

The Joy of Forgiveness

A Workbook for Memorizing

Psalm 32

by

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Introduction

You are about to start a wonderful adventure! Memorizing Scripture is an awesome privilege. As you memorize and meditate on the Words of our Lord, you'll find them penetrating the very essence of your being. They'll feed your soul and bathe your spirit as nothing else. You'll experience parched areas of your life being satisfied as never before. You'll find yourself experiencing the all loving, all powerful Author in new and intimate ways. And as you begin memorizing this psalm always remember that the Bible is unlike any other book—it is the *all-powerful, never failing Word of God*. It is God speaking to you.

David wrote many Psalms. Some were hymns of praise and exaltation to the Lord. Some were historical or prophetic, foretelling the coming of Israel's Messiah. Some were pleas for help in difficult situations. Others reflect his feelings and emotions at specific times in his life.

Most Bible scholars agree that Psalm 32 was undoubtedly written after David's sin with Bathsheba. (You can read the story in II Samuel 11:3 - 12:14.) David was guilty of adultery with another man's wife while her husband was away fighting in his army. When David found out that she was pregnant, he ordered her husband deliberately placed in the front line of battle so he would be killed. This was a particularly heinous crime in that Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, had proved himself to be a very honorable man and devoted soldier. He is listed in Scripture as one of David's 30 "mighty men". These were men who had distinguished themselves as his bravest and most dedicated soldiers, noted in I Chronicles 11:41. David must have felt untold anguish and remorse that he could be guilty of thus repaying one who had served him well, one who undoubtedly many times willingly risked his life in valiant service on David's behalf and doubtless would gladly have forfeited his own life for that of his king.

In this psalm David tries to put into words the devastation and humiliation he experiences after the fact. Knowing that he, David, could be guilty of such gross transgressions seems almost more than he can endure. So it is that he struggles with his guilt, leading us through his heavy weight of anguish and remorse and contrasting it with the ultimate joy that he experiences when he confesses all to the Lord and asks Him for forgiveness. This is the joy that every sinner can experience when he repents and brings even the worst of sins to the Lord for His cleansing.

As you begin this powerful chapter, remember that Scripture should not be memorized under pressure, but leisurely, as you give the Holy Spirit opportunity to impress it on your mind and spirit. Remember that it is not getting to know the words that is important, joy lies in getting to know the Author. Be sure you can say each verse without mistakes, then quote it to someone who will check it for you to make sure you are saying it word perfect before going on to the next verse. Say the Scripture you have learned often, to yourself and out loud, while you're working around the house or yard, riding in the car, lying in bed, or whenever your mind is not active in other areas. The more often you say it, the easier it will be to remember. Writing it out will also help to impress it on your memory.

Some people find it helpful to note word and letter associations - such as acronyms, alphabetic sequence or counter sequence and/or the repetition of words. Such associations often help jog the memory when a catalyst is needed. (*The Sword! Scripture Memorization: A Must for today* is a great motivational and informative text book that includes helps and hints to help you memorize Scripture. It can be downloaded free of charge or purchased on this web site)

Psalm 32:1

*Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*

Blessed! That's an interesting word, isn't it? It can be translated, "joyful" or "happy". That's what everyone wants to be, isn't it? ***Happy!*** Are you happy? Think for a moment: If you could have anything in this world, what is it that you think would make you completely *happy*? Perhaps your mind might stray quickly to such things as being rich, or important, or popular, or good looking. It's easy for us earthlings to look at things that we don't have, thinking they will make us happy. But if you look at people who possess such things you don't see a lot of happy people. In fact, you often see some of the world's most miserable. Why? It's very simple! The things of this world can never make us happy because this world has no happiness to give. It is the intent of the "prince of this world" (the one who initiates all evil) to make us as miserable as possible. According to Scripture, his entire agenda is to kill, steal and destroy everything we hold dear.

So maybe you're thinking, well if being rich and famous isn't where it's at and if it's not even in this world, how can I ever be happy? What would you think if I told you that happiness is imported from outer space? But before you start flying into the wild blue yonder, let's take a trip around the block—your block. What kind of baggage is it that you're carrying around with you? What is there in your past that you'd like to forget but you have to drag along because you can't get rid of it? I would venture to say that there are a lot of things that you're pretty ashamed of if the truth were known. Well, join the club! There's no one in this big, wide world who isn't saddled with a lot of garbage they would rather not talk about. God says, we've *all* sinned and come short of His standards. (Romans 3:23).

