

How Much Does Real Rest Cost?



SABBATH—JULY 17

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: 2 Samuel 11:1–5; 2 Samuel 12:1–4; 2 Samuel 12:10–23; Psalm 51; 1 John 1:9.

MEMORY VERSE: “God, create [make] a pure [clean] heart in me. Give me a new spirit that is faithful [loyal and obedient] to you” (Psalm 51:10, NIV).



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SOME PEOPLE will do almost anything to have a little peace and quiet. They will pay for quiet time, too. Many big cities have rooms that have no Wi-Fi. People can pay by the hour to use these rooms. These rooms have strict rules: no noise, no visitors. People will rent these rooms just so that they can nap or sit quietly and think. There also are small sleep rooms that people can pay to use in airports. Workers can even buy boxes that can be unfolded and pulled over the head and chest. The boxes are the same as a shield. People use these cardboard shields when they want to feel private during their breaks at work.

Real rest costs us something, too. Sure, many self-help experts want you to believe that finding rest is as easy as making the choice to rest. But if we are honest with ourselves, we will see that we cannot bring real rest to our hearts. In the 4th century, Augustine talked in his famous book *Confessions* about the loving-favor of God. Augustine says, “You [God] have made us for yourself. Our hearts do not rest until they find rest in you.”—Adapted.

This week, we look at the life of David. David was a man who showed to other people the love that was in the heart of God. As we read about David, we will find out how he discovered what rest in God really cost.

TIRED AND WORN OUT (2 Samuel 11:1–5)

On a warm spring evening, King David finds no rest. He walks on the roof of his royal house. David really should be with his army across the Jordan River. David should be leading his army in war. He should be helping Israel beat the Ammonites so that his kingdom finally will be at peace.

David is not where he should be. This wrong choice makes it possible for him to fall into sin. Read the story about the fall of David in 2 Samuel 11:1–5. What happens in this story? What awful sin does David do?

David looks out over the city and sees a very beautiful woman. She is taking a bath. David wants her. His wish to sin takes control of his heart. That evening, David sleeps with Bathsheba. Bathsheba is the wife of one of the soldiers of King David. In Bible times, kings have power to do whatever they want. As king, David does not need to follow the rules that everyone else must obey. But this painful story shows us a powerful Bible truth. We see that King David must continue to follow the law of God.

The law of God protects us from sin. It keeps us safe. So, when the king breaks the law of God, he must pay the awful price. What happens as soon as David breaks the law of God? Right away, he feels his life start to change for the worse. David tries to tell himself that no one knows about his sin. Then Bathsheba tells him she is going to have his baby. Her husband is too far away and has been gone too long to be the father. Now David is in deep trouble.

How does David try to cover his sin? Read 2 Samuel 11:6–27 for the answer.

David comes up with a very tricky plan to get Uriah home to sleep with his wife. This way, everyone will think Uriah is the father of the child of Bathsheba. But the plan of David fails. Uriah is loyal to God. Uriah refuses to visit his wife. He tells David, “ ‘The Holy Box [the ark] and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My lord Joab and my lord’s officers are camping out in the field. So it is not right for me to go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife’ ” (2 Samuel 11:11, ERV). When the tricky plan does not work, David decides to use force. He orders for Uriah to be killed in war.



David looks out over the city and sees a very beautiful woman.

NATHAN AND THE PICTURE STORY (2 Samuel 12:1–4)

First, David sleeps with the wife of one of his most loyal soldiers. Then David tries to hide his sin. David orders Joab to kill Uriah by putting him where the enemy can shoot Uriah in war. These sins show us one of the worst times in the life of King David. But there is good news. God sends Nathan to David. Nathan is a prophet. A prophet is a special messenger from God. Nathan and David are friends. Earlier, Nathan gives David advice about his plans to build God a temple (2 Samuel 7). Now, God gives Nathan a different job to do for the guilty king.



God sends Nathan to David. Nathan is a prophet.

Why do you think Nathan chooses to tell a story? Why do you think Nathan does not shame or accuse David by naming his sin right away? Read 2 Samuel 12:1–14 for the answer.

Nathan knows what to say. Nathan says it in a way that David can understand. David was a shepherd before he was a king. So, Nathan tells a story about sheep. Nathan knows that David is a man who loves to do what is just and fair. So, we see that Nathan sets a trap for David in this story. David does not know Nathan is talking about him. David gets upset when he hears the story. David says the rich man should die because he stole the sheep from the poor man.

When David judges himself, Nathan says, “ ‘You are the man!’ ” (2 Samuel 12:7, NIV). When we look at the way David answers Nathan, we can see that Nathan chooses to show David the mercy and love of God for sinners. David must feel the pain that God feels when one of His children sins against Him. The words of Nathan touch the heart of David. David sees how awful his sin really is.

Why does David say, “I have sinned against the Lord”? Why does he not say, “I have sinned against Bathsheba”? Or, “I am a killer”? For the answer, read 2 Samuel 12:13; read also Psalm 51:4.

