



Pointers and questions on the book of

Psalms:
Selection A

PSALMS

Session 4

Psalm 51

Repentance and confession of sin is the way forward when we fall

Summary

2 Samuel 11-12 records how King David committed murder and adultery over Bathsheba and how God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him over his sin. David responded by being truly repentant, and God forgave him. In this psalm he expresses his confession to God and asks for forgiveness, restoration and the blessing of God on his future.

- v1-2** In an opening prayer David appeals to God for his grace and compassion.
- 3-6** David confesses his sin and admits his sinful nature.
- 7-12** He asks God for forgiveness—and also for inner renewal in order to avoid falling into the same mistakes again.
- 13-17** He assures God that he will respond to forgiveness by a new commitment to serve and praise him, and by seeking to maintain a humble attitude in future.
- 18-19** David asks God to bless and prosper the whole nation, over which he rules. He doesn't want his own sin and bad example to cause wider suffering.

Questions to get you thinking

1. Have you familiarised yourself with the background events in 2 Samuel 11-12? If not, pause here and read the passage through.
2. Being the king, David probably thought he could abuse his rank to sin with impunity. Do you hold any position of power or influence? How tempting is it to abuse that position and write off your action as a perk?
3. Talk about verse 4. Is David's statement here true?
4. Which verses look back to his sin, and which reach forward to a better way of living in the future? Why are both important?
5. Give reasons why David's request in v11 would not have been appropriate if he had lived in New Testament (as distinct from Old Testament) times.
6. Discuss how this psalm focuses not just on outward actions but on inner attitudes.
7. From what you know of the life of David after the Bathsheba affair, did God answer David's requests in this psalm? Did David receive any punishment for his sin? (see 2 Samuel 12:10-25)
8. If a Christian leader today fell into adultery, should he be allowed to continue as a leader?