Probably none of us really knows how much our past sins weigh on our minds and affect our daily life. And this verse tells us that we can never be truly happy unless we can get rid of that miserable feeling of guilt and failure that dogs our tracks. We'll follow up on this a little later in this psalm but before we leave this verse, there are a couple of words that we should examine a little more closely.

Mention is made of *transgressions* and *sins*. We sometimes think of the two words as being synonymous, but they do have slightly different meanings. A *transgression* is a willful act of deliberate disobedience or rebellion. *Sin* has the meaning of "missing the mark". It might be a sin of weakness or ignorance. It isn't always a wilful act of defiance. So a *transgression* is always a *sin*, but a *sin* isn't always a *transgression*.

One of the great blessings of memorizing Scripture is to meditate and delight in its truths as you think about them in review. David alludes to this in his very first psalm. So I would encourage you to fill in the blanks below, if for no other reason than to give you opportunity to relish the profound truth in this verse. It will also be important for you to quote what you have learned to someone who will carefully check it for you to be sure it is word perfect. We'll remind you of these things just to get you started. You'll soon get into the habit and do them automatically.

Beginning:

Vs. 1 - Blessed is _____ whose transgressions _____ forgiven, whose _____ are _____. (It is best if you cover up this "Beginning" part before doing the "Progressing, and cover up the "Beginning" and "Progressing" parts before doing the "Advancing"; then cover up "Beginning", "Progressing" and "Advancing" before doing your "Arriving" because it's always o easy to look back at the answers.)

Advancing:

Vs 1 - _____ is he _____ transgressions are _____ , _____ sins
_____ covered.

Progressing:

Vs. 1 - _____ is _____ whose _____ ,
whose _____ are _____ .

Arriving:

Vs 1 - Blessed _____

Psalm 32:2

*Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and
in whose spirit is no deceit.*

Here is that word again—*Blessed!* This is really a happy man! Although we don't know all the gruesome details of David's past, we do know that he had committed adultery with another man's wife and then had him killed so he wouldn't find out that his wife had gotten pregnant while he was away at war. But we're told in this verse that all the ugliness of David's past is no longer part of his record. He has received a full pardon. There's nothing hidden, the Lord knows it all, and all has been forgiven. There is nothing, *nothing* that is being held against him. It's as if he's never done anything wrong at all and he'll never be judged for any of his past sins and indiscretions. Wel-I-I, what would happen if his sins were not forgiven and if they *were* counted or "judged" against him?

Romans 3:23 says, *the wages of sin is death*. Maybe you're thinking, "So what, everyone is going to die some day!" True! One day these bodies will return to dust (unless the Lord comes first) but the *wages* spoken of in this verse are something more complex than just physical death. They also involve *spiritual* death. When Adam and Eve sinned, they lost their status of living forever in the Garden of Eden but dying physically was only part of the punishment for their sin against God. *Without* forgiveness they would also have had to face a *second death after* the physical kind. And what is the *second death*? In Revelation 21:8, God says . . . *the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*"

The lake of fire was made for the devil and his angels and we're told in Revelation 20:10 that it will burn *for ever and ever*. God never intended for people to go there. He sent His own Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for sin so that anyone and everyone might be freed from such condemnation and judgment. Anyone who comes to the Lord for forgiveness and accepts this wonderful gift is relieved of all guilt and condemnation. Complete forgiveness is his. Eternal punishment and separation from God in the *second death* are no longer in his future.

Now maybe you're thinking, "Well I've never done anything as bad as David, like adultery and murder." Take another look at Revelation 21:8 back in the second paragraph. How about *lying*. Have you ever told a lie? Lying is a sin, oh it may not be in the same league as David's sins, but it is a sin just the same. The Bible says that if we keep the whole law, but offend in just one point, we're guilty of the whole thing. (James 2:10) The law is kind of like an egg. You can't just break part of an egg, can you? If it's broken, it's broken. And that's the way it is with God's law. Once it's broken, it's broken and we can't put it back together. But then, when it comes to sin you're no different than anyone else because we're all in the same boat. We've all broken God's law. We're all sinners. Big sins, little sins, sin is sin.

