



Connect. Grow. Serve. Go![®]

SUMMER 2015
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Leader Guide Included

**SAMPLE
SESSION**



**CONVERSATIONS
WITH GOD**

You don't have to be powerless when you have a powerful God.



BE HOLY

Encountering God is a life-changing experience.



STAND!

Please God always, especially when under pressure.





AN INVITATION FROM THE EDITOR...

After over 18 years serving as full-time minister of education for churches in four different parts of the country, I chose to accept the invitation to become editor of LifeWay's *YOU* Bible study curriculum. I still remember the hiring director's words, "By accepting this position, your ministry will touch lives around the world." Those words, combined with my passion for Christian education (people growing to know and live out the truth of God's Word) and *YOU*'s vision to make it easy for churches on their mission to make disciples, fuel my commitment to pour trustworthy content into *YOU*.

“ ...your
ministry will
touch lives
around the
world. ”

YOU is a relevant biblical resource in an ever-changing world where our spiritual health is in question. The curriculum strategy: **Connect** (with an open heart), **Grow** (in body, mind, and spirit), **Serve** (with willing hands) and **Go** (with ready feet) is a blueprint for staying spiritually fit. Each component builds on the next, strengthening a believer's faith and walk with the Lord. The thought-provoking lessons address today's issues and hot topics. The straightforward, open-ended discussion questions cause learners to reflect on the way we live.

Intentionally focused and uniquely designed for urban, multi-cultural audiences, *YOU* provides a comprehensive (leader, learner, and devotional all-in-one), biblically strong, yet simplistic approach for small group and individual Bible study. Because it is non-dated, it offers versatility of use for a number of large and small group settings, as well as evangelism opportunities for areas that include apartment, prison, collegiate, and senior adult care facility ministries.

Whether a small group in someone's home, a new church plant, medium, large, or mega church, *YOU* can make a difference in the spiritual health of your church. I encourage you to give it a try by reviewing the sample lesson provided. You won't be disappointed!

In His service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly".

Beverly Sonnier
Content Editor
YOU

FOR YOU

BY

YOU

Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!

Preview four free sessions at lifeway.com/you

YOU!

Connect. Grow. Serve. Go!®

SUMMER 2015
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Leader Guide Included

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

*(Shown at 75%
of actual size.)*

CONVERSATIONS WITH GOD

You don't have to be powerless
when you have a powerful God.

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Encountering God is a
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Please God always, especially
when under pressure.

Lifeway | Adults

1



Unit 1 Conversations with God



A Bible Study on Prayer

Coaches aren't just for sports. When wedded bliss turns into wedded blahs, a marriage coach can help sparks fly again. Dreamed of a corner office? A career coach can help you say good-bye to cubicle alley. And, if your little prodigy has turned into a teenage prodigal, there's a parent coach for that. But this expertise costs. *Payscale.com* reports that the average U.S. life coach gets about \$29 per hour.

Although setting goals, getting godly advice, and bettering ourselves are great goals, the best advice is free. We can go to the Lord in prayer. Burdened by others' needs and want

to know how we can help? Want to admit our faults and have relationships restored? A talk with God should always be our first move.

Simply put, prayer is a conversation with God. This unit of study looks at the prayers of godly men in the Bible. Their examples will help us answer questions like: How should I pray when I've blown it? What do I do and where do I go when problems, big or small, enter my-world? How should I pray when I see a need? How should I pray for spiritual growth? The next time you consider hiring a coach, talk first with the ultimate Giver of wisdom.

10 YOU

“I Blew It” Conversation

Background Passage: Psalm 51

Lesson Passages: Psalm 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

2

The Question: How should I pray when I’ve blown it?

The Point: Prayers of confession restore my fellowship with and witness for God.

LESSON PASSAGES

PSALM 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

3

- ¹ Be gracious to **a** me, God, according to Your faithful love; according to Your abundant compassion, ***** blot out my rebellion.
- ² ***** Wash away my guilt and **b** cleanse me from my sin.
- ³ For I am conscious of my rebellion, and my sin is always before me.
- ⁴ Against You—You alone—I have sinned and done this evil in Your sight. So You are right when You pass sentence; You are blameless when You judge.
- ⁵ Indeed, I was ***** guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me.

.....

