

Bible Studies for Life: May 14

Recovering from a Fall into Temptation • Psalm 32:1-7

By Laura Lee Leathers



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“Then David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD” (2 Sam. 12:13). His confession brought the following response from Nathan, “The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.”

When looking at God’s forgiveness and restoration, the example of David’s meeting with Nathan is at the top of the list for an illustration. Later, David would pen Psalm 51, an honest prayer of repentance. Then after experiencing God’s forgiveness, David wrote Psalm 32 about the joy of knowing that God had forgiven him.

Both are known as penitential Psalms. Also, Psalms chapters six, 38, 102, 130, and 143 are parts of this group. Most of them were written by David – a man after God’s own heart.

“Those who follow Christ know the joy of forgiveness that

Christ gives us when we place our faith in Him. But what happens when we sin after we have come to Him for salvation? Christ is in His children, but we still can falter and sin.

In those moments, His forgiveness still applies! Our tendency is often to berate or punish ourselves for our failure, but we need only confess our sin, turn from it, and return to walking with Christ" (LifeWay).

Joy and blessing flow from God's forgiveness (Psalm 32:1-2 NKJV). This Psalm is a Maskil, meaning "I will instruct," and the reader can glean wisdom.

"It is a Psalm of Penitence, but it is also the song of a ransomed soul rejoicing in the wonders of the grace of God. Sin is dealt with; sorry is comforted; ignorance is instructed" (G. Campbell Morgan).

In the first two verses of Psalm 32, there are three terms referencing sin. "The idea behind transgression is crossing a line, defying authority. The idea behind sin is falling short of or missing the mark. The idea behind iniquity is of crookedness and distortion" (Enduring Word).

Then notice the three terms to describe what God does to put away sin: forgiven, covered, and does not impute, meaning He doesn't count the sin against a person (Psalm 103:12).

Because of God's grace, we are doubly blessed (also see Romans 4).

There is no forgiveness without confession of sin (Psalm 32:3-5). We must not forget the warning of 1 John 1:8, "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." The Holy Spirit brings conviction, and confession is a certain proof of salvation.

Sin, when unconfessed and hidden, can bring physical and spiritual agony. David describes this as "my bones grew old."

He felt God's hand heavy upon him. He lost his strength as if he was dealing with the Mississippi August heat.

Then comes the decision in verse five. David acknowledges his sin; he no longer hides it and he knew that when he came honestly before God, He would forgive him.

Now go back to 1 John and note the promise, "He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness" (v.9).

Living in a restored relationship with God helps us avoid future sin and temptation (Psalm 32:6-7). Go back to 2 Samuel, and review Nathan's conversation with David. There would be consequences to David's sins that would bring heartbreak. They could not be erased but the relationship David had with God would be restored, and it would bring joy.

There is no better place to be than under God's pardon, surrounded by His protection and depending upon His guidance. Here is where we find our hiding place. There is safety found in His deliverance.

We are sinners saved by grace – justification. We grow in grace and sanctification when we confess our sin and live daily by God's precepts.

Spurgeon wrote, "Observe that the same man who in the fourth verse was oppressed by the presence of God, here finds a shelter in him. See what honest confession and full forgiveness will do!

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance (Romans 2:4)?"

While studying for this lesson, I found a video of John MacArthur reading Psalm 32 from the Legacy Bible. Listen intently, spend time in prayer confessing your sin, and bask

in God's forgiveness.

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