

# How to Handle a Bad Conscience

*Ray Stedman*

## I. Introduction.

A. Text: Psalm 51.

B. The background of the Psalm is when David committed adultery with Bathsheba.

1. David covered up his sin by killing Bathsheba's husband Uriah.
2. He expresses his grief in Psalm 32.
3. Nathan had to approach David subtly through a parable to convict him.

## II. How to handle a guilty conscience.

A. Pray for forgiveness.

1. This is the need for mercy.
2. There is a need for the debt to be blotted out.
3. There is a need for cleansing—sin is like a stain upon the soul.

B. The basis for forgiveness.

1. God's steadfast love.
2. God's abundant mercies.

C. Sin must always be acknowledged—it is an insult and injury to God.

## III. The prayer.

A. A request for wisdom—the truth about oneself regarding one's fallen-ness.

B. A request for purging with hyssop—the evil must be cleansed.

C. A request for truth for joy.

D. A request for blotting out guilt.

E. A request for a new heart.

F. A request for the assurance of the Holy Spirit. (Hebrews 13)

G. A request for the will to do God's will.

1. God has given us the power we need to break away from evil.
2. A person must realize this to do this.
3. Forgiveness must be performed.
4. People need to see the relief of the freedom of sin.

IV. Praise.

V. David requests restoration of his people because he knew his sin affected all the people since he was king.

**Application questions:**

1. Why pray for forgiveness when God already knows that is what we need?

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2. Why is it important to have a basis for forgiveness? Should God not just forgive?

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3. Have you ever found it necessary to request the will to do God's will? Explain why David found this necessary and how you might be able to relate.

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