- ⁷ Purify me with **c** hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
- ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the **d** bones You have crushed rejoice.
- ⁹ Turn Your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt.
- ¹⁰ God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

.....

¹² Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit.

¹³ Then I will teach the rebellious Your ways, and sinners will return to You.

KEY WORDS

4

- a Me:** David—king over God’s people from about 1005 to 965 B.C. Psalm 51 is David’s prayer for restoration after he committed adultery with Bathsheba.
- b Cleanse:** A term for spiritual purity and forgiveness. “Purify me” (NLT); “cleanse me and make me wholly pure” (AMP) (Ps. 51:2).
- c Hyssop:** A bushy plant that is associated with ritual sprinklings as in cleansing lepers and other “unclean” people (or living quarters) after contact with a corpse.
- d Bones:** A common symbol for suffering or mental anguish. See also Psalms 31:10, 38:3; and Lamentations 3:4.

For more information about key words (*), visit the glossary on pages 160–161.

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MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 51:12

Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and give me a willing spirit.

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE FEATURES

1. Unit Overview establishes the theme for each lesson in an easy-to-relate way.
2. “The Question” and “The Point” provide a clear takeaway up front.
3. Lesson Passages found in the lesson.
4. Key Words clarify and provide context for Scripture.
5. Featured Memory Verse helps group members know the Word personally

“I Blew It” Conversation

Psalm 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

How should I pray when I've blown it?



UNIT 1 LESSON 1

If Yolanda Adams could travel back in time to sing her hit “The Battle Is the Lord’s,” she’d get an “amen” from King David. Instead, she encourages us modern-day believers who, like David, sometimes feel our sins are so grave, our bodies are so dirty, and our relationship with God is so strained that we need to seek God in prayer. He’ll go to battle for us—cleaning us up and restoring us to fellowship with Him. But how should I pray when I’ve blown it? Make David’s prayer (Ps. 51) your war cry. Battle on!

Focal Passage Outline

**CAST YOURSELF ON
GOD’S GRACE**
(Ps. 51:1)

ADMIT YOUR FILTHINESS
(Ps. 51:2-5)

ASK GOD TO CLEAN YOU UP
(Ps. 51:7-10)

JOYFULLY LIVE FOR HIM
(Ps. 51:12-13)

1 CAST YOURSELF ON GOD’S GRACE PSALM 51:1

2 With themes like war, murder, and a political sex scandal, the events in 2 Samuel 11–12 rival those on the evening news. These scriptures tell how King **a** David (see Key Word *me*, p. 11) lusts after Bathsheba, the wife of one of his deployed soldiers (Uriah). David summons Bathsheba to his palace where he commits adultery with her, resulting in her pregnancy. He attempts to hide his actions from Uriah and eventually has him killed in battle. Confronted by the prophet Nathan, David becomes remorseful. Psalm 51 is David’s confession and prayer for restoration.

Read Psalm 51:1. What can we learn about the nature of God from this verse?

Like David we’ve all made bad choices. Whether our misdeeds have tainted our reputation, estranged us from a family member, or cost us our job, reconciliation involves knowing the attributes of God and relying on Him for restoration. David makes an obvious plea for God’s mercy in verse 1 with terms and phrases like “gracious,” “faithful love,” and “abundant compassion.” He seeks God’s love, forgiveness, and acceptance despite his faults.

“I Blew It” Conversation

Psalm 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

Which characteristics of God do you reflect upon most in your prayers? Why?

Although we can appeal to God for restoration with Him based on His perfect character, our attitude still matters. When David’s sin was exposed, he didn’t become angry. Instead he was sorry for rebelling against God. Adultery and murder were intentional, severe sins that warranted isolation from the Israelite community or worse, being put to death. A sacrifice wouldn’t be sufficient for David’s actions (Ps. 51:16); however, God would look favorably upon “a broken and humbled heart” (Ps. 51:17).

During David’s time animal sacrifices were common. Now believers are deemed righteous only “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all” (Heb. 10:10). When we study who God is, know His character, and understand His sacrifice, it makes sense for our prayers to begin like David’s.

