

When You Feel Like a Failure . . . Because You Are

P s a l m 5 1 *

Few psalms have found as much use as this one among the saints of all ages, a fact which bears witness to the spiritual needs of God's people. Psalm 51 stands as a paradigm of prayers for forgiveness of sins. Its superscription ascribes the occasion to David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11), an incident in which David broke several of the Ten Commandments. Believers have been comforted by the fact that since David's sins were forgiven theirs can be too.

The message of this psalm is that the vilest offender among God's people can appeal to God for forgiveness, for moral restoration, and for the resumption of a joyful life of fellowship and service, if he comes with a broken spirit and bases his appeal on God's compassion and grace.¹ When peace eludes us and failure plagues our lives the psalmist teaches the careful reader to . . .

- *Cast ourselves on God's mercy to confess sin (1-4)*
- *Comprehend our need for cleansing from sin (5-9)*
- *Concede the need to purify, renovate, & restore the sinner (10-13)*
- *Confirm & renew our worship of God (14-17)*
- *Call upon God on behalf of the greater community of faith (18-19)*

Next Time: "Introduction to the Acts of the Apostates" ~ Jude

* These notes are prayerfully prepared to aid, not replace, your personal study of God's Word.

¹ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (Ps 50:22-23). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.