

# FROM UNCLEANNES

## THE LESSON: 2 SAMUEL 12, PSALM 51

*From all uncleanness in thought, word, and deed... Good Lord, deliver us.*

Jesus said, “It is not what goes into the mouth that makes a person unclean” and “eating with unwashed hands doesn’t defile a person”. The religious establishment of that day had become obsessed with mere outward cleanliness. But Jesus explained that what actually makes people “unclean” comes from the *heart*: things like “evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander” (Matthew 15:11-20).

When we pray to be delivered from uncleanness, we are speaking of this sort of serious moral defilement that can grow out of the heart, moving into our thoughts, words, and actions.

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Scripture refers to King David as “a man after God’s own heart” yet he is the one who wrote Psalm 51 – the prayer of someone whose heart is seriously unclean. In a moment we’re going to look at the prophetic visit that brought King David to his knees in that Psalm. It’s a pretty bad scene. But here’s what we need to remember: David was given a special place in the genealogy of Jesus and *continues* to be known as a man after God’s own heart. *Why?* Because when he was confronted with his serious moral sin, he responded with sincere repentance. And as his own testimony bore out, God will not reject “a broken and contrite heart”.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER))

*Psalm 119:11 says, “I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you”. The At-Home Challenge during this unit is to commit a short passage of scripture to memory each week. If the suggested passage is too long, try picking out one verse or phrase that speaks to you particularly and commit it to memory. You will be amazed at how the words of scripture, stored in the heart, will return to you in the moments when you most need them.*

Select a few verses from **PSALM 51** to memorize (or if you are feeling ambitious, memorize the whole thing!)

Here are a few suggestions:

- <sup>1</sup> Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; blot out my transgressions.
- <sup>10</sup> Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
- <sup>15</sup> O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.
- <sup>17</sup> The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

*Almighty and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent: Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.* (THE COLLECT FOR ASH WEDNESDAY, BCP PAGE 138)

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## 2 SAMUEL 12, PSALM 51: **GUILTY OF AN UNCLEAN HEART**

**(2 SAMUEL 12):** <sup>1</sup>And the Lord sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, “There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. <sup>2</sup>The rich man had very many flocks and herds, <sup>3</sup>but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms, and it was like a daughter to him. <sup>4</sup>Now there came a traveller to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man’s lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” <sup>5</sup>Then David’s anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, <sup>6</sup>and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.”

<sup>7</sup>Nathan said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. <sup>8</sup>And I gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. <sup>9</sup>Why have you despised the word of the Lord, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. <sup>10</sup>Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife’... <sup>13</sup>David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”

**(PSALM 51):** <sup>1</sup>Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. <sup>2</sup>Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! <sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. <sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgement... <sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. <sup>10</sup>Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me... <sup>17</sup>The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.