ADMIT YOUR FILTHINESS PSALM 51:2-5

Read Psalm 51:2. Couldn’t we all use a Nathan in our lives, a godly person to hold us accountable for our sin? After his discourse with Nathan, David seeks forgiveness and an internal cleansing only God could provide. He pleads, “Blot out my rebellion” (v. 1), and “Cleanse me from my sin” (v. 2). David also prays that his guilt be washed away (v. 2). What a wonderful response to correction! (See Key Words, p. 11, and Key Words Glossary, pp. 160–161, for more on * blot out, * wash, and ⑤ cleanse.)

How do you respond to godly correction? How could you improve?

Read Psalm 51:3-4. Some people cover up extramarital affairs, pregnancies, and dark family secrets. This all amounts to a life without peace. Agonizing over his wicked actions, David admits, “My sin is always before me” (v. 3). After all, David’s sins affected Uriah, Bathsheba, his empire, his family, his own body, and God’s people. However, David’s dishonor of God is his utmost concern when he says, “Against You—You alone—I have sinned” (v. 4). He wasn’t denying that he’d also hurt others.



Diggin’ Deeper

3



Filthiness

Filthiness is our state when something renders us dirty in God’s sight. In Psalm 51:2-3, David is unclean because of his guilt, sin, and rebellion. Then he repents and seeks purification. It’s a good thing he did; otherwise, his prayers would be hindered. The consequences of filthiness are harsh!

- **Read 1 Kings 14:22-24.** What was God’s response to Judah’s filthiness?
- **Read 2 Chronicles 7:14.** What benefits did God promise His people for turning away from their evil ways?
- **Read Isaiah 59:2.** How do our iniquities and sins damage our fellowship with God?

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE FEATURES

1. Easy-to-follow lesson plan makes it simple to follow along and engage during group time.
2. Focal Passage Outline makes it easy to find your place at a glance.
3. Diggin’ Deeper provides additional depth through Scripture reading.

YOU 13

“I Blew It” Conversation

Psalm 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

1



Did you know?

Eighteen different words refer to humankind’s evil. Three are described below from least to greatest in severity.

- To **sin** is to stray from God’s plans for one’s life. *Sin* is the most common translation of a Hebrew word meaning “to miss the mark” as an archer would miss a target with a bow and arrow because of an error in judgment.
- **Iniquity** is the willful turning away from the path designated by God. It is usually followed by deep guilt.
- **Transgression** expresses a more severe evil involving rebellion and withdrawal from godly authority. It literally means “running wild.”

How do you feel knowing that God sees all of your most grievous sins?

Read Psalm 51:5. People play the blame game. Some folks indeed have rough upbringings and greater trials than others do. However, when David says, “I was * guilty when I was born” (v. 5) (see Key Words Glossary, pp. 160–161), he isn’t blaming his wicked acts on his sinful nature. Instead, David’s intent is to exalt God by showing the stark differences between God’s “blameless” (v. 4) manner and humankind’s evil nature.

How can you exalt God in your prayers?

It’s time we quit covering up our filthiness (see Diggin’ Deeper, p. 13) and turn it over to the One who sees it all anyway.

ASK GOD TO CLEAN YOU UP PSALM 51:7-10

Read Psalm 51:7-9. The distance sin wedges between David and God hurts David so badly that he equates it to having his  bones (see Key Words, p. 11) crushed (v. 8). As a result, David continues to seek cleansing for his evil actions (see Did You Know?, p. 14) for terms associated with sin). He uses ceremonial terms and imagery to emphasize the deep spiritual cleansing he desires: “Purify me with  hyssop” (see Key Words, p. 11), “clean,” and “wash me” (v. 7).

When sin causes you to feel distant from God, what is your prayer?

Read Psalm 51:10. After admitting his sin to God and asking for cleansing, David seeks a restored fellowship with Him. He wants the joy he previously had when his relationship with God was more intimate (and had fewer blemishes). The “clean heart” and renewed, “steadfast spirit” (v. 10) he asks God to create in him aren’t just pleas for forgiveness. They are necessary to live in obedience to God.

When we sin (and we all do), where can we find that fresh relationship with God?

“I Blew It” Conversation

Psalm 51:1-5,7-10,12-13

JOYFULLY LIVE FOR HIM PSALM 51:12-13

Unconfessed sin deteriorates believers' fellowship with God. He is still our Heavenly Father. We (believers) are still His children. That relationship (and our salvation) won't change. However, our fellowship and intimacy with Him can. As a result, every believer's goal should be restoration in our fellowship with and witness for God.

