



What's Needed?

Psalm 32



What's Needed for What?

- ❑ In Lesson 3, the question was “What’s Wrong?” The answer was “sin.”¹ Because of sin, man’s natural fallen condition is a broken relationship with the creator God.²
- ❑ Humans are personal beings made by a *personal* God. God is the Creator, Designer, Purpose-giver, Ultimate Authority, Law-giver and Judge. For the believer, God is also Father.
- ❑ A broken or damaged relationship with God results in guilt, shame, and/or fear. We may not realize these conditions or feel these emotions, but we do realize that *something* is missing or wrong.³ In response to the problem of sin, we now ask “What’s Needed?”

Blessed is...

- ❑ Read Psalm 32.⁴ The psalm begins with a wisdom saying (*v. 1-2*). Verses 1-2 use three different Hebrew words (transgressions, sin, sin/iniquity)⁵ to represent “what’s wrong.”
 1. Based on verses 1-2, whom is blessed? Why is such a person blessed?⁶

- ❑ Verses 1-2 are quoted in Paul’s letter to the Romans (4:7-8). Paul makes it clear that we are forgiven (and made right with God) by God’s grace. We cannot earn it! It is a gift of God received through faith. This is possible because of Jesus Christ’s death on the cross, for us.

📖 “For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ” (2 *Corinthians* 5:21, *NLT*).



Personal Testimony

- ❑ Read verses 3-5. David shares his experience. He went through two phases. At first, he “kept silent” (*v. 3*). In other words, he refused to confess his sin. As a result, he constantly experienced inward unrest or disturbance, and a loss of strength and health (*vv. 3b-4*).⁷
- ❑ However, David realized “what’s needed,” and he did what he needed to do (*v. 5*). He acknowledged his sin.⁸ He did not try to hide it. He confessed his sins to the LORD.

¹ There are various ways to define ‘sin.’ One definition is ‘any action or attitude that is opposed to the authority and moral will of God.’ This coincides with the rejection of God’s rightful place in our lives (Psalm 14:1a). ‘Sin’ can also refer to the condition of separation from God (that is, broken relationship) that arises from such rejection.

² Relationship with God can be restored by God’s grace through faith. However, sin still affects the relationship. A true believer’s sin does not *break* his/her relationship with God, but it adversely affects fellowship with God.

³ Some experience guilt, shame or fear more than others, for various reasons (perhaps for wrong reasons). In any case, as we become more aware of who God is, the more sensitive we become to these conditions or emotions.

⁴ ‘*selah*’ – probably to indicate a pause in the musical presentation, or perhaps a musical interlude.

⁵ ‘transgressions’ (*peša’*) – rebellion against God; ‘sin’ (*hata’ah*) – turning away from the true path (the most general term for sin); ‘sin’ or ‘iniquity’ (*awon*) – distortion, perversion, evil, disrespect for God.

⁶ Blessed is the person whose sins are forgiven (lifted) and covered; and whose sin does not count against him. Forgiveness of sin releases the person from guilt (and condemnation), shame, and fear. Since sin separates us from God, forgiveness of sin allows reconciliation (restoration of relationship) to God, who is the Source of blessing.

⁷ This certainly involves a loss of spiritual health or wellness, and may also involve physical sickness.

⁸ ‘acknowledge’ – ‘admit to be true.’ Verse 5 uses the same three words for sin as verses 1-2.

2. What attitudes and knowledge are needed for a person to confess his/her sin? (vv. 2-5)⁹

Lesson Learned

- ❑ Read verses 6-7. In verses 6-7, David addresses God. At the same time, he exhorts others¹⁰ to learn from his experience. He exhorts others to pray to God while he may be found (v. 6a).¹¹
- ❑ David understands that the LORD is his “hiding place” – *the* place of true safety, security and protection. Our trust in God, and his forgiveness and acceptance, allow us to be in that place.

Instruction

- ❑ Read verses 8-10.¹² Not only should we pray, we should listen to God’s instruction. When we listen and obey, we can have confidence that God is guiding us, and protecting us (v. 8).
- ❑ We should *not* be like a horse or mule, which have no moral sense to guide them. They must be controlled by “bit and bridle” (v. 9). However, we must be open to God’s will and respond in trust and obedience. If we do, we will avoid the sorrows of the wicked, and instead be surrounded by the LORD’s unfailing love (v. 10).



What’s Needed?

3. What’s needed (from us) to enter into a relationship with God?¹³ Based on Psalm 32, what’s needed (from us, as believers) to enjoy fellowship with God and be what God calls us to be?¹⁴

Praise

- ❑ Blessed are those whose sins are forgiven! Blessed are those who are surrounded by the LORD’s unfailing love! What should such people do in response? Read verse 11.

Reflection/Application

- Do you agree with the Bible’s answer to “what’s wrong?” If not, the Bible’s answer to “what’s needed?” makes no sense. “What’s wrong” matters because a personal God exists. Whatever you presently believe about “what’s wrong,” seek to know God; seek to know Jesus.
- As a Christian, are you enjoying fellowship with God? Is there sin in your life that you need to confess? Reflect on Psalm 32 & 1 John 1:8-9, and devote some time to prayer, asking God to reveal sin in your life. Confess your sins, commit to obedience, and rejoice in the Lord.

⁹ Attitudes of honesty, openness, and humility are needed (vv. 2b, 5a). Knowledge of truth and moral rightness is needed, which brings knowledge of sin. This knowledge increases through instruction from God’s word (the Bible), and the conviction of the Spirit, but every human has enough knowledge to be held responsible (Romans 1:18-21).

¹⁰ ‘godly’ – refers to God’s people; who are, or should be, devoted to God; but the application can be extended.

¹¹ One Bible scholar explains, “God does not make himself readily available to those who seek him only in times of extreme distress. The psalmist’s exhortation is that a relationship of trust and reliance on God must be built in times of relative peace and security, so that when the ‘mighty waters’ of trouble come, the one who has an established pattern of communication with Yahweh (the LORD) will not be overcome.” (Gerald Wilson, *The NIV Application Commentary: Psalms – Volume 1* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002], 547.)

¹² This may be God’s instruction (e.g., a priestly word of godly instruction), or perhaps David’s instruction (v. 8).

¹³ We need to agree with “what’s wrong,” confess our sin, and turn to God. We need to trust in God’s provision for forgiveness. That provision is Jesus Christ, who died for our sins, and arose from the dead.

¹⁴ Based on Psalm 32, we need to be open and honest with God, confess our sins, listen to God’s instruction, and obey. (We also need to realize our need of God’s grace. It is God’s grace that saves us, and empowers us to obey.) We need to delight ourselves in the Lord, and offer him thanksgiving and praise. What else?