

Text: Psalm 51

**Title: Restoring a Broken Relationship with God
[The Folly of Hidden Sin]**

Proposition: Restoring a broken relationship with God demands humility.

Ashley Madison List made public:

- Tagline: "Life is short. Have an affair."

A year after one of the most devastating cyber crimes in internet history (occurring in 2015), which wrecked marriages, the victims have told how the scandal changed their lives.

Last summer, hackers released the personal details of 35 million members of adulterous dating site Ashley Madison.

The July 2015 cyber attack resulted in divorce, shame, and even suicide.

At least two deaths were linked to the leak, after police in Canada reported the victims had taken their own lives.

And now Channel 4 documentary makers have met the victims of the exposure, both site users, and their spurned partners.

At the time of the hack, millions of people were actively using Ashley Madison to embark on "discreet" affairs with a low risk of their partner or spouse finding out.¹

The Ashley Madison hack will have a serious effect on churches. According to Ed Stetzer, as many as 400 pastors, deacons, elders and church staff members may resign this Sunday after their names surfaced on the list of users revealed in the Ashley Madison hack.

[In a post](#) on his *Christianity Today* blog, The Exchange, Stetzer said the number is based on "conversations with leaders from several denominations in the U.S. and Canada," adding, "To be honest, the number of pastors and church leaders on Ashley Madison is much lower than the number of those looking to have an affair." Along with being a contributing editor for *CT*, author and professor, Stetzer is the executive director of LifeWay Research, and a well-regarded expert on church leadership. He is also the executive editor of the Christian leadership publication *Facts & Trends*. All that to say, Stetzer is well-informed, and his number is likely accurate. Former social conservative lobbyist and Christian reality TV star [Josh Duggar](#) and Christian [vlogger Sam](#)

¹ <https://nypost.com/2016/09/01/the-ashley-madison-hacks-deadly-aftermath/>

[Rader](#) recently released their own statements, acknowledging that they were both users of the site, which facilitates adultery.²

A good example of the futility of denying the reality of sin in our lives is King David in [2 Samuel 11](#), [Psalms 32](#), and [Psalms 51](#). In these passages, we find:

- 2 Samuel 11-12: King David lusts, sins, seeks to hide the sin by committing more sins, and then, after confrontation, repents. [Psalms](#) 32 and 51 are probably found within the “hiding” context of this story.
- Psalm 32: King David reveals the struggle that results from hiding his sin and the subsequent peace that results from repentance.
- Psalm 51: King David shows us that repentance is seeing our actions in the way the Lord sees them and coming to him honestly, without hiding.

This morning, I want to show you how to humbly restore a broken relationship with God by following the example of King David. It of course begins with the hardest part...admitting that you have a problem! After you get over that hurdle (admitting your sin) Psalm 51 provides practical steps toward returning to the blessings of a close walk with God and an abundant ministry for His glory.

-- David's sin:

[It's not that big of a deal.] (note the consequences of David's sin as it relates to the breaking of the 10 commandments)

- It was the breaking of the tenth commandment, coveting his neighbor's wife that led David to commit adultery, thus breaking the seventh commandment.
- Then, in order to steal his neighbor's wife (thereby breaking the eighth commandment), he committed murder and broke the sixth commandment.
- He broke the ninth commandment by bearing false witness against his brother.
- This all brought dishonor to his parents and thus broke the fifth commandment.

In this way he broke all the commandments that relate to loving one's neighbor as oneself. And in all of this he dishonored God as well. *THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A SIMPLE SIN!*

- Sin will always take you farther than you want to go...
- Keep you longer than you want to stay...
- And cost you more than you want to pay.

Application:

- No one is beyond falling into sin and damaging his relationship with God! (he was 50 years old when he sinned) That's why each of us, both young and old, can use accountability!

² <https://relevantmagazine.com/slices/expert-400-church-leaders-will-resign-sunday-because-names-surfaced-ashley-madison-hack>

- You can't hide your sin forever. (Proverbs 28:13) [David thought he got away with his sin publicly. But God had other plans!]
- God may want to use you {like Nathan} to confront your brother or sister who may be caught in sin.
- The road toward restoration demands humility! ("Let him that thinks he stand take heed...")

But first you must change the way you think about God and yourself...

I. Restoration begins with right thinking.

- A. YOU MUST HAVE A HEALTHY VIEW OF GOD (vs. 1 and 18-19 = Gracious, Dependable, Merciful, Good, Holy)
- B. YOU MUST HAVE AN HONEST VIEW OF YOURSELF (vs. 1b,2 = Transgressor, One who commits iniquity, A Sinner... all the blotting, washing, and cleansing is entirely dependent on God's Work in man's heart)
 1. A SINNER (1b-6)
 - **Transgression** – One who participates in outward rebellion (1)
 - **Iniquity** – One who deliberately twists the facts and consciously engages in wrongdoing (2)
 - **Sin** – One who misses the mark (2; 3-6)
 - Guilty based on your own conscience.
 - (vs. 3) "I know... ever before me"

Romans 14:23 – **23** But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin.

- Guilty based on your own conduct.
 - (vs. 4) "I sinned and have done what is evil"

-- James 4:17; 2:10

17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

10 For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

- Guilty based on your own conception.
 - (vs. 5) "I was brought forth in iniquity..."