Read Psalm 51:12-13. What's stealing your joy? How might it be restored?

In verse 12 David asks God for a willing spirit (or noble spirit) to uphold him. With a willing spirit—one that is bent on doing right—believers are equipped for making godly decisions and are able to be a testimony to others. Because of this witness, other “sinners will return to” God (v. 13).

The word *joy* appears in the Bible more than 150 times. We find “abundant joy” in God's presence (Ps. 16:11). Christians realize “great joy” when experiencing “various trials, knowing that the testing of” our “faith produces endurance” (Jas. 1:2-3). Joy is a by-product of knowing God and serving Him and obeying Him.

Live It!

We know how it feels when we've blown it. Our relationships are messy, and our bodies are worn with anguish. Instead of throwing up our hands, we can fold them in prayer. Modeling David's example, we find that remorseful sinners who admit their filth can turn to God's grace and cleansing power. Then, when we move forward in obedience, our lives reflect God's goodness. So, how should I pray when I've blown it? Prayers of confession restore our relationship with and our witness for God.

Everyone has a weakness. Identify yours. Fight it with prayer. When tempted, stop and pray for God to give you a willing spirit.

3

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE FEATURES

1. Did You Know? provides additional insight into lesson themes.
2. So What? and Live It! ask pointed questions and provide clear and practical takeaways for each lesson.
3. Live It! makes the study personal.

2 SO WHAT? How does this apply to me?

Life's small victories make good small talk. But there's more to life than sports scores and deals at the mall. Family, friends, and even strangers need to know about your victories with God—how He cleaned you up and restored your fellowship with Him.

Use these questions to think as David did and share your reconciliation story.

• **Believers praise God when they share stories of reconciliation. What's holding you back?**

• **How do you respond when someone shares a victory over an “I blew it” scenario?**

• **How can you encourage someone who's enduring a battle that God has already helped you overcome?**



YOU 15

1. Honesty Is the Best Policy
John 8:31-32

Benjamin Franklin is credited with the saying, "Honesty is the best policy," but living in truth has always been God's thing. When we confess our sins to God, we allow ourselves to walk lighter, free from the weight of unconfessed sin. Although admitting our sins may be painful, the hurt of hindered prayer because we won't confess them is even greater. God already knows what we've done; He's just waiting on us to come to Him. Confess your sins today.

Dear God, thank You for restoring my relationship with You when I confess my sin. Help me remember when I mess up that I don't have to stay that way.

2. More Than "I'm Sorry"
Psalm 51:16-17

In today's society saying "I'm sorry" is commonplace. It has become an automatic response given without thought. When we pray to God for forgiveness of our sins, He deserves more than a thoughtless, rote response. He deserves a humble heart and a broken spirit when we sin against Him. In Psalm 51, David modeled that a prayer of confession is more than saying sorry. He humbled himself before God because he had a desire to restore his relationship with God.

Dear Lord, forgive me of the sins I have committed against You and reconcile me back to You.

1

DAILY READINGS

3. Overwhelmed
John 16:33

The biggest trick the enemy plays on God's people is to make us believe we will never have problems just because we are His. This could not be further from the truth. God never promised a life without chaos. He did, however, promise to be our peace in the middle of chaos. We will face moments when we are overwhelmed, but we don't have to stay that way. Jehovah Shalom is the God of peace, and Christ is His Prince.

Thank You, God, for being my peace in the midst of chaos. I know I don't have to be overwhelmed because You have already overcome.

4. Power
2 Chronicles 20:6

When the electricity goes out in your house, what you can do is limited because you have lost your power. Jehoshaphat also knew that powerless feeling. He was powerless against his enemies, and he could do nothing but cry out to God. He did not focus on what he could not do, but he remembered what God could do. No matter the size of our problems, we serve an omnipotent God who can solve them.

God, I thank You for Your perfect strength in my weakness. In times of trouble, I will keep my focus on You and not my problems.

16 YOU...

1

BEFORE YOU TEACH

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

STEP 1 LISTEN TO A WAR CRY.

Today's lesson introduction suggests playing Yolanda Adams's song "The Battle Is the Lord's." Listen to it with hopes of gaining a fresh perspective. Meditate on the lyrics and consider comments to share with learners. Anticipate their questions. Think about this song as a believer's war cry—words and phrases to encourage us with the hope of God's grace when we've messed up.