The last part of this verse gives us important insight as to how we can disentangle ourselves from this load of guilt that has become part of our life and how we too can know the same joy that even this adulterer and murderer experienced. *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.* *Deceit* means to be sneaky, to try to hide the truth. When it comes to forgiveness, it's important that we don't try to hide anything, or hold anything back. We have to dump the whole load on the Lord. We have to be honest and above board about all the nasty stuff that's there, no matter how humiliating it might be. Our Lord knows all about it anyway, so if we try to hide it, the only person we might fool is ourselves. The Lord has said in no uncertain terms, *No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence (Psalm 101:7).* So the first thing we must do is to be honest about what lurks in the dark corners of our past.

Notice, it doesn't say *Blessed is the man . . . in whose spirit is no guilt*, it says *in whose spirit is no deceit.* *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit.* In other words, it's not our sin that condemns us, we are condemned only when we try to hide it or cover it up. The Lord knows we're guilty, he says we're all guilty but it will only be a problem if we try to keep it hidden and don't seek the same forgiveness that David talks about in this verse.

So, the first thing we must do in order for us to enjoy the forgiveness and happiness that David speaks about in this psalm is to humble ourselves, acknowledge the mess we've made of things and not try to hide it in a dark corner.

(Now you have two verses. Write or type out the first verse to help establish it in your mind then say verses one and two together to the one who is checking for you.)

Beginning:

Vs. 2 - *Blessed _____ the man _____ sin the _____ does not count _____ him and in whose _____ is no _____.. (Don't forget to "cover up" as you go along.)*

Advancing

Vs. 2 - _____ is the _____ whose _____ the Lord _____ not _____ against _____ and in _____ spirit is no _____.

Progressing:

Vs. 2 - *Blessed _____ the _____ sin _____ does _____ count _____ him _____ in _____ is _____.*

Arriving:

Vs. 2 - *Blessed _____*

Psalm 32:3

When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long,

Now we get the full story. Before David got to the place of forgiveness and joy, he tried the "deceitful" route. He tried to sweep all the rotten stuff he'd done under the rug and just forget about it. Maybe he thought if he ignored it, it would go away. But it didn't work for David, any more than it works for us. No matter how hard he tried to forget it, it wouldn't disappear. It hounded him every hour of every day, no matter what he did or where he went. It was there when he went to bed at night, and there when he got up in the morning. It was like being tied to a dead body. No matter how hard he tried to erase it from his mind, the consuming guilt did not subside.

David probably thought many times, "If only I had it to do over again . . ." but what was done was done and he couldn't undo it. At this point he was too proud to confess it to the Lord and it's almost as if he can't even find the words to describe the shame and remorse he was feeling. He hated himself. But try as he may he couldn't disassociate himself from the disgrace and humiliation that had become part of him. There was always that *big elephant* lurking in the shadows to remind him.

I guess we can all relate to his dilemma, can't we? We all know what it's like to regret our yesterdays. Perhaps you are there right now. If you are, you can know that it is a curable condition. There is good news ahead.

(Time for review! Write or type out verses one and two and say verses one, two and three to the one helping you to be sure you are saying them correctly and have them firmly impressed in your mind.)

Beginning:

*Vs. 3 - When I _____ silent, my _____ wasted away _____ my groaning
_____ day _____ . . . (You won't forget to cover up each section as you complete it, will you?)*

Advancing:

*Vs. 3 - _____ I kept _____, my bones _____ away _____
my _____ all _____ long,*

Progressing:

*Vs 3 - When I _____ silent, _____ wasted _____
_____ my _____ all _____ long,*

Arriving:

Vs. 3 - When _____

Psalm 32:4

*For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer.*

Up until now David has been talking to us, his readers. Now, he's shifting gears. He says . . . *day and night your hand was heavy upon me*. Whose hand was heavy on him? Who does the "your" refer to? Actually we're not told, specifically, until we get to the next verse, but I think we all know who it is that convicts us of our sin, don't we?

So, David, talking to the Lord, says, . . . *Your hand was heavy upon me*. What does he mean? Was it really God who was making him miserable? Why would the Lord's hand be heavy on him? Hebrews 12:6 tells us. . . . *the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes those He accepts as His children*. So why would the Lord make David miserable when he sinned? It was only because He loved him. He didn't want him to hide his sins and transgressions. He wanted David to come clean and confess them so they could be forgiven and so his fellowship with God could be renewed. Do you think it would have been a good thing for the Lord to just let David wander around with this ugly sin festering in his life. It was only because of His great love for David that the Lord worked in his life to make him miserable enough so that he would run to the arms of his Savior and God for forgiveness and cleansing.

