

Seeking God With A Contrite Heart (Go To Meeting)

Lindsay Stephens—March 28, 2025

My purpose in this message is to point out what a contrite heart is, looking at it from God's perspective:

- why we need to have it
- why God wants us to have it

In our time of preparation for Passover and the days of Unleavened Bread, we need to approach God with a certain frame of mind that is pleasing to Him.

I associate being contrite and having a contrite heart as the type of attitude that God is looking for at this time of season.

Psalm 51:17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

So there are a few key words in this verse that I want us to have a look at.

- **Broken**—Hebrew 'shabar'
- **Contrite**—Hebrew 'dakah'
- **Heart**—Hebrew 'leb'; meaning to break or break in pieces; to crush meaning in a man, mind or will
- **Spirit**—Hebrew 'ruach'; meaning breath or wind

So, let's put all of this together so that we can understand what a contrite heart and spirit really is. A contrite heart or spirit is when a person's inner man or will has been broken so they can no longer run after the things they want but surrender to the things that God wants.

A broken heart or will says 'I will no longer do this my way or on my terms, but I will surrender to Your ways.'

This type of heart that is fully surrendered to God, **this heart that is fixed** is not likely to turn away. A strong and compelling example of what I want to bring out in this message is the attitude of David in Psa. 51 and we'll go through the whole Psalm, but before we go there we need to look at the background that led to this.

David was king over all the tribes of Israel at the time and everything was going right until his attention was diverted to another man's wife leading to his downward spiral of sin.

Psalm 51 is one of the few Psalms that are pinpointed as to their historical origin. What happened to Bathsheba is well known.

2-Samuel 11:2—*where David's attention was diverted*: "And it came to pass one evening, David arose from his bed and walked upon the roof of the king's house. And from the roof *he saw* a woman bathing. And the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon."

David could have stopped right there before sin took hold of him, and he could have diverted his attention to what God wanted him to do.

Verse 4: "And David sent messengers and took her. And she came in to him and he lay with her. And when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, 'I *am* with child'" (4-5).

We know the story. He tried to cover his sin by bringing her husband Uriah home from battle so Uriah could lie with her and think it was his baby, but Uriah was too noble to go into his wife while his comrades were in battle. So, David arranged to have Uriah killed so that he could quickly marry Bathsheba and cover up the sin that way.

The last words in this chapter has the bottom line: v 27: "...But the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the LORD."

The Prophet Nathan was sent by God with a parable that entices David to pronounce his own condemnation. Then Nathan makes the astonishing statement 'you are the man' and asks 'why have you despised the word of the Lord to do evil in his sight.'

We pick up the story in 2-Samuel 12:13: "And David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. Only, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, this child born to you shall surely die'" (vs 13-14).

First of all David was very quick to recognize his sin but here are the facts:

- adultery is committed
- Uriah is dead
- the baby will die

Yet, the Lord will put away David's sin! How would the world's court system handle this?

Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

That's everyone in humanity all through history, and David was no exception here.

Verse 24 "But are being justified... [put in right standing] ...freely by His grace through the redemption that *is* in Christ Jesus."

Through deep repentance and obedience to God's Laws ***the opportunity is there to be brought back and to be put in right standing with God!***

Verse 25: "Whom God has openly manifested ***to be a propitiation through faith in His blood***, in order to demonstrate His righteousness, in respect to the remission of sins that are past."

➤ **Propitiation**—*continually regain the good will of*

The sins that David had committed as evil as they had been were in the past.

Verse 26:"Through the forbearance of God; yes, to publicly declare His Righteousness in the present time, that He might be just, and the One Who justifies the one who *is* of *the* faith of Jesus."

Jesus was the God of the Old Testament. David did have tremendous faith in God Who had promised that his descendants would sit on the throne forever. God did not simply sweep David's sin under the rug.

He sees from the time of David down the centuries to the death of his son Jesus Christ who would die in David's place, so that David's faith in God's mercy and future redemption unites David with Christ his descendant.

In God's all-knowing mind David's sins are counted as Christ's sins and Christ's righteousness as his righteousness and God justly passes over David's sin.