STEP 2 BRING AN EXTRA "WORD."

In the usual Sunday morning rush, we sometimes forget to bring our Bibles. Have extra copies in your class for learners to use. If visitors show up who don't own a Bible, allow them to take a copy home. But first consider writing a personal note to the individual on the inside cover; include an encouraging word or verse. Invite guests to come back and study with you again soon.

STEP 3 SNEAK A PEEK.

Any time you begin a new quarter, read the unit overview and thumb through the lessons to get a feel for what's in store. Ask God to prepare your heart and mind to teach the subject matter and to be open to learning new things as the Holy Spirit reveals them to you. Be alert during the quarter for real-life examples and relatable ways to present the material.

STEP 4 KNOW WHO'S INVOLVED.

This week's Bible study has several characters whom learners will need to know to understand the context of the lesson. Review 2 Samuel 11–12 to find out how David interacted with Uriah, Bathsheba, and Nathan before he wrote Psalm 51. Be sure to jot down things that remind you of God's sovereignty. Think about how God was involved throughout David's ordeal.



LOOK BACK

After welcoming members and guests, say: *We wrapped up the previous quarter with a unit on service titled "It's Your Serve." The last session of our five-week unit, "Seize the Moment," included a study of Luke 10:27-37. Remind learners of The Question: "When should I serve?" and The Point: "I serve when there is a need in front of me." Invite learners to share how they served difficult people they encountered (last week's Live It! challenge). Recite or read last week's Memory Verse in unison, Luke 10:27.*

YOU OBJECT LESSON



HAND SANITIZER

Display the hand sanitizer. Shake hands with a volunteer. **Ask:** *How would you feel if I told you I just sneezed in my hand?* **Say:** *You'd be upset, and our relationship may be strained, especially if you got sick. But we'd still be friends. Why didn't I admit that I was sick or at least use the sanitizer? Not a good testimony on my part, is it?* Stress that when we (believers) have grave, unconfessed sins, our intimacy with God suffers. Still we're His children. When we admit our filth, He's ready to cleanse us and prepare us to be a good witness for Him. The next time you use sanitizer (which should be often), think about God's cleansing power.

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“I BLEW IT” CONVERSATION (TEACHING PLAN)

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

2

INTRODUCTION

Begin the study by playing a portion of Yolanda Adams's song, “The Battle Is the Lord's.”

Invite learners to share struggles people take on that really belong to the Lord. (Typical answers will include things people worry about that are out of their control—illness, birth, death, wayward family member, etc.) **Ask:** *Who takes on the responsibility of cleansing sin?* Emphasize that although we have a responsibility to confess, repent, and then resolve to do better, God is the One who cleanses us.

Remind learners that we are beginning a new quarter and that Unit 1 kicks off the Bible study with a session titled “I Blew It Conversation.” **Say:** *This month, we'll focus on different types of prayer.*

Read the lesson introduction on page 12 that begins “If Yolanda Adams.” Introduce The Point, The Question, and the Memory Verse (p. 11). Explain that today's lesson focuses on David's prayer of confession and his desire for restoration with God.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

CAST YOURSELF ON GOD'S GRACE PSALM 51:1

- Make two columns on the board. Label one *TV* and the other *Bible*. **Ask:** *What are some common themes on TV?* As learners offer ideas, jot them down under the “TV” column. Put a check in the corresponding column marked “Bible” if a similar theme can be found in the Bible. **Say:** *Notice all the check marks! The Bible is still relevant to today's believers.* To help put the lesson into context, invite a learner to read the first paragraph under the heading “Cast Yourself on God's Grace” (p. 12) that begins “With themes.” Then direct learners' attention to *me* in Key Words.
- **Enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 51:1 aloud.** Explain that before Nathan confronted David about his sin, David had twice tried to cover it up (2 Sam. 11:6–13). Emphasize the attributes of God specifically mentioned in Psalm 51:1. **Ask:** *Why do we sometimes try to cover up our sin when God's grace is readily available?* Briefly discuss responses.
- **Read Psalm 51:16–17 aloud.** Discuss what the term *broken heart* generally means today and what it means in the context of David's prayer (v. 17).

