

Consider the condition of King David's heart when he penned these words in Psalm 51: "Be gracious to me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, blot out my rebellion. Wash away my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin. For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me." King David was not seeking a negotiation with God; he was not requesting a redefinition of sin in order to assuage his conscience; no, King David viewed the stain of his sin against the unstained holiness of God and knew his only recourse was to cry out for mercy.

Consider the heart of the people of Israel when they received these words from God, through His prophet Isaiah: "Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness, who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. Woe to those who are wise in their own opinion and clever in their own sight." The people of Israel suffered from a heart of rebellion; they were following the dangerous path of redefining right/wrong in agreement with the wisdom of humanity rather the holiness of Divinity; the people of Israel had decided to categorize 'disobedience' as 'obedience', and thusly felt at liberty to speak defiantly to their Creator.

A concise illustration contrasting the beautiful overflow of a humble heart with the toxic runoff of a proud heart is found in Luke 18:9-14, the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. In this parable told by Jesus, the Pharisee holds company with the proud people of Israel being rebuked by Isaiah; the Tax Collector shares the place of humility evidenced by King David's confession in Psalm 51.

As it concerns the sin with which you struggle, are you more closely aligned with the humility of King David and the Tax Collector or the blind arrogance of the Israelites and the Pharisee?

We all struggle with sin. The Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Most of us hide our struggle with sin; some of us respond like King David, humbling ourselves before God and experiencing His forgiveness, His restoration, His deliverance; and some of us want our sinful behavior to be reclassified as acceptable behavior so we can continue on our merry way. Listen, sin has been wreaking havoc in human development since that tragic day in the Garden of Eden. Every single one of us wrestles with the manifestation of sin in our lives... even after we come to salvation through Jesus Christ.

God recognizes our intense battle against sin. God knew beforehand how strong would be the influence of our sinful flesh. So because of His incredibly amazing love, God did two things to help us navigate life's journey. First, He gave us His Word, the Bible, so that we could clearly know if something is righteous or unrighteous, sinful or approved, good or evil. God didn't put it on us to try to figure out right and wrong because we're not that smart. Secondly, God gave us His Holy Spirit to strengthen, convict, comfort, and encourage us. Think about this awesome truth in Philippians 2:13, "For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him." Friend, be honest with God about your struggles with sin; approach Him with deep humility; follow 1 John 1:9 consistently, and resist the urge to argue with God's decrees concerning behavior He has already deemed sinful and unrighteous.

A final encouragement from Psalm 103: "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him." Grace & peace, love you. PK