So, this with this background, I want to go through Psa. 51 and point out aspects of David's repentance.

Psalm 51:1: "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving kindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion, blot out my transgressions."

So, the first thing he did was to turn to his only hope: ***the mercy and the love of God!***

Verse 2: "Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin,"

So, he prays for the cleansing from his sin. An important aspect of the Holy Spirit is to have our conscience pierced from the sins we have committed.

The Apostle Paul mentions being cleansed ***by the washing of the water by the Word!***

Verse 3: "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me."

David acknowledges the seriousness of his sin and confesses at least five ways that his sin is extremely serious.

- 1) **he can't get the sin out of his mind**
- 2) **his sin is only against God**

Verse 4: "**Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight**, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge."

So it doesn't it doesn't mean that Uriah, Bathsheba and the baby weren't hurt in this, but all sin ever committed is against God ***because sin killed Christ!***

- 3) **David vindicates God not himself.** There is no:

- self-justification
- no defense
- no escape

Verse 4: "Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done evil in Your sight, that You might be justified when You speak and be in the right when You judge."

- 4) **David intensifies his guilt by drawing attention to his inborn corruption**

Verse 5: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

We all have the law of sin and death that we are striving to overcome.

- 5) **David admits that his sin not just against external law but against God's Light in his heart, the sin within**

Verse 6: "Behold, You desire Truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part You shall make me to know wisdom."

In v 7 *he admits that he wants to be cleansed*: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Hyssop was a branch used by the priests to sprinkle blood on a house that had a disease, and declare it clean (Lev. 14:51)!

David is crying out to God as his ultimate Priest, that He would forgive him and count him as clean from sin. And Jesus Christ is our High Priest!

After turning to God's mercy, and then praying for forgiveness and cleansing, and then professing the depth and greatness of corruption, David pleads for more than forgiveness. *He pleads for renewal, and is passionately committed to being changed by God!*

I want to draw attention to *six ways* he pours out his heart for change. Forgiven people are committed to being changed by God, hate what they were and set their faces to change.

1. **he prays that God would confirm to him at his election**

Verse 11: "Cast me not away from Your presence, and take not Your Holy Spirit from me."

He means *don't treat me as one not chosen!* Don't let me fall away and lose access to Your Holy Spirit.

2. **he prays for a heart and a spirit that are new and right and firm**

Verse 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

The right spirit here is *the established firm unwavering spirit!* He wants to eliminate the kind of instability that he had just experienced.

3. **he prays for the joy of God's salvation and for a spirit that is joyfully willing to follow God's word and be generous with people rather than exploiting them**

Verse 8: "Make me to hear joy and gladness that the bones, which You have broken, may rejoice."

Verse 12: "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and let *Your* free spirit uphold me."

One might wonder why David isn't crying out for sexual restraint. He knows that sexual restraint is a symptom not a disease. People give way to sexual sin because they don't have the fullness of joy and gladness in Christ. Their mind is not firm, steadfast and established and give way, because God does not have the place in their thoughts that He should have.

4. **he asked God to bring his joy to the overflow of praise**

Verse 15: "O LORD, open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise."

Praise is what joy in God does when obstacles are taken out of the way. That is what he's praying for:

O God, overcome everything in my life that keeps my heart dull and my mouth shut when they ought to be praising. Make my joy irrepressible.

5. **he asked that the upshot of this will be a life of effective education of right and Truth of God's way**

Verse 13: "Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall turn back to You."

David is not content just to be forgiven, to be clean, to be elect, to have a right spirit. He is not content to be joyful in God by himself. He will not be content until his broken life serves the healing of others.

6. **he discovered that God has crushed him in love and that a broken and contrite spirit is the mark of all God's children**

Verse 17: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise."

This is foundational to everything. Being a Christian means being broken and contrite. We are broken all the way in this life unless sin gets the upper hand. Being broken and contrite is not against joy and praise, but it is a flavor of Christian joy and praise.

Verse 16: "For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not take pleasure in burnt offering."