ADMIT YOUR FILTHINESS PSALM 51:2-5

- **Enlist a volunteer to read Psalm 51:2-5 aloud.** Explain that although believers have the Holy Spirit to guide us, we sometimes reject His lead when we're in the throes of a painful episode of sin. During those times God may use another believer to get us on the right path. In David's case God sent His prophet Nathan to confront David.
- Direct learners' attention to the Key Words *blot out*, *wash*, and *cleanse*. Discuss likenesses and subtle differences. Invite a learner to read *Diggin' Deeper* (p. 13). Lead learners to respond to the third question that asks, “How do our iniquities and sins damage our fellowship with God?” If learners need help answering, refer them to Isaiah 59:2.
- Invite learners to name as many people as they can who were affected by David's sin. **Ask:** *Why did David say his sin was only against God? How might your response to temptation change if you thought about it as a sin against God Himself?*
- Read the third paragraph under the heading “Admit Your Filthiness.” **Ask:** *How might the “blame game” lead to generational sin?* **Say:** *Instead of playing the blame game, David used the opportunity to exalt God.*

LEADER PAGES | YOU 103

LEADER GUIDE FEATURES

1. Before You Teach page gives practical tips to set your group up for success, recaps the last lesson to provide transition, and recommends an object lesson to start the group time.
2. Teaching Plan provides everything the group leader needs to guide discussion.

“I BLEW IT” CONVERSATION (TEACHING PLAN)

FOR UNIT 1, LESSON 1 (pp. 11–15)

ASK GOD TO CLEAN YOU UP PSALM 51:7-10

- **Invite a learner to read Psalm 51:7-10.** Point out that sin hurts! David compared it to having his bones crushed (v. 8). Refer learners to the Key Word **bones**. Invite learners to describe ways sin physically affects people today. **Ask:** *How do you know when you've sinned?* Discuss responses.
- Direct learners attention to Did You Know? (p. 14). Compare and contrast the three different terms used to represent evil done against God.
- Explain **hyssop** (Key Words, p. 11) and its role in the cleansing process. Refer to the Leader Commentary for additional information on hyssop and its uses.

JOYFULLY LIVE FOR HIM PSALM 51:12-13

- **Read Psalm 51:12-13.** Lead learners to respond to the first question under the heading “Joyfully Live for Him” which asks, “What’s stealing your joy? How might it be restored?” Discuss what David means in verse 12 when he says, “Restore the joy of Your salvation to me.” **Emphasize that believers are not to interpret that salvation itself can be lost.** Clarify any ambiguities by summarizing the first paragraph under the heading “Joyfully Live for Him” (p. 15).
- **Ask:** *What are the fruits of a willing or noble spirit? (joy, peace of mind, other people coming to know Christ, etc.) As suggested in verse 13, what responsibility do we have to the rebellious?*

SO WHAT? HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO ME?

Google the words “rags to riches stories,” and you’ll find nearly five million results. People crave inspiration and encouragement, especially in grim situations. Imagine how much more powerful our spiritual testimonies are! With those stories abusers, adulterers, and other sinners gain hope in the cleansing and restorative power of God. Use these questions to help you reflect on the importance of confession and being a testament to God’s grace and mercy.

- *Believers give God praise when they publicly share stories of reconciliation. What’s holding you back?*
- *How can you encourage someone who’s enduring a battle that God has already helped you overcome? How do humility, transparency, and pride affect your witness and prayers?*
- *Considering David’s prayer and the effects of prayer in your own life, how can you encourage someone else to seek God for their cleansing and reconciliation?*

CLOSE THE SESSION

Remind learners that God welcomes a remorseful sinner’s prayer of confession. He indeed is a restorer! Lead learners in reciting together the Memory Verse, Psalm 51:12. Challenge learners to complete the Live It! assignment on page 15 during the week. Close in prayer asking God to create willing spirits in each learner and to equip them to be living examples of God’s grace and mercy. As students leave, play Yolanda Adams’s “The Battle Is the Lord’s.”

“I Blew It” Conversation**Lesson Passages:** Psalm 51:1–5, 7–10, 12–13**The Question:** How should I pray when I’ve blown it?**The Point:** Prayers of confession restore my fellowship with and witness for God.

This commentary is designed to help you think about the question, “How should I pray when I’ve blown it?” and drive home this one truth: Prayers of confession restore my relationship with and witness for God.

