

# Memory Verse

## Psalm 51:2-4

**Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. 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.**

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# Selections from the Psalms

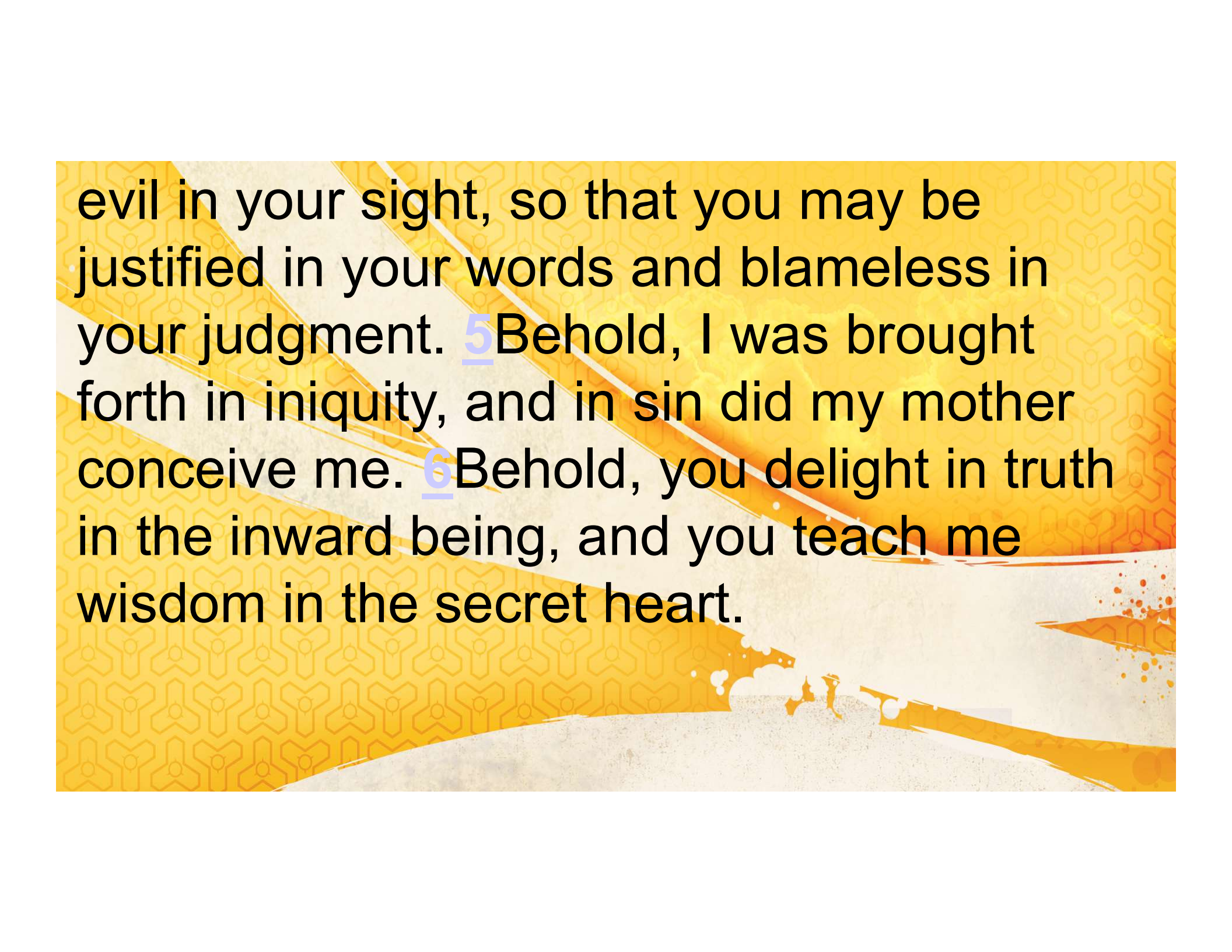
## Part 10

### Psalm 51

### What is Repentance?

## Psalm 51:1-6

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.

*Repentance* is a word used in churches, Bible studies and in teaching and preaching. The word means *a change of mind and direction*. The image is you walk one direction, but "*repent*" and walk in the opposite direction. For the Jewish mind, *repentance is a change of mind, leading to a change of life.*

## **A. *Psalm 51:1* – Have Mercy on Me**

David *pleads with God for His mercy*, and according to His steadfast, abundant love and mercy. David calls out to God, because he *understood God's character* as holy, loving, merciful and gracious. David remembered *God's covenants with Israel* and the *covenant He made with David* in *chapter 7*, which occurred before his sin.

## **A. *Psalm 51:1* – Have Mercy on Me**

This last part can be one of two things or both. **One**, he is *asking God to wipe away the record of his rebellion, or comparing God's forgiveness to an object that is wiped clean.* This would be like *washing a dirty dish*, and the food stains on the dish represent our sins and transgressions.