So, God doesn't want us to go through some ritual that we think will appease Him, especially if it is dealing with repentance. God does not want only outward transactions, but He wants inward transformation, *being transformed by the renewing of our mind!*

This kind of transformation only comes when we change internally, when we come with a heart that is crushed and broken over our sins and have a true desire for repentance. God will never despise.

Well, I'll make it plainer here. God doesn't want our 'stuff' or anything we can do for Him more than He wants our mind and our heart to be focused on Him.

When we lead with bringing our broken heart, we are bringing the type of sacrifice that God would not turn away. When we stop justifying our wrong choices, when our eyes are truly opened to sin, when we tremble or accept God's righteous condemnation of sin, that is when contrition is present.

When our actions speak louder than our words, we become real and transparent. A contrite heart wants to listen and obey God, to hearken to Him. The more we love God, the more we will want and desire to do the things that please Him. When we see how the world operates today, whether in politics, in major businesses or any other facets in society, people do not want to take responsibility for their actions, many of which have disastrous consequences!

For most of the world's problems, excuses are made and the blame is conveniently shifted away from the perpetrators.

- a contrite heart offers no excuses and shifts no blame
- a contrite heart throws itself upon the mercy of God, knowing that it desires nothing but righteous correction

Let's go where we have a look at God's perspective on things:

Isaiah 57:15: "For thus says the high and lofty One Who inhabits eternity... [He dwells in eternity with no beginning and no ending] ...Whose name *is* Holy; 'I dwell in the high and Holy place... [the Holy of Holies is in heaven] ...even with the one who is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.'"

So, there it is. Those with a contrite heart are promised a dwelling place with God. Their broken hearts will be made new. God says:

When I see a person with a contrite spirit, I will choose him or her as my friend. I will stay with that person and make my home in that person's life.

When God comes to the contrite, he revives the spirit and breeds new life into the heart.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool....'"

We see this perspective here. God created the whole universe and this earth, which is only a speck of dust in comparison. Not only that, not even that.

"...Where then *is* the house that you build for Me? And where *is* the place of My rest?" (v 1).

He asks a question. Where am I going to live? When we look at the size and the scope of what the known universe contains, we are blown away with awe. We have access to the images from the James Webb telescope, and even that is only a small part of what is in the universe.

Verse 2: "'For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look, to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and who trembles at My Word.'"

So, the emphasis changes here. As God looks down from the heights and glory of His Throne, who among the lowly beings on earth could capture His attention? After all, the nations with all their splendor and corridors of physical power are like a drop in the bucket and are counted as a small dust of the scales.

What mere individual could possibly draw His gaze? Well, God provides three non-negotiable qualifiers in this verse, each one expressing a prerequisite.

First, He will look at a poor spirit, often translated as 'humble.' The Hebrew 'ani' means to be poor, afflicted, needy and (inaudible). It conveys the idea of one who is lowly of heart that God requires His servants to be.

The virtue of spiritual poverty is absolutely necessary to be used by God. Jesus affirmed it when He said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.' No one seeking the spotlight in God's Kingdom will be enlisted by Him in active service. Nor can we hold any desire for self-promotion or self-glory.

We were called into His Family with a step of humble faith. Likewise, we will grow in usefulness to God only as we increasingly lower ourselves before Him and walk in humility.

Secondly, is the term 'contrite spirit,' being stricken or smitten. Rather than being puffed up and self-elevating, think of when Korah elevated himself against Moses, and what was the result of that?

We are required to be as one who is broken and yielded to God under His mighty hand. This life-long repentance needs to be cultivated in the depth of our being.

Thirdly, God will look to the one who 'trembles at My Word.'

This means we must take his word very seriously. God's Word is the Truth.

Psalm 119:160—*the longest of all Psalms*: "Your Word is true from the beginning, and every one of Your righteous ordinances endures forever."

Whatever God says, we must embrace and take to heart. It means responding to what He says with **reverential awe, high regard, and deep respect!** Putting this simply: God will honor the one who honors His Word.

Over the centuries since these words were spoken, nothing has changed. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, the day forever. God still demands the humility, contrition, and soul trembling of His servants.