FOCUS ON THESE POINTS**Cast Yourself on God’s Grace (Ps. 51:1)**

King David wrote Psalm 51 following his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah, an elite soldier in David’s army.

Psalm 51 served as David’s prayer of confession. David offered his prayer with a “broken and humbled heart” (Ps. 51:17), especially since burnt offerings weren’t acceptable for sins of such severity. Estrangement from the community (sometimes even death) was the typical punishment for these cases. During David’s time a burnt offering was burned completely until only ashes remained. It was used to compensate for sin or avoid judgment and had other purposes, as well. According to Hebrews 10:10, Jesus is the only sacrifice believers need. His sacrificial blood cleanses us even today!

Admit Your Filthiness (Ps. 51:2–5)

The Bible tells us that all have sinned (Rom. 3:23). All of our sin is done in God’s sight, just as David’s was (Ps. 51:4). Because God is omnipresent, He witnesses our sin (Prov. 15:3). Thus, He is blameless and “right” when He judges (Ps. 51:4). From a legal stance the word *right* also can mean “just.”

The Hebrew word translated *blameless* literally means “clear, clean, or pure.” God acted with perfect justice and impartiality when he sent Nathan to confront David (2 Sam. 12:1–12). David knew humankind had an inherently sinful nature, but he didn’t use this fact to excuse his evil actions. Although he says, “I was sinful when my mother conceived me” (Ps. 51: 5), no biblical text indicates David’s mother had a specific sin surrounding his conception and birth. The most commonly agreed-upon interpretation of verse 5

is that it teaches the concept of original sin (Gen. 3).

One literal meaning for the word *confess* in the Old Testament is “to throw oneself down.” Its usage in the New Testament literally means “to agree” or “to say the same thing.” When paired, the Old and New Testament meanings convey a clearer biblical context for the term *confess*: confession involves being in one accord with God about our sin.

Ask God to Clean You Up (Ps. 51:7–10)

Hyssop is a small bushy plant standing just over two feet tall. Its characteristics made it a suitable brush for the Israelites to use in spreading the blood of the Passover lambs on their doorposts (Ex. 12:22). It had many other ceremonial uses including cleansing people with skin diseases (Lev. 14:4,6); consecrating the people, the Law scroll, the tabernacle at Sinai, and the articles of worship (Heb. 9:19,21); and securing the sponge containing the vinegar offered to Jesus during His crucifixion (John 19:29).

David asked God to purify him. By incorporating the word *hyssop* in his request, he was pointing toward his spiritual uncleanness. Because of his sin, David was ceremonial unclean. According to Hebrews, this made him unfit to worship God.

David prayed that God would create a clean heart in him. Since there was no word for *conscience* in the Hebrew language, the word *heart* was often used instead. For Christians, the heart is God’s dwelling place (2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 3:17; Rom. 5:5).

Joyfully Live for Him (Ps. 51:12–13)

David missed the joy his salvation once brought him. His prayer certainly didn’t imply that a believer’s salvation could be lost. God’s grace is available to the repentant sinner.

David knew the benefits of telling his restoration story were greater than the risks associated with preserving his good name. His desire was to exalt God’s name and help others have a right relationship with Him.

LEADER GUIDE FEATURES

1. Leader Commentary takes you deeper into the session content.
2. Online extras are available at any time.

Need more commentary/articles to increase your understanding?

Visit www.LifeWay.com/YOU.



Staying Fit ... Spiritually

We talk a lot about the importance of staying physically fit, but what about the health of your spirit? **Connect, Grow, Serve, Go** is a call to evaluate your present spiritual condition and discover ways to improve your spiritual health. Packed into each biblical concept—**Connect, Grow, Serve, Go**—is a simple way you can move forward, not remain stagnant. Best of all, these tools will stand the test of time—no “fad” diets here. They will help you become spiritually healthy, and stay that way.



WITH AN OPEN HEART
MARK 12:29-31



IN BODY, MIND, & SPIRIT
ROMANS 12:2



WITH WILLING HANDS
1 PETER 4:10-11



WITH READY FEET
MATTHEW 28:19-20

Connect urges you to worship, pray, fellowship, and relate to others in positive relationships at work, at home, and in other settings. Spiritual fitness results when you connect with God, with others, and with your church family.

Grow refers to learning and understanding more about God and His expectations of His people, which comes through Bible study. You grow by applying that knowledge to your everyday living.

