

## BIBLE STUDY

### Psalm 51 (OSB 50): A Prayer for Mercy and Renewal

#### Bible Study Preparation and Materials Needed:

Reflecting on: Psalm 51 (OSB 50) - God is Close to the Brokenhearted

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

*Recommended Orthodox Study Bible* [HERE](#).

*Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition* [HERE](#).

#### Optional Practice

If time permits, begin or conclude this Bible study with an antiphonal Psalm reading. Have students read the psalm aloud in two groups, line by line. Encourage them to hear David's emotion, allowing it to become their own prayer.

#### Leader Notes

Things to Watch For:

Some students may have experienced real trauma. Don't push for details or force sharing.

If discussions stall, that's okay. Silence is better than forced responses.

Be ready to follow up individually with students who seem especially affected.

#### Adaptation Options:

For smaller groups (under 8), skip partner discussions and keep everything as full group.

For larger groups (over 15), use more small group time.

If your group is less familiar with Holy Scripture, add more context about psalms in general.

For groups that are more reserved, extend individual reflection time and reduce sharing time.

#### Memory Verse:

**“Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.”**

**- Psalm 50:12 (OSB)**

## ***Psalm 51 (OSB 50)***

*1 For the End; a psalm by David;\**

*2 when Nathan the prophet came to him, at the time he went in to Bathsheba.*

*3 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to Your great mercy;  
And according to the abundance  
of Your compassion, blot out my transgression.*

*4 Wash me thoroughly from my lawlessness  
And cleanse me from my sin.*

*5 For I know my lawlessness,  
And my sin is always before me.*

*6 Against You only have I sinned  
And done evil in Your sight;  
That You may be justified in Your words,  
And overcome when You are judged.*

*7 For behold, I was conceived in transgressions,  
And in sins my mother bore me.*

*8 Behold, You love truth;  
You showed me the unknown  
and secret things of Your wisdom.*

*9 You shall sprinkle me with hyssop,  
and I will be cleansed;  
You shall wash me,  
and I will be made whiter than snow.*

*10 You shall make me hear joy and gladness;  
My bones that were humbled*

*shall greatly rejoice.*

*11 Turn Your face from my sins,  
And blot out all my transgressions.*

*12 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
And renew a right spirit within me.*

*13 Do not cast me away from Your presence,  
And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

*14 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,  
And uphold me with Your guiding Spirit.*

*15 I will teach transgressors Your ways,  
And the ungodly shall turn back to You.*

*16 Deliver me from bloodguiltiness,  
O God, the God of my salvation,  
And my tongue shall greatly rejoice  
in Your righteousness.*

*17 O Lord, You shall open my lips,  
And my mouth will declare Your praise.*

*18 For if You desired sacrifice, I would give it;  
You will not be pleased with whole burnt offerings.*

*19 A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit,  
A broken and humbled heart God will not despise.*

*20 Do good, O Lord, in Your good pleasure to Zion,  
And let the walls of Jerusalem be built;*

*21 Then You will be pleased  
with a sacrifice of righteousness,*

## Bible Study Lesson

### Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՛ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

## A Reflection on Psalm 51 (OSB Psalm 50): A Prayer for Mercy and Renewal

**Let's Think About:** Have you ever felt the weight of something you did wrong? Not just guilt, but the kind of sorrow that makes you realize things need to change deep inside.

Psalm 51 is the most famous psalm of repentance, written by David after his fall into sin with Bathsheba. It is not a shallow apology. It is a soul-level cry for cleansing, healing, and new life. This psalm isn't just for people who messed up "big." It's for anyone who wants a clean heart, a renewed spirit, and a fresh start.

### The Prayer Begins

*"Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy; and according to the abundance of Your compassion, blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from my lawlessness and cleanse me from my sin."* (vv. 3-4)

#### Mercy First

David doesn't begin with excuses. He begins with who God is: merciful, compassionate, full of love. Orthodox prayer always starts by recalling God's nature (not to manipulate Him, but to center us in truth). We're not begging a distant ruler. We're returning to a Father who longs to forgive.

Repentance, in the Orthodox tradition, is not a shameful transaction. It's a healing encounter. Sin wounds us; confession is how we return to the Healer and repentance is the cure or remedy for our spiritual wounds

**Q:** *Why is it important to focus on God's mercy before we confess our sins? How does that change the tone of our prayer?*

### Truth in the Hidden Places

*"For I know my lawlessness, and my sin is always before me. Against You only have I sinned and done evil in Your sight... Behold, You love truth; You showed me the unknown and secret things of Your wisdom."* (vv. 5-8)

#### No More Hiding

David owns his sin completely. No blame-shifting. No softening. But he also acknowledges something deeper: God desires truth in the inward parts. This means that repentance isn't just about behavior change. It's about heart change.

In confession, the priest doesn't just hear our words. He stands as a witness before God while we bring our inner wounds into the light. This honesty is where healing begins.

**Q:** *What's one area in your life where you feel God inviting you into deeper honesty?*

## The Heart of the Psalm

*“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.” (vv. 12-13)*

### The Prayer That Changes Us

This is the center of the psalm. David doesn't just want to be forgiven. He wants to be changed. That's real repentance: not just sorrow over sin, but a desire to become new.

In the Church, we pray this psalm during Lent, at the Midday Hours, in the Baptismal Service and in many other services because it invites us into transformation. We don't just want to be “better people.” We want God to create something new inside us.

**Q:** *When you confess sin, do you also ask God to make you new? What would a renewed spirit look like in your life?*

## Joy After Sorrow

*“Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your guiding Spirit. I will teach transgressors Your ways, and the ungodly shall turn back to You.” (vv. 14-15)*

### The Gift of Restoration

Sin robs us of joy. But repentance restores it. David doesn't expect God to scold him forever. He asks for joy, not as a reward, but as a fruit of restored relationship.

And more than that, he wants his story to help others. Real repentance doesn't end with personal peace. It becomes a testimony. Your healing can lead others to God.

**Q:** *Has God ever used your struggles or healing journey to help someone else?*

## What God Really Wants

*“The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God will not despise.” (v. 19)*

### A Heart Wide Open

David knows that God doesn't want empty religion. He wants a heart that is soft, humble, open. In Orthodox worship, every bow, every prostration is an invitation to let our hearts be broken open before the Lord.

This is what makes Psalm 51 timeless. It isn't a checklist. It's a relationship being restored.

**Q:** *What does a “broken and humble heart” look like in daily life? How can you cultivate that kind of spirit?*

**Make This Psalm Your Own:** This week, pray Psalm 51 slowly before you go to bed. Let each verse sit with you. Notice where God meets you in it. This isn't just an ancient prayer. It's your prayer too.

## Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think is the difference between guilt and true repentance?
2. Why do you think David trusted God's mercy, even after serious sin?
3. What areas of your life feel like they need to be renewed?
4. How does Psalm 51 challenge the way our culture talks about failure and forgiveness?
5. What does it mean to you to have joy restored after repentance?

### Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.