Can you relate to what David is saying in this verse? Have you been there? I think I can say if you haven't, you are probably the only person in the whole world who hasn't. This is a picture of every person who has not experienced the Lord's forgiveness as well as every person who has wandered out of fellowship with Him. Are you there now? If you are, there is no reason in the world for you to stay there. You can do just as David did, tell the Lord what you're feeling right this very moment? Don't try to cover anything up, tell Him what you've done and why you are miserable. Then you'll be ready for the next step in which David will tell you how he experienced complete forgiveness and cleansing and how you too can know this joy.

(Write or type out the first three verses to help establish them in your mind, then say verses one through four together to the one who is checking for you. And I think you can handle your own review from here on, can't you?)

Beginning:

*Vs. 4 - For _____ and _____ Your hand was _____ upon me; my
_____ was _____ as in the _____ of summer.*

Advancing:

*Vs. 4 - _____ day _____ night _____ hand _____ heavy upon _____; my
strength _____ sapped _____ in the _____ of summer.*

Progressing:

*Vs. 4 - For _____ night _____ was _____ upon _____;
my _____ was _____ as _____ the _____ of _____.*

Arriving:

Vs. 4 - For _____

Psalm 32:5

*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.*

It's obvious that David resisted for as long as he could stand it, but his load of guilt and shame finally became heavier than he could bear. He eventually came to the place where he had to give in. He couldn't fight against the heavy hand of conviction any longer, so he uncovered all the garbage he had been trying so hard to conceal, and laid it all out before the Lord. As hard as it was for him to confess that he had blown it so miserably, and as difficult as it was to talk about it, he told the Lord *everything*. (Not that the Lord didn't know it already.) Then what happened when he stopped trying to hide it and confessed it to the Lord? Did the Lord rebuke him or shame him or punish him? Did He hide His face from him and tell him that his sins were just so black He couldn't bear to look at them? No! What does this verse say? The Lord was just waiting for David to stop playing games, admit to what he had done and ask for forgiveness.. That was all there was to it. Then God *forgave* him and wiped his slate clean. No guilt! No condemnation! No punishment!

Now here is an interesting scenario. God is a righteous and just Judge, isn't he? A *just* judge is forced to punish anyone who breaks the law, whether he wants to do it or not. If a confessed murderer came before a judge in one of our courts today, what would happen? He would be convicted and punished, wouldn't he? So how do you figure? David was a murderer. How could God just forgive him and let him off scot free and still be a *just* Judge?

Well there is no question but that sin has to be punished. David's sin had to be punished. Your sin has to be punished. My sin has to be punished. Enter: God's unbelievable love for us and for mankind. God knew before He even created the world that men would reject Him and follow the great deceiver. He knew we would all sin against Him. So He devised an incredible plan whereby both His *justice* and His *love* could be satisfied.

He sent His own sinless, perfect Son to earth, to live as a man, to be tempted in every way like we are, to experience rejection and heartache, just like us. He was humiliated, tortured and ultimately executed like a common criminal on a horrible cross. Why? He was accused of fake, trumped up charges that had no basis, whatsoever. He didn't deserve to be punished or to die so cruelly. No, *He* didn't. But *we* did. When Jesus died on that cross, all the sins of the whole world were placed on Him. All the rotten stuff that was ever conceived of in the heart of man was placed on the pure sinless Son of God as He writhed there in pain and agony on that cross. All your sin and all my sin was put on Him. All of David's sin was placed on Him and all the sins of the whole world were placed on Him. *He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our guilt and iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him . . . (Isaiah 53:5 - Amplified Bible/NIV). God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ. (II Corinthians 5:21 NLT)*

This is why David could be forgiven. This is why you can be forgiven, why I can be forgiven. Jesus paid the penalty for sin. God's justice was satisfied. Forgiveness for sin was now possible for anyone and everyone, free for the asking. All that is left for anyone to do is to come clean with the Lord; to come to this loving God and humbly acknowledge his sin and need for a Savior. If you have never confessed your sins to the Lord and received this gift of forgiveness, or if you have done it before and have fallen back into sin, why don't you bow your head right now and tell the Lord all about the mess you have made of things. Ask Jesus to cleanse you with His precious blood that was shed for you on the cross. Say with David, "I acknowledge my sin, and will not cover up my iniquity. I confess my transgressions to you, Lord. Please forgive me." He

will forgive you of your sins, just as he forgave David.

According to Hebrew scholars, the language here implies an immediate process. The moment we confess the transgression in our heart, even before the words come out of our mouth, God has already forgiven us.