Those who take His Word lightly will be passed over in His service. Those who are self-elevating will be set aside and forgotten. ***But those who submit themselves to the Eternal will be used for His purpose!***

Let's come to this example in, Luke 18, which is the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

Luke 18:10—*Jesus speaking*: “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.”

Here we have quite a contrast of two people, a contrast of two people in society, two different types.

Verse 11: “The Pharisee stood and prayed with himself in this manner: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers—or even as this tax collector.’”

Notice that he wasn't praying to God on His Throne in heaven. He was praying with himself or to himself. And he acknowledges the tax collector as someone below his standard of self-righteousness. So he says, ‘look at me!’

Verse 12: “I fast twice in the week, *and* I give a tithe *of* everything that I gain.”

Now contrast the attitude, this attitude, with the tax collector

Verse 13: “And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat himself on *the* chest, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner’.... [or *the* sinner] ...I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. **For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled; and the one who humbles himself shall be exalted**” (vs 13-14).

So, God wants a change of heart to the way the carnal mind thinks.

Deuteronomy 5:29—*dealing with a change of heart*: “Oh, that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”

We know that the children of Israel were only given the letter of the Law, and *the unconverted heart cannot obey God*. The change of heart begins with repentance, ***the transformation of the mind from the way we were out in the world!***

God leads us to humbly repent with a broken, contrite, crushed, and bruised heart. We recognize our brokenness and inability to fix ourselves. We see our sins and the filth they produce in our hearts. All our righteousness are as filthy rags. When we see this, then we can pray as David did:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me!

At this time, close to Passover, we can think of Paul's admonishment to us in:

2-Corinthians 13:5: “**Examine yourselves**... [in other words, place ourselves on trial] ...*to see* whether you are in the faith; prove your own selves. Don't you *of* your own selves know that Jesus Christ is in you? Otherwise, you are reprobates.”

So, a contrite mind will make it far easier for Jesus Christ to be in us. We don't want to be reprobates. The Apostle Peter gave his first message on that first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection in 30 A.D. It was about a subject that was certainly going to arouse attention. So, we pick up this story in

Acts 2:36—*Peter speaking*: “Therefore, let all *the* house of Israel know with full assurance... [or certainty or conviction] ...that God has made this *same* Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”

Some of those people were on the scene when Jesus was on trial and condemned to be crucified. But all of us have sinned and have had a part in the crucifixion of Christ.

Verse 37: “Now, after hearing *this*, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, ‘Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?’”

This is what happens to everyone God calls. ***They deeply regret their past life and want to change to God's way of life!***

Verse 38: “Then Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

This is where the Tree of Life comes into our awareness with the choices we make. The covenant is made with God the Father and with Jesus Christ.

We choose to obey His voice and believe His Word for the rest of our lives in the flesh! This means having a contrite heart in our spiritual development in overcoming the pulls of the flesh.

Verse 39: “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all those who are afar off, as

many as *the* Lord our God may call.”

So, many of us are far off, we’re miles from anyone else of like mind spiritually. But this is in God’s hands. We’ll know how many there will be when we’re resurrected and on the Sea of Glass.

What Peter described in Acts is the foundation of God’s *spiritual temple in us through Jesus Christ*, which will spread among those whom God has called, and will spread during the Millennium and the Great White Throne Judgment period, and will eventually encompass the whole universe. ***It begins with Passover!***

2-Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore, **if anyone be in Christ, he is a new creation...**”

So, being created doesn’t happen instantly, but it is a process over time, just as salvation is a process over time. ***It’s a process over our lifetime!***

“...the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (v 17).

Verse 18: “And all things *are* from God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation.”

He has made it all possible by His death and by His resurrection!

Verse 19: “Which *is*, that God was in Christ, reconciling *the* world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and He has entrusted to us *this* message of reconciliation.”

He willingly took all the sins of the world upon Himself!

