



## LESSON 5 // PUTTING A BROKEN LIFE BACK TOGETHER

All of us have broken places that need to be restored. In this lesson, we'll learn from David, the great king of Israel, how God puts broken people back together through a process of restoration. Psalm 51 is David's reflection of his personal experience of this process after his awful moral failure.

***Psalm 51:1-13 (NIV)** Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup> Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. <sup>3</sup> For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. <sup>4</sup> Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. <sup>5</sup> Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. <sup>6</sup> Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. <sup>7</sup> Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. <sup>8</sup> Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. <sup>9</sup> Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. <sup>10</sup> Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. <sup>11</sup> Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. <sup>12</sup> Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. <sup>13</sup> Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.*

Based on these verses, what do you need to do to allow God to restore broken places in your life?

### 1. Acknowledge your mistakes and defeats.

When things go wrong and bad choices are made, the human tendency is to rationalize, justify or blame. Very seldom do people step up to the plate and say "I made a mistake! I failed! I missed it!" Restoration, in its fullest sense, will never happen until we're willing to do this.

This was David's first step: he acknowledged clearly to God, "I know my transgressions and my sin is always before me" (Psalm 51:3). It was only at the point when David owned his mistakes that God's restoration could begin.

### 2. Remember the greatness of God's mercy and grace.

When haunted by sin or failure, it's important to remember the greatness of God's mercy and grace. This is what David did as he cried out, "Have mercy on me, O God" (Psalm 51:1).

In His mercy, God withholds from us the punishment we rightfully deserve. In His grace, the Lord gives us blessings we rightfully don't deserve. David deserved to die because of his sin, and he understood this. But he also knew he could appeal to God's mercy and grace. Only He can extend the mercy and grace we need to help us recover from the mess we've made.

***Psalm 103:3-4 (GW)** He is the one who forgives all your sins, the one who heals all your diseases, <sup>4</sup> the one who rescues your life from the pit, the one who crowns you with mercy and compassion.*

### 3. Let go of your pride.

Pride is about self-promotion and self-protection. It always wants us to present ourselves in the best possible light—no flaws, no mess ups, no weaknesses. One of the main reasons pride is dangerous is because it keeps us from God’s grace:

*James 4:6 (NIV) But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."*

The pathway of mercy and grace is open to us through humility. Humility means that we acknowledge our sins, failures, weaknesses and mistakes. It’s the opposite of covering up.

Many people never experience restoration because they can’t make it past this point of pride. Our culture promotes pride—to never to admit mistakes or weakness, to blame other people or things for our bad choices. Instead, David took responsibility before God for his sins. This was critical to his healing and it’s critical to our restoration as well (Proverbs 28:13; James 4:10).

#### 4. Ask God to restore you.

David was willing to ask God for restoration. He knew that only God could restore him, and he dared to ask the Lord for this. Note several things that are evident in his request (Psalm 51:10-13): David *understood* what he had lost, *believed* in God’s power to restore, *asked* for restoration and *promised* to help others when God restored him.

The Bible is clear that asking is appropriate. God restores us in answer to our prayers!

*Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV) Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup>For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.*

#### 5. Don’t just get better to feel better; choose to be better.

Restoration is of no value unless it changes the way we live and what we do with our lives moving forward. David learned some valuable lessons from his failures—that God really wants a “broken and repentant heart” (Psalm 51:17) and a desire to help others turn to Him.

Restoration is not just about “feeling better” or “getting better.” It’s all about “being better”—the kind of person that is broken and humble before God and willing to make a difference with His mercy and grace in the lives of others.

#### Discussion questions

1. Read James 4:6 and 10. Why is letting go of your pride so important in the process of restoration? What challenges keep you from this and how can you overcome them?
2. Read Psalm 51:17. What does it mean to have a “broken and repentant (or contrite) heart”? How can this change the way you live?
3. In what ways can you demonstrate God’s mercy and grace to others based on the mercy and grace He has shown to you?