



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE—YOUTH

Year 3—The God Who Pursues Relationship: A Story of God's People

Module 4: God Leads His People

Lesson 6: God Demands and Desires our Salvation—Psalm 51

ENCOUNTER 1—Community Discussion

Read Psalm 51 together out loud as a group. Encourage each person to journal through the passage using these questions. After allowing sufficient time for reflection, invite the group to share their thoughts.

How is this God's story?

How is this others' story?

How is this my story?

How is this the world's story?

ENCOUNTER 2—Community Discussion

(Read the biblical reflection included with this lesson. The questions are designed for your group to enter into a meaningful dialogue about the Word. The bulleted teaching points are taken from the reflection and correspond to the questions.)

GOD'S STORY

What does David say about God's character in this psalm?

- David seeks mercy according to God's "unfailing love" and "great compassion."
- Alongside of what David directly prays, he also indirectly reveals his trust in God's ability to wipe the slate clean for him.

Why is David's sin against both God and the people he hurt?

- Sin is more than failing to follow God's commandments—it's an act of betrayal relationally.
- By using the word "blot" in regards to his sins, David appealed to God as a king who is able to expunge a record or grant a pardon.

How can David be so sure God forgave him? How can we be sure God forgives us when we confess our sin to Him?

- David took responsibility for his offense after trying to dodge it. The psalm became public, as did his confession to God.
- By appealing to God's grace and mercy, David acknowledged his sin as a personal issue with God alone. He knew he had to be purified from his choices and his sin nature.

OUR STORY

What does it mean to confess your sins to God?

- Sin has to be cleansed according to God's ways and not the way of society or people. It can't be done symbolically if it means nothing personally.
- David didn't just apologize for his choices, but sought out a right relationship with God.

How do you try to deal with temptations that come up again and again?

- If we resist temptation by relying on God, we become a stronger person for it. If we give into temptation, we rely on God for mercy. In either case, we end up relying on God—either for mercy or for strength.

OTHERS' STORY

Why do you think people try to cancel out their sins with good deeds?

- In reality, there's no amount of human penance or religious sacrifice that can repair a damaged connection with God. Only he can bridge the gap with himself.

Is it possible to live in among people who sin without their sin impacting our lives?

- One tension Christians face is as we dedicate our lives to God we become separated from the way many others live. A phrase we can use to reconcile this is "living IN the world but not OF the world."
- Separating ourselves from evil has become more challenging since technology has advanced. We can let our guard down for television and internet signals that bring images into our homes we would never allow to happen live in front of us.

THE WORLD'S STORY

How have the public actions of other Christians who have fallen affected the people you're trying to reach?

- The public's perception of Christianity is often less about the way things should be than about the way things often are. When everyone from politicians to pastors claim to follow Jesus yet do or say things contrary to his teachings, more cynicism is created.
- Christ does the life-change through people. Even when someone in Christian leadership sins, what God did through that person isn't canceled out. The leader's future ministry position may be affected by the choice, but those who were ministered to in the past can still forge forward.

David prays that he would be restored back to the "joy" of his salvation. What do you think this means?

- Christians will struggle with maintaining purity from sin in the world unless they develop a heart willing to look deeper than what the world offers. By having a willing heart, soul, and mind we can apply our strength toward God.

What do you think it means to "sing of (God's) righteousness"?

- Only God can turn an ungodly person into a new creation. The more we "sing out" how awesome God is, the more others will know of Him and realize He can do things they never could their own sweat or merit.
- Psalm 51 speaks to God's holiness as much as it does his mercy.

PRAYER

(Lead your group in corporate prayer.)

*Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

*When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.*

*Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.*

*Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.
You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should
go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on you.
Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.
Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.*

*Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!*

(Psalm 32)

WEEKLY PRACTICE

(Read the weekly practice out loud, and challenge your group to practice *missio* beyond today.)

Often we know we should pray, but find ourselves getting too busy or forgetful to make it a regular part of our daily lives. A helpful way to remember is to write the word ACTS on a 3x5 index card and place it somewhere you will see it before you go to bed or when you wake up in the morning. This card will remind you to go before God in prayer and help you focus as you come before Him with a humble heart.

Adoration—Praise God for who He is.

Confession—Confess anything that you need God to forgive or help you with in your relationship with Him or others.

Thanksgiving—Thanks God for all He does.

Supplication—Bring your requests before God.

BECOMING MY STORY

(Encourage the group to spend time this week in God's Word, allowing it to penetrate their heart and life.)

Nehemiah 9

1 John 1

Spend time this week reading and journaling through the above scriptures. In the context of Psalm 51, consider the following questions:

What is happening inside of me that I need to confess to God before it seizes me in a negative way?

What do others in my life need to know about me so I can better address my blind spots?

Consider other passages you might know related to Psalm 51 and read them this week, journaling as you go.