Serve describes the work you do inside your church. Your church is full of ministry and service opportunities. You serve by using your spiritual gifts, skills, and passions to glorify God. All of us must work together for the church to function as God intended.

Go moves you outside the church and into the community and the world. Evangelism and missions are ways to go into your community and the world in the name of Jesus Christ. It might be uncomfortable at first, but you will experience first-hand the difference Christ can make through you.

Connect, Grow, Serve, Go must impact YOU, the individual, before it can permeate your circle of friends, your Bible study group, and then the church as a whole. But balance is the key! We must be actively participating in all four areas if we want to be spiritually healthy. All Go and no Connect with God or other believers results in powerless activity and wears you out. A steady diet of Grow without the action of Serve or Go leads to unhealthy spiritual obesity and laziness. We need a balanced spiritual diet to remain fit and able to serve God in the ways He has gifted us.

The **YOU** lessons will help you Connect , Grow , Serve , and Go . Look for these icons throughout this issue. They will help you check and maintain your spiritual health.

THE STUDY PLAN...

FALL 2015



September

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus (Jesus Christ) John 1:1-5,11-14/
Matt. 4:18-25/John 8:3-11/
Heb. 7:22-28



October

Joy Ride (Joy)
Gal. 5:19-26/ Jas. 1:2-
8,12/ Ps. 32:1-5,10-11/
Luke 15:1-7



November

It's All About Family
(Family)
Gen. 1:26-27; 2:18,21-
25/ Gen. 6:1-2,6,8,18,22;
7:1/ Gen. 25:27-28;
27:6-10,41/ Gen. 32:9-
11,24,28-30; 33:3-4/ Gen.
35:1-6,16-18

WINTER 2015



December

Worship—More Than a
Church Service (Worship/
Praise)
John 4:10-14,19-24/ Mark
7:1-2,5-9,13/ Luke 1:46-
48; 2:8-14,16,20/ Ps.
95:1-7a



January

Peace I Give You (Peace)
John 14:1-6,27-29/ 1 Cor.
1:10-13; 4:11-13/ Col.
3:8-17/ Phil. 1:12-21/ Mic.
4:1-5



February

My Soul Is a Witness
(Witnessing)
Eph. 2:1-10/ Acts 2:22-24;
Rom. 10:9-13/ Titus 3:3-11/
Acts 8:26-37

SPRING 2016



March

By The Book (Bible Study,
Part 1)
Heb. 4:12-13; 1Pet. 1:24-
25; 2Pet. 1:16-21/ Ps.
119:33-36; John 16:7-115;
2Tim. 3:14-17/
Ps. 119:9-16,97-112/
Deut. 6:1-9; Ezra 7:8-10;
Acts 17:10-11



April

The Devil Made Me Do It
(Temptation)
Josh. 6:17-19; 7:1,20-
21,24-26; Jas. 1:13-15/
Gen. 3:1-5,8-13/ Eph.
6:10-18/ Matt. 4:1-11



May

What About Your Friends?
(Friendship)
1Sam. 20:4-8,13-17,31-
34,42/ Matt. 26:47-50;
Luke 22:3-6; John 12:3-6;
13:2-5,10-11/Ps. 55:12-
14; Matt. 18:15-17;
Phil. 4:1-9/ Gen. 15:3-6;
18:20,23-26; 22:1-3,15-
18/ 3 John 1:1-14

SUMMER 2016



June

God's School of Obedience
(Obedience)
Deut. 4:1-2,5-9,30-31,39-
40; 1 John 5:3/
1Sam. 13:1-14/ 1Sam.
15:7-9,12-21,24/
1 John 1:5-2:2



July

Tough Talk About Tough
Issues
(Sanctity of Human Life/
Alcohol & Addictions)
2Sam. 13:1-2,6-15,19-22/
Prov. 20:1; 23:19-21,29-
35/ Ps. 55:9-11; Jonah
3:6-10; 1Pet.3:8-12/ Ex.
1:15-17,20-22; 2:1-10;
Heb. 11:23



August

Stepping Up to Serve
(Leadership)
Neh. 1/ Neh. 2:1-8,11-18/
Neh. 4:1-14/ Neh. 5:1-16/
Neh. 12:27-31,38-41a,
43-47

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FOR YOU

— **BY** —

YOU

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