Beginning:

Vs 5 - Then _____ acknowledged _____ sin to _____ and did not cover up _____ iniquity. _____ said, "_____ will confess _____ transgressions to the Lord"—and _____ forgave the guilt of _____ sin.

Advancing

Vs. 5 - Then I _____ my _____ to you and did not _____ up my _____. I said, "I will _____ my _____ to the Lord"—and you _____ the guilt of my _____.

Progressing:

Vs. 5 - _____ I _____ my _____ to you and _____ not cover _____ my _____. I _____, "I _____ confess my _____ to the _____" —and you _____ the _____ of my _____.

Arriving:

Vs 5 - Then _____

Psalm 32:6

*Therefore let everyone who is godly
pray to You while You may be found;
surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.*

This verse talks about praying to the Lord *while He may be found*. What does this mean? Isn't the Lord always there? There's another verse in Isaiah 55:6 that says almost the same thing. *Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near.*

When we sin, God's Holy Spirit is faithful to convict us and make us as miserable as He can, not just to make us miserable, but so that we won't sit there and wallow in our guilt. He is trying at such times to convince us that there is an easier way, all we need to do is to come to the Lord, confess our sins and ask Him for forgiveness. This is so we can unload the heavy load of guilt we carry around with us and so we can be cleansed and have our fellowship with the Lord restored. But God has made us with a free will. We are free to do whatever we want to do and He will never try to force us to do anything against our will. If we come to Him for forgiveness, He will welcome us with open arms. If we choose to hang on to our guilt and misery, and go our own way, we are free to do that too. The Lord might bring things into our life to encourage us to change our mind and try to make us so unhappy we can't stand it any longer as what happened with David, but in the end, the choice is ours.

But be aware that we can't presume on the Lord's goodness. If we keep refusing to respond to the Holy Spirit when He convicts us of our sin, our heart becomes hardened and His voice will not be quite as distinct as it was at first. The longer we resist Him, the harder our heart becomes. And if we keep resisting the Holy Spirit's gentle urging, our heart may become so hardened that we can hardly hear him at all. And even the desire to respond disappears.

This is why the writer of Hebrews tells us, *Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.* (Hebrews 4:7) There is also a solemn warning in Genesis 6:3 where the Lord says: *My Spirit shall not always strive with man.* (Genesis 6:3 - KJV) Apparently there is a time if we vehemently and constantly resist Him that God's Holy Spirit will give up and stop pursuing us, altogether.

According to many scholars, the *mighty waters* or "flood waters" as they are translated in some versions, speak of judgment. Thus David is saying, those who do not harden their hearts but who come promptly to the Lord for forgiveness—while He *may be found*—will never be judged for their sins. The "waters of judgment" will never reach them. So everyone has a choice: They can either accept the fact that Jesus was judged in their place and has taken their punishment, thus choosing God's *forgiveness*—or—they can harden their heart and ignore God's love thus choosing judgment. They will, themselves, then face eternal punishment for their sins and transgressions.

If God's Holy Spirit has been convicting you as you have been working through this psalm, be sure you don't harden your heart against Him. Run to the Lord for forgiveness and restoration. He is waiting for you with outstretched arms.

Beginning:

Vs. 6 - Therefore let _____ who is _____ pray to you while _____ may be _____ ; surely when the _____ waters rise, _____ will not _____ him.

Advancing:

Vs. 6 - _____ let everyone _____ is godly _____ to you _____ you _____ be found; _____ when the _____ waters rise, _____ will not reach him.

Progressing:

Vs. 6 - Therefore _____ who is _____ to _____ while you _____ may be _____ ; _____ when _____ mighty _____ , they _____ not _____ him.

Arriving:

Vs. 6 - Therefore _____

Psalm 32:7

You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.

David now reveals beautiful assurances God promises to those who have been sensitive to His voice, those who come to Him for forgiveness and cleansing. No longer do they struggle to hide their sins and carry their load of guilt. Instead of misery and judgment, they now can face each day with a clear conscience. Nor do they have to struggle alone with their problems and short-comings, they have Someone to walk with them and show them the way. They have One who will protect them from the pitfalls of life, and Someone who will deliver them from the clutches of the evil one who would lure them into temptation, regrets and heartache.

David had found true happiness—not in possessions, or popularity, or power, or prestige. It was when he was relieved of a dark and shameful past, that he could sing songs of deliverance and look forward to a future that was safe and secure, protected by the One whose love knows no limits.

