

PSALMS: DIARIES OF GODLY OLD TESTAMENT SAINTS

Psalm Fifty-One: Conquering The Sin Of Immorality

(Psalm 51:1-19)

I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Paul warns that immorality, unlike any other sin, is a sin against one's own body, cf. 1 Cor. 6:18. Although it is not the worst sin one can do, immorality will do more to ruin a marriage, a reputation and a credible Christian witness than just about any other sin.
- B. Besides, immorality is a powerful sin: 1 Corinthians 7:4 shows us that one's spouse has control over his sexual appetite, making both men and women mutually prey to abuse by those of the opposite gender.
- C. Psalm Fifty-one, David's repentance over his adultery with Bathsheba, reveals how one conquers immorality (1) **either** if he has sinned (2) **or** if he has not yet sinned, and would like to keep himself pure!

II. Conquering The Sin Of Immorality, Psalm 51:1-19.

- A. David penned this psalm after he had committed immorality with Bathsheba, and had been convicted of sin by the prophet, Nathan, cf. intro. notes to the psalm with 2 Sam. 11-12, esp. 12:13.
- B. In the psalm, David gave a thorough analysis of his condition, taking appropriate steps to deal with it:
 1. David came to God based upon God's **chesed**, a word meaning "loyal love" and meaning **grace**, Ps. 51:1a (Harris, Archer and Waltke, eds., Theological Wordbook of the O.T., vol. I, p. 305-307).
 2. Approaching God as unworthy through God's **grace**, David candidly confessed his sin, 51:1b-9:
 - a. He acknowledged his sin, the purest form of "confession" to which 1 John 1:9 refers, in Ps. 51:3a.
 - b. David then noted that his adultery, though negatively affecting so many other people, was **primarily** against God and **God's** law, Ps. 51:4a. This cleared the way for a speedy resolution by God, 51:4b.
 - c. David then noted his original sin as the fountainhead of his act of immorality, Ps. 51:5. Accordingly, he asked for a total cleansing as he felt wretchedly guilty, Ps. 51:6-9.
 3. The next request David made involved his great desire for renewal to assuage his terrible sense of guilt:
 - a. David requested a new heart, a new inner man that would be different from his present, guilt-laden self that had committed his notorious sin, Ps. 51:10. (Note: David asked that the Holy Spirit not be taken from him, a reality possible in Old Testament times but not to the Christian today who is unconditionally, permanently sealed with the Spirit, cf. Ep. 4:30, Ry. St. Bib., KJV fn. to Ps. 51:11).
 - b. He asked for a restoration of his former joy of fellowship with God, Ps. 51:8, 12, 14-15.
 - c. David noted that his restoration would be a teaching tool for the benefit of others, Ps. 51:13.
 - d. David recognized that all the worship offerings he could do would not appease a holy God for his sin; rather, he came to God with a crushed spirit, knowing God would not reject it, Ps. 51:16-17.
 4. **Of real import is David's allusion to building Jerusalem's walls, v. 18:** it was David's **ministry** as **king** to fight Israel's enemies to build up Israel's protection (pictured in building up her "walls"). In **failing** to be **doing** this **ministry**, David had left himself **open** to being **tempted** to sin, 2 Sam. 11:1-4!
 5. In effect, David noted that were God to bless him in equipping him to **get back** to the **ministry** of strengthening Israel's protection by fighting as he was **supposed** to have been doing, God would **then** be pleased with his return to worship sacrifices, Ps. 51:18-19.

Lesson: (1) For those who **HAVE** sinned with immorality, (a) realize that God is a God of infinite **GRACE** so that He is **PREPARED** to forgive (Ps. 51:1a), and (b) that He will not turn away a candid heart that is crushed with guilt (51:16-17). (c) Then, **FACE** the matter as **SIN** (Ps. 51:3a), (d) noting that it is primarily sin against **GOD** (51:4a) and (e) candidly confess it (51:4b, 3a) for (f) total forgiveness, Ps. 51:5-9, 8,12,14-15. (g) Look to the Lord for a new heart to face the future's fallout, Ps. 51:10. (h) Seek to use the whole experience to teach others who may have sinned how to get it forgiven, or as a warning to others not to sin, Ps. 51:13. (i) Become occupied with doing the will of God to circumvent future temptations to immorality, Ps. 51:18-19! (2) For those who have **NOT YET** committed immorality, (a) **STAY OCCUPIED** with God's will to circumvent many temptations that lead to this devastating sin, Ps. 51:18-19 with 2 Sam. 11:1-4! (3) If **FACED** with its temptation, **FLEE**, cf. 1 Cor. 6:18 with Gen. 39:11-12.