SINNER'S **PRAYER**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

	PSALM 51
1	Psalm 51 is a vivid reminder of how the grace of God can turn our worst failures into heart-felt worship. After being rebuked by Nathan, David ran to the Lord who had revealed himself as "merciful" and "abounding in steadfast love" (Ps. 51:1, Ex. 34:6). What is the grace of God? Think of your own story and frame it through lens of "the praise of His glorious grace." (Eph. 1:5-6)
	God's grace is free to all who receive it, but it cost Him greatly in Christ. Read through Psalm 51 and then trace' how amazing the gift of His grace is in the following verses.
	Only Christ's innocent blood can ultimately erase man's guilt (Heb. 9:14, 22).
	Only Christ's perfect record of "righteousness" can substitute for man's sin (cf. Ps. 51:14, Heb. 4:15).
	Only Christ's Spirit can regenerate the human will (Ps 51:12, 19; Titus 3:8).
	Only Christ's sacrifice is permanently delighted in by God (Ps. 51:16; Heb. 10:5–10).
	Salvation is only by grace, never in response to our merit or deserving (Ps. 51:18; Titus 3:3-7, Phil. 2:13).
2	What were some of the emotions that David could have been feeling as he contemplated his sin? (See Psalms 51:2,3,7,8,10,12 for several descriptors). Talk about the different ways that sin affects the whole person. Explore the following areas: relationships, mental health, emotional health, physical health, and spiritual vitality.
3	Take some time to discuss how true repentance is the best response to the depth of our sinfulness. What is the foundation for that kind of response? Why can we truly repentwhat makes it not just possible but the best thing for us? Consider how God's character and faithfulness supports genuine repentance.
	According to 2 Corinthians 7:8-11, what is the difference between repentance and remorse? ²

Think about how much you know of real repentance, even though your sins are doubtless not as grievous as David's. If we don't repent, what are we forgetting about God and ourselves?

Adapted from The Gospel Transformation Study Bible Eric Lane, Psalms 1-89: The Lord Saves, Focus on the Bible Commentary (Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2006), 235–237.

	Q	Discuss a few biblical examples where people had proper or improper repentance.
4	Wh	at are some of the different ways people try to deal with a guilty conscience? How are those ways ultimately empty and powerless?
		What more do Christians know about how to overcome a guilty conscience than David did, enabling us to come to him without fear? (See Heb. 10:22.)
		Read 1 John 4:16-19. What is the "perfect love" that is described in these verses. How does "perfect love casts out fear"?
5	stea "As	en we are hard on others and easy on ourselves, we do not understand God's grace. After hearing Nathan tell the story of the rich man ling and killing the poor man's lamb, we see in 2 Sam 12:5-6 how David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he no pity." Look up Exodus 21:37 and find the prescribed penalty for stealing a lamb.
		Discuss two indicators of our lack of an understanding of God's grace: when we are quick to point out other people's faults while ignoring our own and when we are quick to dish out judgment that is sterner than the law requires.
	O ₀	Consider what an anti-psalm 51 would sound like if David, after being confronted with his sin, deflected God's work and grace to belittle his sin or blame others. What might a response of blaming or belitltinghave looked like? What are some other ways that don't work when dealing with guilt and sin?
	•	How do you see yourself in that anti-psalm 51 excercise? Think of a sin that you are presently struggling with (you don't need to share what it is). What are some ineffective ways that you often try to deal with your own sin?