These are the blessings that await all who come to Jesus for forgiveness, those who are in fellowship with their God, walking as righteous and clean with the King of kings and Lord of lords.

And when trouble and adversity hit, where is it that we can run for protection? Proverbs 18:10 says, *The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe.* When Jesus is your Savior and Guide, He is your *hiding place*, a *strong tower* where you can go, a place that is completely private and completely safe, a place that you can run to and get away from all of this world's hurts and wounds. No matter what this day might hold, no matter what traps the enemy may set for you, you can look to your great God for protection and deliverance. You can run to His *strong tower* and be safe.

Beginning:

Vs. 7 - _____ are _____ hiding place; _____ will protect _____ from trouble and surround _____ with songs of _____ .

Advancing:

Vs. 7 - You _____ my _____; you _____ protect me _____ trouble _____ surround me _____ songs of deliverance.

Progressing:

Vs. 7 - _____ are _____ place; _____ will _____ me from _____ and _____ me with _____ of _____ .

Arriving:

Vs. 7 - You _____

Psalm 32:8

*I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.*

There is an interesting transition in this verse. In verses 4 to 7, David was talking to the Lord, in this verse it is the Lord talking to David. In the last verse David tells us about the protection and deliverance that he and all of God's children experience in Jesus. In this verse we have God's assurance that He doesn't ever abandon His children. He teaches us and watches over us as we learn to walk in His ways.

Perhaps you've picked up by now that coming to the Lord for forgiveness is just the first step in a wonderful journey that stretches before you in this life. When we come to the Lord with our load of sin and dump it on to His love, this is the end of it. It's gone. Psalm 103:12 says "*As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.* If you go *north*, far enough, you'll eventually start going *south*, won't you? But you can go *east* forever and you'll never catch up to *west*.

If you have walked with David through this psalm and have accepted Jesus' forgiveness and love, you now have a clean slate, a slate that is pure and spotless—just as if you had never done anything wrong. But where do you go from here? You don't stop living at that point, do you? But you've fouled up in the past, how do you keep from fouling up in the future?

Well, when we come to Jesus, He gives us a new heart and a new life. We don't see things the same way we did before. Instead of wandering aimlessly in a world of uncertainty we now have a reason for living. We are no longer comfortable with the old way of life. Our desires change. Now we want to do the right thing and live in a way that is pleasing to the One who loves us and gave His life for us.

But, unfortunately, even though we may not want to sin, perfection is not something that happens in this world. Have you ever seen a child who learned to walk without falling down? What would happen if a toddler fell down and never got up again? Would he ever learn to walk? Falling down doesn't stop him from trying again, does it? Why? Because he's determined that he's going to walk and he keeps on trying. So it is in our Christian walk. We don't learn to walk perfectly just because we want to. As we learn to walk in God's way, we will fall down, but the disgrace is not in falling down, the disgrace would be if we didn't get up. We all fall down in different ways but that shouldn't stop us from wanting to live a pure and clean life and continuing to strive in that direction for as long as we live on this earth.

Jeremiah said "*Great is His faithfulness; His mercies begin afresh each day.*" (*Lamentations 3:23 - NLT*) Why do you think he said that God's mercies are *fresh* every day? Why does the Lord have to give us a "new beginning" every morning? Could it be because we always seem to have a way of messing up our yesterdays?

Look at that first verse again. *Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven.* Notice, it's written in the present tense. The Lord doesn't say, *Blessed is he whose transgressions were forgiven* or *will be forgiven.* He says, *Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven.* You will find it is a progressive thing. We start out by coming to the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing from that big wad of sin that stained our past, but this is just the first step. Now a new life stretches before us.

Here in verse 8, our Lord promises you that He *will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;* He says He *will counsel you . . .* But how is this accomplished? Does He write it in the sky? Does He send you a telegram or an email? Just exactly how does this promise to instruct and teach us, come about?

Think for a moment: How much have you learned already as you have been memorizing this psalm?

Has the Lord not already started to teach you about His love and His ways?

He doesn't just leave us alone to fend for ourselves. As we memorize and obey His Word, as we read it and study it, and as we look to Him for wisdom and guidance He will watch over us, teach us and lead us in safe paths to help us avoid some of the heartaches and anguish that has plagued our past.

