

9. Lastly, David vows to, “*teach transgressors [God’s] ways*” (51:13; cf. 32:8-9). From your perspective, how would all that he endured enable him to better instruct others?

After this study, what will you be able to teach others from your own experience of forgiveness?

**Last Word:** David’s story challenges us to accept God’s forgiveness despite our own feelings. There’s an old hymn we sing entitled, *Bring Christ Your Broken Life* (Thomas Chisholm). The song speaks to the struggling heart wrestling to accept God’s forgiveness. The second verse is especially poignant:

Bring [Christ] your every care if great or small-  
Whatever troubles you – O bring it all!  
Bring Him the haunting fears, the nameless dread  
Thy heart He will relive, and lift up they head.

Forgiveness isn’t something you can give yourself; it is something Jesus has purchased for you. Let Him take away the regret, shame and guilt and “*Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!*” (32:11). The Father’s grace and blessing are yours to enjoy. I urge you, accept God’s forgiveness today and begin to live your life with a new found hope and joy.

**Prayer:** Ask God to create in you a heart that joyfully accepts His forgiveness, overcoming any and all doubts that might arise in our hearts.

## *Accepting God’s Forgiveness*

### Psalms 32, 51

With a trembling voice a friend confided, “When I think about all that I’ve done, the people I’ve hurt, and the terrible consequences I’ve caused, I become paralyzed by regret, shame, and guilt. I just don’t think I can ever forgive myself for what I’ve done.” Can you identify with this person’s sentiment? I’m sure that on one level or another, we can understand such emotions.

Perhaps a well-meaning friend may have told you that forgiving yourself is the first step toward healing and recovery. The problem is, nowhere in the Scriptures do we find God instructing us to deal with our heartaches by forgiving ourselves. Rather, He urges us to humbly accept the gracious forgiveness He provides.

Like us, Israel’s King David experienced the highs and lows of spiritual living. Psalms 32 and 51 both emerge from a spiritual low-point in his life. Psalm 51 was written shortly after God’s prophet confronted the King over his sins of adultery and murder. Within its stanzas David acknowledges the horrendous nature of his sins and pleads for God’s forgiveness. While on the other hand, the tone of Psalm 32 suggests a later more contemplative work of praise. Through these two Psalms we’re challenged to accept the joy and freedom of the Lord’s pardon. The question for us is will we humbly accept God’s forgiveness? *Read Psalm 51 then 32.*

1. Looking back to 2 Samuel 11:1-27, briefly summarize the story of David’s sin with Bathsheba and against Uriah.

2. In Psalm 51, David refers to his spiritual failures as “*transgression*” (v. 1), as “*sin*” (v. 2), “*evil*” (v. 4), and as “*iniquity*” (v. 9). How do each of these words describe different aspects of what David did?
  
3. As David refuses to confess his sin, God seeks to draw him back. What happens inwardly when one refuses to come clean with God and confess sin? (see 32:3-4; 51:8b)
  
4. Finally, God sends His prophet Nathan to confront David (2 Samuel 12:1-15). How does David respond to God?

Let's explore three reasons why we might struggle to accept God's forgiveness, noting David's response as a model for us to follow.

5. First, sometimes we might struggle to accept God's free forgiveness because we try to earn His mercy. How does David demonstrate that one must rely wholly on God's grace for forgiveness? (51:1, 7-12, 14-15; cf. 32:5 with 51:16-17)

6. Second, at other times, we could simply refuse God's forgiveness because we can't understand why He would possibly pardon us. In your own words, briefly explain the nature of God's forgiving spirit as described in Isaiah 55:6-9.

Read Psalm 32:1-2, 10-11. How does David model a faithful reaction to God's incomprehensible forgiveness?

7. Third, we may struggle to accept God's forgiveness because we don't feel forgiven when we suffer the painful consequences of our sins. What ramifications does David suffer for his iniquities? (2 Samuel 12:10-11, 14)
  
8. Put yourself in David's sandals, what emotions do you think you would have wrestled with in the same situation?
  
9. Using Proverbs 3:11-12 and 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 as your source, how would you help a friend cope with the negative consequences of sin that God allows into their lives?