have shown utter disrespect for the LORD, the child himself who is born to you shall certainly die.” ¹⁵ Then Nathan went to his house.

Psalm 51

51 Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithfulness;

According to the greatness of Your compassion, wipe out my wrongdoings.

² Wash me thoroughly from my guilt And cleanse me from my sin.

³ For I know my wrongdoings, And my sin is constantly before me.

⁴ Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight,
So that You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in guilt, And in sin my mother conceived me.

⁶ Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in secret You will make wisdom known to me.

⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; Cleanse me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness, Let the bones You have broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide Your face from my sins And wipe out all my guilty deeds.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

¹¹ Do not cast me away from Your presence, And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

¹² Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And sustain me with a willing spirit.

¹³ *Then* I will teach wrongdoers Your ways, And sinners will be converted to You.

¹⁴ Save me from the guilt of bloodshed, God, the God of my salvation;

Then my tongue will joyfully sing of Your righteousness.

¹⁵ Lord, open my lips, So that my mouth may declare Your praise.

¹⁶ For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offering.

¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, God, You will not despise.

¹⁸ By Your favor do good to Zion; Build the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then You will delight in righteous sacrifices, In burnt offering and whole burnt offering;

Then bulls will be offered on Your altar.