So, coming to the Lord for forgiveness, correction, instruction and strength to live for Him are now part of our every day journey. And as we pointed out in the last paragraph, it is important for us to ask the Lord to teach us, to help us and show us the right way as He has promised to do. But if we fall short we shouldn't try to hide it, instead, we should be quick to bring it to Him, so we can be forgiven and cleansed and have our fellowship with Him renewed.

But we should be very careful not to take sin for granted, or think because God forgives that a sinful life style is acceptable to Him. The apostle John told us in chapter 2:4 of I John: *If someone says, "I belong to God," but doesn't obey God's commandments, that person is a liar and does not live in the truth.* We can't presume on the Lord's loving forgiveness.

When Satan tempted our Lord, Jesus told him *"It is written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"* In other words, don't deliberately do things you know are wrong, assuming that it's okay because God will just make it right. In another psalm David asked the Lord to keep him from *deliberate* sins. (Psalm 19:13) As we mentioned in earlier comments, it is a dangerous thing to deliberately ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit and to sin deliberately, presuming on God's goodness.

So in order for our sweet fellowship with the Lord to continue, we should ask the Lord every morning to lead us and help us follow in His ways. We must be quick to confess any sin that enters our life or our mind. And we must claim His promise for He has said, *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you and watch over you.*

Beginning:

Vs. 8 - I will _____ you and _____ you in the _____ you should _____ ; I will _____ you and _____ over you.

Advancing:

Vs. 8 - I _____ instruct _____ and teach _____ in the way _____ should go; I _____ counsel _____ and watch over _____.

Progressing:

Vs. 8 - _____ will _____ you _____ teach you _____ way you _____ ; I will _____ you _____ watch _____ you.

Arriving:

Vs. 8 - I _____

Psalm 32:9

*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.*

Why do you put a bridle on a horse and a bit in its mouth? Would it go where you wanted it to if you didn't use some means of control? Horses have minds of their own, don't they? On one occasion, when I was a child, I was riding bareback on an old, tired horse, but one that was much wiser than its rider. Because she was slow and gentle, I was lolling nonchalantly in side-saddle fashion with the reins unattended, while I leisurely visited with a neighbor. The next thing I knew, I was sitting on the ground and Old Minnie was at the stable. I had not retained control and she had her own ideas about what she would rather be doing.

So, God is here telling us not to be like horses that have to be controlled and restrained with a bit and bridle. In other words He is saying we shouldn't be stubborn and hard-headed when He is trying to guide us. We should be quick to obey so He won't have to use harsh methods.

In Psalm 73:24 the psalmist said to the Lord: *You will keep on guiding me with your counsel, leading me to a glorious destiny. (NLT)* Then he added: *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.* This should also be the desire of our heart. We should seek the Lord's will because we love Him. We are told in His Word: *show your love to the Lord your God by walking in His ways and clinging to Him.* The Lord doesn't want to use harsh means to get us going in the right direction like what is needed in dealing with a strong willed horse. We need to know His Word, and seek His ways with our whole heart. And we should always pray that He will give us a tender heart, sensitive to His voice and His Word.

Right now as you are memorizing this psalm, you are taking a big step in this direction. You are hiding God's Word in your heart so it will always be there for you to draw from for strength and guidance. We don't understand the Lord's ways or how He thinks. He has told us that our thoughts aren't His thoughts and His ways aren't our ways. (Isaiah 55:8) That's why it's so important for us to know His Word in order to walk with Him in an evil world.

Beginning:

Vs. 9 - Do not be like _____ horse or _____ mule, which _____ no understanding but _____ be controlled by _____ and bridle or _____ will not come to _____ .

Advancing:

Vs. 9 - Do not be _____ the _____ or the _____ , which have no _____ but must be _____ by bit and _____ or they will not _____ to _____ .

Progressing:

Vs. 9 - Do _____ be _____ the _____ or _____ , which _____ no _____ but _____ be _____ by _____ and _____ or _____ will _____ come to _____ .

Arriving:

Vs. 9 - Do _____

Psalm 32:10

*Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the man who trusts in Him.*

(In this verse David again takes up the narration.) If you were asked to name the two kinds of people who are in the world, how would you describe them? Some would say "Well, there are *good* people and there are *bad* people." And that would be logical thinking from man's point of view. But God sees things a little differently. According to this verse, He describes the two categories as *the wicked* and *those who trust in Him*.