Verse 20: “Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us. We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, **‘Be reconciled to God.’**”

We can only be reconciled to God if we have the mind of Christ. This does not mean to be proud, haughty, and lifted up like the world, ***but to have a mind that is contrite and broken to God’s will!***

Verse 21: **‘For He made Him Who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.’**

God’s gift of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit cleans our hearts and begins the process of changing it spiritually.

As God says in Ezekiel 11:19: “And I will give them one heart... [or mind; it’s a unity of mind] ...and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh, and will

give them a heart of flesh.”

So it’s the Holy Spirit with the mind of Christ being available. It’s a heart of sensitivity, a contrite heart ***that will submit to God’s ways and obey His voice!***

Verse 20: “So that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”

So, while this is a Millennial setting, it’s talking about converted people whose hard and stony hearts *are replaced by a broken and contrite heart!* The core of this message, close to Passover, ***is to look to God to create in us a clean, pure, healthy heart that is totally devoted to Him:***

- His ways
- His plan
- His purpose

God wants to give His Laws into our minds and inscribe them upon our hearts, and He wants to be our God and we his people.

This healing process or spiritual heart transplant is only possible because of God’s love and because of Christ’s supreme sacrifice for those whom God has called as firstfruits and then the rest of mankind.

Luke 4:18—*quoting from Isaiah:* **‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; for this reason, He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal those who are brokenhearted, to proclaim pardon to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to send forth in deliverance those who have been crushed.’**

We can look at each phrase of this verse and apply it to each one of us personally, Before Jesus Christ and we were called:

- we were ***poor in the understanding*** of God’s Truth
- we were ***captive under Satan’s system*** and deception
- we were ***blind to God’s Plan and love*** for mankind

And by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, which included all the scourging and accusations against Him—in the most unjust trial in history—He has sent forth deliverance to those who have been crushed and have a contrite heart.

Broken, bruised and repentant hearts are necessary for the healing that God has in mind to begin. If we approach Him in contrition, He can create in us a pure, sound, living, peaceful heart that will rejoice forever. ***Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!*** We praise God for all the

promises He has given us and God will look on us and welcome us as His children, whose hearts can be nourished by feeling the deep joy of being loved and belonging to the closely knitted God Family.

What is the result of a pure and contrite heart? *We'll get David's answer to this in:*

Psalm 32:1: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.... [this is after having repented of sin] ...Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (vs 1-2).

There is no guile in having a contrite heart. Totally submissive to God the Father who owns us as His and to Jesus Christ, our elder Brother.

1-John 3:1: "Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, **that we should be called the children of God!**...."

This is God's very own offspring. If we have a humble and contrite heart there is no need to worry about the future, which is in God's hands, and because of all that Jesus Christ has done for us.

Jesus promised to His disciples and to us, even in the light of knowing that He was going to be mercilessly brutalized only a few hours later. So this is after last Passover, *Jesus' last Passover*, and He's informing his disciples.

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me."

Don't let anything shake our faith or diminish our love for God and serving Him with a contrite heart. Think of the end result.

Verse 2: "In My Father's house are many dwelling places... [or offices of responsibility that we're going to be given] ...if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again... [that's the promise He's given to us] ...and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also" (vs 2-3).

This is a special place for each one of us to dwell with God at His appointed time. ***This is on provision that we have the right attitudes and keep God's Commandments and have a contrite heart to obeying Him and look to His Word!***

As we take the Passover in just a few days time and observe the days of Unleavened Bread, ***may our hearts rejoice as we do this!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 51:17
- 2) 2-Samuel 11:2, 4-5, 27

- 3) 2-Samuel 12:13-14
- 4) Romans 3:23-26
- 5) Psalm 51:1-7, 11, 10, 8, 12, 15, 13, 17, 16
- 6) Isaiah 57:15
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-2
- 8) Psalm 119:160
- 9) Luke 18:10-14
- 10) Deuteronomy 5:29
- 11) 2-Corinthians 13:5
- 12) Acts 2:36-39
- 13) 2-Corinthians 5:17-21
- 14) Ezekiel 11:19-20
- 15) Luke 4:18
- 16) Psalm 32:1-2
- 17) 1-John 3:1
- 18) John 14:1-3

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Leviticus 14:51

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