David sees that sin hurts God. When we sin, we also hurt ourselves. Our sin hurts other people, too. When we sin, we cause our families or churches to feel shame. But most important, we cause God pain. Our sin nails Jesus to the cross again.

FORGIVE AND FORGET? (2 Samuel 12:10–23)

David announces his own punishment (2 Samuel 12:5, 6). Then Nathan tells David that his sin is very big. Bad things will happen in the future because of it (2 Samuel 12:10–12). The heart of David breaks with sorrow. David confesses his sin. Right away, Nathan tells David, “ ‘The LORD will forgive you, even for this sin’ ” (2 Samuel 12:13, ERV). Do you see that David does not need to wait for God to forgive him? David does not prove that he is ready to be forgiven before God forgives him.

Then Nathan tells David some more bad news. The child of David and Bathsheba will die soon after it is born.

What does it mean that God forgives the sin of David and takes it away? Does God change the past? Does everyone just forget about what happened? Read 2 Samuel 12:10–23 as you think about these questions.

David sees his life fall apart: the dead baby, his future family troubles with his sons. But David also understands that God will forgive his sin. The mercy of God will cover the mistakes he made. Someday, the bad things that happened will be made right. God will heal the suffering. So, David can find rest now in the mercy of God.

What does David feel he really needs? Also, what does David wish for more than anything? For the answer, read Psalm 51:1–6.

In Psalm 51, David makes a public announcement. He opens his heart and confesses his sins. David cries for the mercy of God. He asks for God to show him His love that never fails. David wishes for a clean heart and a new spirit.

This psalm helps us understand how much our rest in Jesus costs. First, we must understand that, as sinners, we need help. We need a Savior. We see our sins. Then we pray to the only One who can wash us and make us clean. The Savior is the only One who can make us new. When we pray to Him for help, we will find courage. If you ever feel you sinned too much for God to take you back, remember David. David sleeps with a married woman. David lies. He kills. He breaks at least five of the Ten Commandments. If David can pray to God for help and forgiveness, then we can, too.



The child of David and Bathsheba will die soon after he is born.

SOMETHING NEW (Psalm 51:7–12)

David confesses his sin. He does not try to make an excuse for his behavior or say that his sin is not really that bad. Then David asks God for something. What does David ask for? For the answer, read Psalm 51:7–12.

David talks about being made clean with “hyssop” (Psalm 51:7, NIV). Hyssop is a small plant that belongs to the mint family. Every Israelite in Bible times understands what David is talking about when he says “hyssop.” Hyssop is used in the law of Moses to make a person clean (Leviticus 14:4). By talking about hyssop, David shows that he understands his need for a Substitute. The Substitute will accept the punishment of David and his sins. This Savior will come in the future and take away the sins of all the people on earth who accept Him.

Next, David asks God for joy. Are you surprised that David asks for joy after all the awful things he does? Verse 13 of Psalm 51 helps us understand why David asks for joy: “Then I will teach your ways to those [people] who do wrong. And sinners will turn back to you” (Psalm 51:13, ICB).



Hyssop is used in the law of Moses to make a person clean.

After David sins and confesses, he prays, “Do not send me away from you. Do not take your Holy Spirit away from me” (Psalm 51:11, ICB). Why do you think David prays this prayer? Read also Psalm 51:12 for the answer.

David does not want to lose the feeling of having God in his heart. David sees that he is weak without the Holy Spirit. David knows now how easily the human heart can fall into sin. David cannot trust himself anymore.

David understands he cannot win against sin by himself. His win against sin will come only from God. So, David must depend fully on God.

Our win against sin is not about us. Our win is about Jesus. When we understand this Bible truth, we will wish deeply for Jesus to live in our hearts. We will feel hungry for His Spirit. We will want the joy that comes from His saving us. We will see our need for a new heart and a new life. We need the rest that only Jesus can give us. That is why God must make us new again. Then we can rest.

Do you know the joy of being made free from sin? If no, then how can this story about David help you?

RAYS OF LIGHT (Psalm 51:13–19)

What do most of us want to do after we mess up and are forgiven? We want to forget the mistake ever happened, right? Thinking about our mistakes can be painful.

What does David want to do with his painful experience? For the answer, read Psalm 51:13–19.

When a bowl or vase breaks, we throw the pieces away. At least, that is what most people do. But in Japan, there are people who fix broken clay pots. This work has a special name: “**kintsugi**.” In **kintsugi** art, the artist uses gold or silver to glue the broken pieces back together. The artist makes a beautiful work of art from a broken pot.

God does the same thing with us. God forgives our sins and makes us new again. The forgiveness of God glues the pieces of our broken lives back together. The places where we were broken in the past show other people the love of God for us. We become living lights for God. Then we will want to shout with joy. We will join David in saying, “Let me sing about all the good things you do for me!” (Psalm 51:14, ERV). We do not try to repair ourselves. Our hearts are now empty of all pride. God can fill our empty hearts with praise. Then our hearts will be the same as bright rays of light. The love of God will shine from our hearts to everyone we meet. When God forgives us, we want to encourage other people to ask God for His forgiveness, too

How are Psalm 51 and 1 John 1:9 the same?