## A. *Psalm 51:1* – Have Mercy on Me

There is a **difference** between *grace* and *mercy*.

**Grace** is *being given goodness we don't deserve*.

**Mercy** is *not getting what we rightly deserve*.

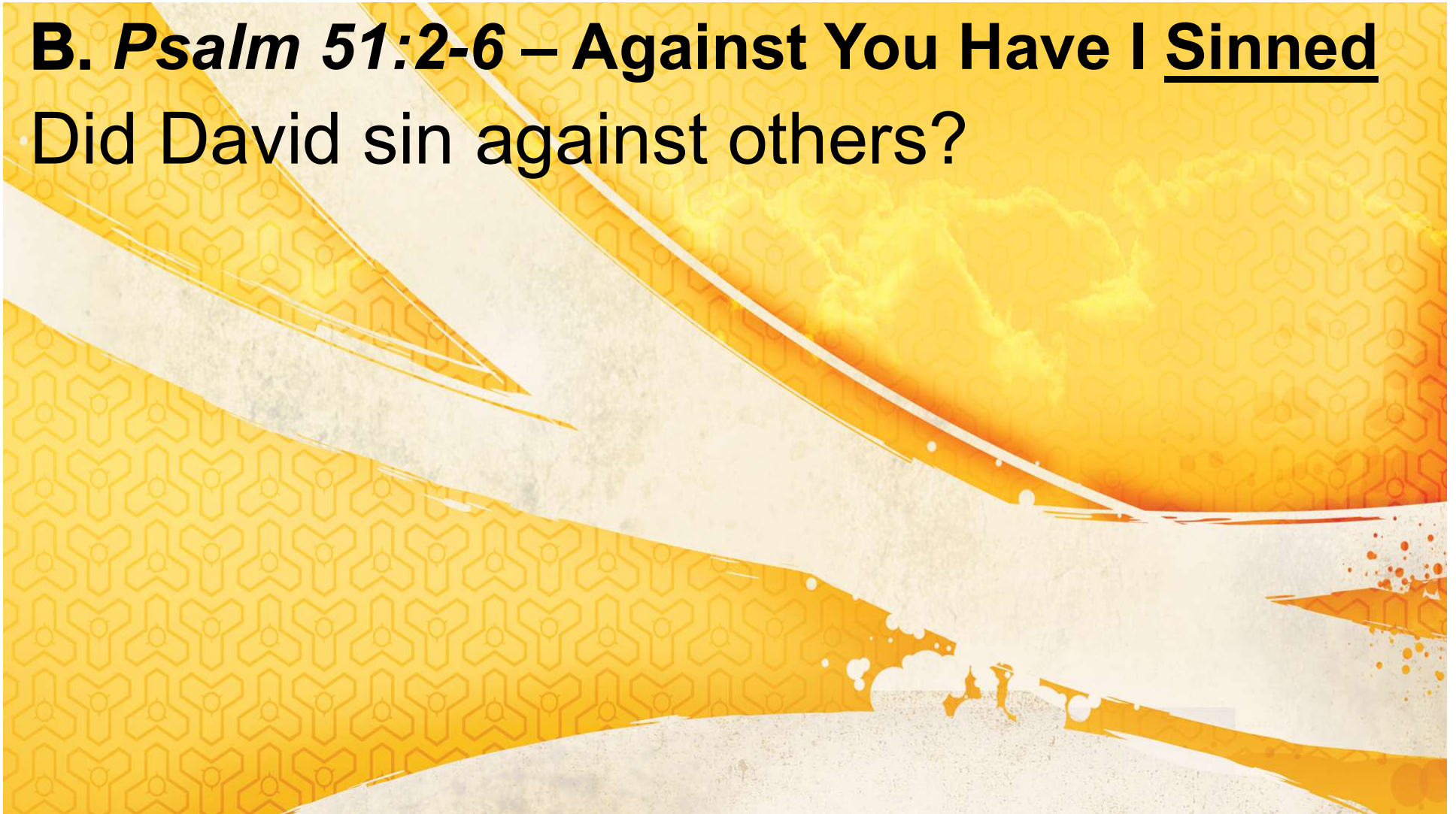


## **A. *Psalm 51:1* – Have Mercy on Me**

To *repent*, one needs to understand something about God's character. If *there is no knowledge* of God, how and why would *someone call out to Him in repentance and faith*? If one does not know God is a forgiving God, how and why would they call to Him for salvation? *To be saved, you must trust in Jesus by faith.*

**B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

Did David sin against others?



**B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

Did David sin against others? Yes!

He took advantage of his position as king and *sinned against Bathsheba*.

He *sinned against Uriah, Joab and the army* to cover his sin, to the point of murder.

## **B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

All sin is against God! He uses cleansing imagery in *verse 2*. *Washing* and *cleansing* are parallel statements based on the *sacrificial system*. *Verse 3* is key when it comes to repentance. He says *he is aware of his sinful actions; rebellious deeds* and they are *before him or in front of him* continually.