David had committed two very grizzly sins—adultery and murder. But it was not these terrible sins that made him a wicked person. It was when he tried to hide them from God that he was con-demned. When he did not immediately go to the Lord for forgiveness and cleansing he found himself in dire straights. But when he came to Jesus with his dirty cloak of sin, Jesus replaced it with a clean white robe of righteousness. Thus when he acknowledged his need and put his trust in God instead of trying to handle it himself, he became a man who "*trusts in Him*".

Always remember, Jesus has taken the punishment for *all* sin. He made the ultimate sacrifice on our behalf. We are not condemned for our sins, no matter how bad they are. We are condemned only if we try to hide our sin from God and ignore the great price that Jesus paid for our pardon. It is like we are thumbing our nose at God's loving gift when we do not come immediately to Him to confess our sin and ask for cleansing. When we seek the Lord's forgiveness, we shift from the *wicked* category to one *who trusts in Him*. Always remember that disgrace is not in falling because we all blow it. The disgrace is only if we don't get up again.

There is something else that is clearly laid out in this verse. *Sin comes with consequences*. God forgave David for his sin and it was never held against him. But for the rest of his life he was plagued with heartache, pain and disappointment as a result of it. If you sin, God will forgive you but the *woes* spoken of in this verse will be yours to endure because even though God forgives, sin has *dire* and painful consequences.

Beginning:

Vs. 10 - Many are the _____ of the _____, but the _____ unfailing
_____ surrounds the _____ who trusts in _____.

Advancing:

Vs. 10 - _____ are _____ woes of _____ wicked, but _____ Lord's unfailing
love _____ the man who _____ in Him.

Progressing:

Vs. 10 - Many _____ the _____ of the _____, _____ the
_____ love _____ the _____ who _____ in
_____.

Advancing:

Vs. 10 - Many _____

Psalm 32:11

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

So now we have it. *Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous!* Who is David talking to? If you have confessed your sins to the Lord and asked Jesus to forgive you and be your Lord and Savior, *He is talking to you.* You are now *righteous* in God's sight. Your sins have been forgiven. You are as clean as the new fallen snow. Jesus has paid the penalty for sin. He took the punishment that was rightfully yours so you are now free. Free from sin! Free from guilt! Free from that great load you were carrying around with you. And free to live a righteous life. You can rejoice with David at your new found freedom and new life.

In Psalm 23:3 David talks about the Lord guiding us in *paths of righteousness*. It is only when we are freed from the guilt of our past sins and learn to walk with the Lord in *paths of righteousness* that we can know true joy and happiness. Just think for a moment: Do you feel good about yourself when you do things that you know are wrong and/or when you do something that is hurtful to other people? Or do you like yourself better when you do what is right?

God's laws are not a set of rules that we keep to make God happy. God knows that the only way for us to experience true joy is to do what is right. And this is the life that you are now free to live. Oh, it doesn't mean you'll never sin. It doesn't mean that life is going to be a "bowl of cherries" from here on out. It does mean that you no longer struggle with that dark cloud of sin and condemnation that separated you from your loving God. It does mean that your heart's desire is no longer for the things of this world; instead, the longing of your heart is for eternal treasure. It does mean that you now have a Friend and Guide who will teach you a better way and lead you in His paths of righteousness. So, *rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!* Salvation and everlasting life with your Lord are your inheritance.

Beginning:

Vs. 11 - _____ in the _____ and be _____, you righteous; _____
all you who are _____ in heart!

Advancing:

Vs. 11 - Rejoice _____ the _____ and _____ glad, you _____; sing,
all you _____ are _____ in _____!

Progressing:

Vs. 11 - _____ in the _____ and be _____, _____
_____ ; sing, _____ you _____ are _____ in heart!

Advancing:

Vs. 11 - _____

Congratulations!! You have now completed Psalm 32. It will always be a blessing to you. Be sure to go over it thoroughly so you can say it with no hesitation and review it often. It will also be a blessing to others as you share it with your Bible Study group, Sunday School Class and even in Church. Others are often encouraged to start memorizing Scripture—in context—when they hear it quoted in this way. The blessings of this precious psalm will be with you now and forever!

Psalm 32

1. *Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.*
2. *Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him
and in whose spirit is no deceit.*
3. *When I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long,*
4. *For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer*
5. *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.*
6. *Therefore let everyone who is godly pray to You while You may be found;
surely when the mighty waters rise, they will not reach him.*
7. *You are my hiding place; You will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.*
8. *I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go;
I will counsel you and watch over you.*
9. *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.*
10. *Many are the woes of the wicked, but the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the man who trusts in Him.*
11. *Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, you righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!*