1 John 1:9 and Psalm 51 teach the same message. David knows that God “will gladly accept a heart that is broken because of sadness [feeling sad] over [because of] sin” (Psalm 51:17, NIV). John tells us that “if we confess our sins, God will forgive us. We can trust God to do this. He always does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrong things we have done” (1 John 1:9, ERV).

Again, David cannot fix the mess he made. He suffers because of his mistakes. At the same time, David knows that God forgives him.

How can you make the promise in 1 John 1:9 yours right now? How should you feel after you do?



The artist makes a beautiful work of art from a broken pot.



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ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “David feels sorry for his sin and turns away from it. His feeling is real. David does not try to make his sin look less awful than it really is. David prays for forgiveness. But his prayers do not come from a heart that is filled with a fear of being judged or a wish to escape punishment. David sees that his sin makes his heart very dirty. David hates his sin. That is why David does not pray only for forgiveness. David also asks God to make his heart clean. . . . God promises to forgive sinners who turn away from sin. In these promises, David sees proof of the forgiveness of God. David sees that God will accept him again (Psalm 51:16, 17). . . .

“The sin of David shows us a powerful picture of the human heart. The human heart is weak. The wish to do wrong is strong. But the story of David also shows us an example of being sorry for sin and turning fully away from it. Many thousands of Christians have fallen into sin. The story of David has helped them. These sinners remember how David turned from sin and confessed his wrong. . . . The story of David gives these Christians the courage to turn away from sin and to turn back to the law of God.

“So, we must empty our hearts of all pride. We must confess our sins. We must turn away from our sins with the help of the Holy Spirit. Then we may be sure that there is hope for us. . . . The Lord will not turn away one person who truly turns from sin and comes to Him.”—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 725, 726, adapted.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Why do you think the Bible includes this story about David?
- ② We must accept by faith that we are the forgiven sons and daughters of the King of heaven. How can we have this hope when we know we are sinners who need God to forgive us?
- ③ Why is all sin really against God? What does it mean to sin against God?
- ④ Why does God allow suffering to happen? How does the war between God and Satan help answer this question?
- ⑤ Psalm 51:11, 12 shows us that sin separates us from God. What has been your own experience with how this happens? How did separation make you feel? Why is the promise of mercy and forgiveness from God our only hope?

THANKING GOD FOR LIFE

15-year-old Giselle felt sick when she woke up. Every morning, Giselle prayed before she got out of bed. This morning, Giselle prayed, “Dear God, thank You for everything You do for me. Thank You most of all that I am alive.”

Giselle was born in Rwanda in Africa. Life was difficult for Giselle in Rwanda. Her parents had a hard time finding work there. The family did not have enough food. Giselle and her family escaped Rwanda when Giselle was 12. Then Giselle and her family moved to the United States. Now they lived in a small home in Georgia.

This morning, Giselle felt very weak after she prayed. She got out of bed and walked carefully downstairs. She told her mother, “I do not feel well.”

Mother was talking on the phone. But she stopped talking to answer Giselle. “Go back upstairs and get into bed. Maybe you will feel better after you rest some more.” Giselle started to climb the stairs. But when she reached the third step, she fell down and landed on the floor. She heard Mother shout her name.

“Giselle!” Mother cried. “Are you OK?”

Giselle did not answer. She had trouble breathing. Mother hung up the phone and ran over to Giselle.

“Giselle! Giselle!” Mother said.

Giselle still did not answer.

Mother touched the face of Giselle. Then she asked her older daughter to come help. Mother told her to bring an electric fan.

The cool air felt nice to Giselle. She started to breathe more easily again.

Mother wanted to take Giselle to the hospital. But Giselle said she was fine. Mother gave Giselle some water to drink. Later, Giselle learned from her doctor that she fell down because she was not eating enough good food.

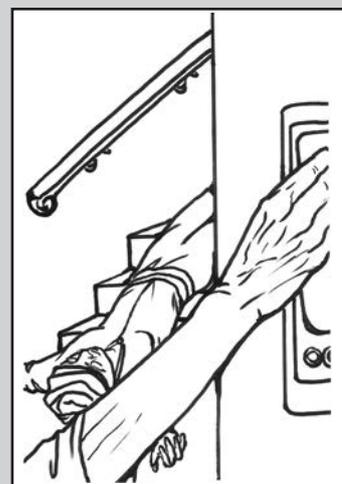
That night, Giselle prayed before she went to sleep. Giselle always prayed every night before going to bed.

“Dear God, thank You for this day. Thank You for everything You did for me and my family. Thank You most of all for keeping me alive.”

This quarter, the 13th Sabbath Offering will help children the same as Giselle to study at Seventh-day Adventist schools in North America. Your 13th Sabbath Offering in 2011 helped Giselle study at a Seventh-day Adventist school in Georgia in the United States. Because of this school, Giselle gave her heart to Jesus and was baptized.

INSIDE *Story*

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Mother hung up the phone and ran over to Giselle.