

## PRAYING PSALM 51

“Have mercy on me O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies” (Psalm 51:1).

This is David’s fourth penitential psalm. It concerns his sin with Bathsheba that led to a series of other sins.

1. A PLEA FOR FORGIVENESS (1-2). Wash me. Blot out my transgressions. Cleanse me.
2. A CONFESSION OF GUILT (3-6). I acknowledge my transgressions. My sin is ever before me. Against You only have I sinned. I was brought forth in iniquity.
3. PRAYER FOR RESTORATION (7-12). Purge me. Wash me. Make me. Hide Your face from my sins. Blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart. Renew a steadfast spirit within me. Don’t cast me away. Do not take your spirit (anointing as king) away from me. Restore the joy of Your salvation.
4. A RESOLVE TO PRAISE GOD (13-17). I will teach transgressors your ways. Deliver (forgive) me from bloodshed. Open my lips and my mouth will show forth your praise. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart.

This psalm offers a fourfold step to fellowship with God when you sin. The first step has to do with the inward desire to be clean before God. The second step is an honest confession of your sin and an admission that you primarily sinned against God who gave the commandments. Step three has to do with complete restoration of fellowship with God. That happens with the removal of sin and the cleansing of the heart. Ask the Lord for this. Step four is an intentional decision to praise God no matter how guilty or miserable you feel. Remember this psalm. The four steps will lead you from guilt to praise. You may have to repeat it, but don’t ruminate on past sins. Rejoice in present forgiveness.