Romans 5:12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

Romans 5:19

19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

- Guilty based on your own conscience.
 - (vs. 6) “truth in the inward being... wisdom in secret heart”

Verse 6 – God places within all of us a tension between right and wrong from birth. We all know that we have a problem that needs a solution.

2. A SAINT (7-9)

- I shall be clean. (vs. 7a)
- I shall be whiter than snow. (vs. 7b)
- I shall be guilt-free. (vs. 8-9)

Note the use of these three words in reverse order in verses 1 and 2...

Vs. 1b-2:

Blot out – referring to erasure from human records

Wash me – referring to the removal of dirt from clothes (no easy task in OT)

Cleanse me – referring to ceremonial purification before the priest

vs. 7-9:

Purge me with hyssop (ceremonial purification) – BEFORE GOD

Wash me (removal of dirt from clothes) – BEFORE YOURSELF

Blot out all my iniquities (erasure from human records) – BEFORE OTHERS

THIS IS TOTAL FORGIVENESS!!!

In a dream, Martin Luther found himself being attacked by Satan. The devil unrolled a long scroll containing a list of Luther's sins, and held it before him. On reaching the end of the scroll Luther asked the devil, "Is that all?" "No," came the reply, and a second scroll was thrust in front of him. Then, after a second came a third. But now the devil had no more. "You've forgotten something," Luther exclaimed triumphantly. "Quickly write on each of them, 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sins.'" GOSPEL PRIMER (page 20)

Romans 5:1-2 – **5:1** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we [\[1\]](#) have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. **2** Through him we have also obtained access by faith [\[2\]](#) into this grace in which we stand, and we [\[3\]](#) rejoice [\[4\]](#) in hope of the glory of God.

Application: Are you claiming the total forgiveness offered by God?

Some people try to punish themselves for their sins. They do not stand on the promises of forgiveness and Christ' propitiation. "Many years ago, a father and his daughter were walking through the grass on the Canadian prairie. In the distance, they saw a prairie fire, and they realized that it would soon engulf them. The father knew there was only one way of escape: They would quickly begin a fire right where they were and burn a large patch of grass. When the huge fire drew near, they then would stand on the section that had already burned. When the flames did approach them, the girl was terrified but her father assured her, 'The flames can't get to us. We are standing where the fire has already been.'" -- [Erwin Lutzer, Failure, The Back Door to Success.](#)

I. Restoration begins with right thinking.

II. Restoration produces right action.

A. Cry out to God in prayer. (10-12)

1. Ask for a revived inner man [a clean heart and a renewed, steadfast spirit] (vs. 10)

2 Cor 4:16 – **16** So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.

2. Ask for a renewed confidence in God's presence and power (vs. 11) – *explain theocratic anointing*

While a believer today will never lose the Spirit of God, we can become disqualified from the race or placed on the bench of discipline instead engaging in the “game”...

1 Corinthians 9:27 (NASB)

²⁷ but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

3. Ask for a restored feeling of joy and security (vs.12) – Psalm 37:4

We forget what it means to have joy in our salvation because we lose our focus and get consumed with the petty affairs of this world like our salaries, our status, and our supplemental toys! What we really need is to be around new Christians. That will fire you up REALLY FAST!

Psalms 37:4 (NASB)

⁴ Delight yourself in the Lord; And He will give you the desires of your heart.

The process of growing a little discouraged a month ago after noticing a significant drop in our weekly giving only to come to my office hour to read an email from a recent guest who felt unwelcomed by our church followed by a member expressing concerns about observing levels of racism at PBC. (*Interaction with Heather*) Spent time alone with God... I begged God for a clean heart, renewed confidence in His presence and power, and a sense of the joy that only He can provide. I call this the DISCIPLINE OF DELIGHT!

B. Share God's goodness with others. (13)

1. With humility (as a fellow transgressor and sinner)
2. Point them to God (as a fellow recipient of God's amazing grace)

C. Lift up your voice in praise. (14-16)

1. Free from guilt (14)
2. Free from shame (15)

- Free to proclaim God's goodness openly [SING OUT LOUD!!!]
(vs. 14-15)
3. Free from hypocrisy (16-17)
- Willing to give back whatever God requires (vs. 16)
 - Approaching God with the utmost humility and respect (vs. 17)
 - Desiring His will to be done in all things (vs.18-19)

CONCLUSION:

IT NEVER PAYS TO COVER SIN. IT ONLY COSTS MORE IN THE END! In the same way, it doesn't pay to hide your sin from God. He sees it all anyway. Why not decide this morning to confess your sin, claim His forgiveness, cling to the prospect of a new beginning and commence with the ministry He has intended for you?

Application:

- **Stop running from the Holy Spirit.**
 - Regarding unconfessed sin.
 - Regarding His prompting to work through you to confront sin in the life of another.
- **Rest in the forgiveness offered by God.**
 - He offers total cleansing through the blood of Christ.
- **Worship God with renewed zeal.**
 - He wants you to experience the JOY OF YOUR SALVATION... the PEACE THAT COMES FROM A CLEAR CONSCIENCE...