



February 19, 2017

Psalm 32

*“The Heart of Confession”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

There’s some good news and some bad news. First, the bad news... we are all sinners. The Bible describes the human condition as sinful, in that none of us measures up to the perfect standard of God. But, the good news is that there is forgiveness for all who will confess their sins to the Lord. But what do terms like sin, forgiveness, and confession mean? King David expressed these things in Psalm 32 when he wrote about his own failures. Pastor Gary explains it all in today’s study entitled, “The Heart of Confession.”

### Historical Background

1. Psalm 32 is a penitential psalm, which means that it includes expressions of regret, remorse, repentance, contrition, or sorrow.
2. The following list includes all seven of the penitential psalms in the Bible: Psalm 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143.
3. The title for [Psalm 51](#) reads: *“For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.”*
4. [Psalm 51:1-2](#) - *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love: according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.”*
5. [Psalm 51:10-13](#) - *“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to*

*sustain me. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.”*

6. Pastor Gary said: “Most Bible scholars believe that Psalm 32 is a fulfillment of the promise David [made] in Psalm 51, when he said, ‘One day I’m going to *teach transgressors your ways.*’ Now, again, a lot of the Bible is not in chronological order, and this is probably one case, [so] Psalm 32 probably follows Psalm 51. Psalm 51 is [David expressing] raw emotion. He’s been caught about his sin of adultery, so he [wrote] Psalm 51, [which] is a psalm of contrition [and] repentance... [David was saying,] ‘One day I’m going to use my sin, my failure, [and] my mess to become a message, [and] my test will become a testimony. And one day, when I have it all together, I’m going to help other people understand how they can recover from their sin and be in a right relationship with [the Lord].’ ”
7. Most Bibles have a title for this psalm, which indicates that it is a maskil, meaning that it is an instructive song.
8. Pastor Gary said **Psalm 32:5** is a key verse: *“Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, ‘I will confess my transgressions to the LORD’ – and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”*
9. At the end of this verse is the word, *selah*, which means, to pause and contemplate.
10. Confession is the key to moving from being humiliated and broken, to being restored with God.

#### Unconfessed Sin Takes A Toll Emotionally

11. **Psalm 32:1-2** - *“Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the LORD does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.”*
12. The Hebrew word for blessed is *esher*, which means, “Oh, how happy!”
13. Pastor Gary said: “Our world is obsessed with trying to discover true happiness, and I guarantee you, true happiness will never be discovered apart from understanding how to have a relationship with God that is open and right through confession of sin. You will never be happy in life until you get right with God, and getting right with God starts with this whole concept of confession.”

14. Pastor Gary said: “A guilty conscience weighs us down. Our mind has no rest when we have harbored unconfessed sin.”

#### Unconfessed Sin Takes A Toll Physically

15. **Psalm 32:3** - *“When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.”*
16. **Psalm 38:3, 7** - *“Because of your wrath there is no health in my body; my bones have no soundness because of my sin... My back is filled with searing pain; there is no health in my body.”*
17. The more David hid his sin, the more he suffered physically.
18. Pastor Gary said: “I’m not suggesting, that if you’ve been diagnosed with something terrible that it must mean there is some unconfessed sin in your life. Good, godly people can still get sick, because... we live in a fallen world, and this fallen world is filled with... sickness and disease, and one day we will leave this fallen world, [and we’ll] go to be with the Lord where there is no more sorrow, no more sickness, and no more pain... In a broader sense, there is a correlation between sin and sickness, in some regard.”
19. **Proverbs 14:30** - *“A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy [which is sin] rots the bones.”*
20. Some people have physical or mental illness that is directly related to a spiritual issue.

#### Unconfessed Sin Takes A Toll Spiritually

21. **Psalm 32:4** - *“For day and night your hand was heavy upon me...”*
22. The “heavy” hand of God is a figurative reference to the pressure of God on his life.
23. “The greatest of all afflictions is to be so heavily pressed with the hand of God...”<sup>1</sup>
24. Sin, iniquity, and transgression are key words in this verse.  
a. Sin is basically defined in the Bible as missing the mark or failing to attain the standards of God.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/calvin/cc08/cc08037.htm>

- i. **Romans 3:23** - "... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory [standard] of God..."
  - b. The Hebrew word for Iniquity is avon, which means, twisted or bent, and it is used to describe the twisted or bent character of a person, which leads to premeditated sin, and it also refers to the inherent moral perversity within each person.
  - c. Transgression literally means willful rebellion against God.
25. God is the only one by whom we will ultimately be measured.
26. **Romans 3:10** - "As it is written: 'There is no one righteous, not even one...'"
27. **Romans 5:8** - "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

#### Confession Is Agreeing With God About Sin

28. The Hebrew word for confess is yada, which means, to agree with God.
29. Pastor Gary said: "God has a standard of right and wrong, and the Bible wants us to be honest about ourselves as the Bible is honest about ourselves. But the problem is that many of us are dishonest about ourselves and, therefore, we don't like the honesty of the Bible. In fact, the honesty of the Bible can sometimes be a very uncomfortable experience when it confronts us about something that we don't want to be confronted about. But this is what confession is all about. It is understanding what God's standard is, [and] what does he say is right [and] what does he says is wrong, and agreeing with that."

#### Confession Is Owning Your Sin

30. Owning your sin is accepting responsibility for your words and actions, instead of excusing it away or blaming your sin on someone else.
31. **2 Samuel 12:13** - "Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'"

#### Confession Is Telling The Lord

32. **Psalms 32:5** "Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD' - and you forgave the guilt of my sin."

33. [Hebrews 4:14-16](#) - *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”*
34. [Romans 8:34b](#) - *“Christ Jesus, who died - more than that, who was raised to life - is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.”*
35. [1 Timothy 2:5-6](#) - *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men...”*

#### Confession Is Keeping Things Right

36. Confession is not a “one and done” event; confession should be the general practice for every Christian.
37. It’s been rightly said that we should always keep short accounts with God.

#### Confession Is Receiving God’s Forgiveness

38. [1 John 1:9](#) - *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”*

#### Confession Brings Happiness

39. [Psalm 32:1-2](#) - *“Oh, how happy, is the man or woman whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Oh, how happy, is the man or woman whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.”* (Paraphrase)
40. [Psalm 32:11](#) - *“Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!”*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Psalm 32](#) to provide the foundation for this study.

3. Provide an overview of [Psalm 51](#) and [2 Samuel 11-12](#), which provides the account of David's sin, so the people in your group will be familiar with the connection with [Psalm 32](#).
4. Read and discuss [Psalm 51:1-2, 10-13](#).
5. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remarks concerning the world's obsession with finding happiness. (See #13 above)
6. What are some of the ways you've experienced the physical and emotional toll that sin takes on the human body?
7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about physical illness not necessarily being connected to sin. (See #18 above)
8. Read and discuss [Proverbs 14:30](#).
9. Spend time talking about the definition of sin, iniquity, and transgression. (See #24 through #27 above)
10. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comments about God's standard of right and wrong. (See #29 above)
11. Allow the people in your group to share examples of the ways they've experienced the forgiveness of the Lord when they've brought their sin to him. (See #30 through #35 above)
12. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary's paraphrase of [Psalm 32:1-2](#). (See #39 above)
13. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).