## **B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

*David acknowledges his sin is against God!*

David recognizes and confesses to God that what he did was like spitting in God's face. The last part of *verse 4* refers to Nathan's confrontation with David.

Through Nathan, God spoke to David and *condemned him*. David *acknowledges God was just and in the right to do that*.

## **B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

Verse 5 is often misunderstood. Look at the context and remember this is poetic literature. David is so overwhelmed by his sin that he, in poetic form, looks back on his life and says he is so sinful, *it goes back to his conception*. He is so broken by his sin that he says *sin marks his entire life!*

## **B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

The *NET Bible* : "The psalmist's point is that he has been a sinner from the very moment his personal existence began. By going back beyond the time of birth to the moment of conception, **the psalmist makes his point more emphatically in the second line than in the first.**"

## **B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

In *verse 6*, David talks about what God wants: *truth in our innermost parts or being* in our life and character. God wanted him, and us to be individuals of character with wisdom or moral insight in our life.

What is character?



**B. *Psalm 51:2-6* – Against You Have I Sinned**

Character is our internal mental and moral characteristics that make us who we are as a person or group.

As God makes us more like Jesus, He is *developing character within us*. When God changes us, this is what He is working on.

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

With understanding who God is, his sin and acknowledging it, David *asks God to cleanse him*. David asks God to cleanse him with hyssop. What is this?



## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

In *Exodus 12:22*, hyssop was used to put blood on the doorposts and lintels for Passover. In *Leviticus 14:49-53* and *Numbers 19:18-19* hyssop was used for purification rituals. David, *using this imagery*, asks God to purify him, cleanse him, forgive him and using parallel form, *asks God to make him whiter than snow.*

## **C. Psalm 51:7-12 – Cleanse Me O God**

Verse 8 talks about *joy and the restoration of the bones God broke*. In his rebellion, *David did not have God's joy*.

The focus is *rejoicing* and David could be referring to *literal physical problems* because of his sin. Or he uses this metaphor and *parallels the first part of the verse*.

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

Continuing with the *cleansing theme*, verses 9-10 mimic David's desire to be clean in God's eyes, with images of *God hiding His face*, and *blotting out his sin*.

**C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

*Galatians 5:16-17* - "But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are **against** the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are **against** the flesh, for these are **opposed to each other**, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

*Isaiah 59:1-2* - "Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have made a **separation** between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."



## C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God

It is 2 *parallel statements*, said in a different way - *David doesn't want God to reject him*. The words about taking His Spirit from David, *can confuse us*. In the OT, *God's Spirit* was at work in creation and in those who followed the Lord. Yet, His work was different and *His presence for empowerment was only temporary*.

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

David is probably thinking of Saul. Saul was the king before David and *fell into gross sin, rebellion, occultism and disobedience*. In *1 Samuel 16:14*, the text says God withdrew the Spirit from Saul. David did not want that to happen to him. *Saul didn't repent. David did.*

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

After Pentecost, the *Holy Spirit* ***permanently*** indwells the believer at the moment of salvation. The Holy Spirit resides within us and when we sin, we *grieve Him*. He *convicts us* and we **accept** that *conviction and repent*, or **reject** it and go our way, *grieving Him more*.

## **C. *Psalm 51:7-12* – Cleanse Me O God**

*Verse 12 is similar to verse 8. David asks God to restore the joy of salvation he had. He wanted to live a life sustained by God and one of loving obedience. David asks God to help him to be willing to follow Him. That is a great prayer.*

## **D. *Psalm 51:13-19* – I Will Exalt You**

Note *verse 13*. After being restored and having the joy of salvation, David said he would *tell sinners or transgressors God's ways*. This may be a **vow** David makes in *response to God's cleansing*, to tell the rebellious sinner of God's restoration in His mercy, with a *desire for them to repent*, at the end of the verse.

## D. *Psalm 51:13-19* – I Will Exalt You

Verses 16-17 talk about *sacrifices*. David referenced this with hyssop. There were a *variety of sacrifices in the Mosaic Law* prescribed for sins and cleansing. However, there were **no sacrifices for willful sin**, which is *the case here with David*. According to the Law, *David should have been judged and*

## D. *Psalm 51:13-19* – I Will Exalt You

He knew, according to the Law, there was **no sacrifice** he *could give to become cleansed and forgiven*, so he called out to God's great abundant, covenant keeping mercy in **repentance**, asking for forgiveness, describing what God wants internally.

## **D. *Psalm 51:13-19* – I Will Exalt You**

The last 2 *verses* seem a bit out of place. The Jews may have *taken David's words* about his sin, applied it to themselves and their sins that led to the 70 year exile in Babylon. These verses *refer to the national restoration of Zion*, and after the walls are fortified in Jerusalem, they will *be able to offer sacrifices again*.



# Prayer

**“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.” Philippians 4:6**

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