



## 40 Days of Prayer and Fasting 2020 – WEEK 2: Grace for Regrets

### Day 8 – Monday 2nd March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Psalm 23:3b***

We'll read these words each day this week. Let them sink in. Write them in your journal, paraphrase them in your own words, perhaps even commit them to memory. Your challenge and joy is to live with these words.

Each day, please note your responses to the following questions with your own reflections in your journal.

Please read **Psalm 32**

In this Psalm, David talks about a time in his life when he was not living in integrity. Read through the psalm, and notice that after he sinned, David did something we can all relate to (found in the first few words of **Psalm 32.3**).

- What was that?
- Why do you think we tend to do that when we sin?
- Getting more personal - when did you last do that, and why did you do it?

**Psalm 32.3-4** describes the weight of unconfessed sin - where integrity is lost, and secrets are kept.

- Note in your own words what that experience must have been like for David, and what it's been like for you when you have felt similarly.

*We will return to Psalm 32 again tomorrow.*

### Day 9 – Tuesday 3rd March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, Psalm 23:3b***

Please read **Psalm 32** again

Note your answers to (and reflections on) the following questions in your journal today.

- What did David finally do to end this episode in his life (See **Psalm 32.5**)?
- What did God do?
- How does this encourage you when you are aware of the weight of your sin?

**Psalm 32:8-11** is like an amplification of **Psalm 23:3b** (where God guides us "in paths of righteousness for his name's sake").

- d. How does God NOT want to guide us in paths of righteousness (See **Psalm 32.9**)?
- e. Do you ever feel like you resist God guiding you from sin to righteousness?
- f. See **Psalm 32.10-11**. If God is so loving, wise, and concerned for our well-being, why do we resist his guidance?

Choose today to uncover your iniquity and confess your sin like David (**Psalm 32.5**) and receive the Lord's forgiveness and guidance - from sin into his paths of righteousness.

## Day 10 – Wednesday 4th March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, Psalm 23:3b***

Read **Psalm 51** today. Another psalm of David, about forgiveness. Please journal your responses to the following questions,

- a. According to **Psalm 51:1**, what is it about God's character that gave David confidence to uncover his sin and guilt before Him?
- b. What did David ask God to do for him (See **Psalm 51.1-2 & 7-12**)?

When we sin, we might naturally tend to: justify ourselves before God; or bargain with God – if you let me have this, I'll give you that; or compensate by trying harder to 'make it up' to God; or compare ourselves to others who also sin; or simply try to ignore God and hope he forgets about it.

- c. What's your natural tendency?
- d. What makes all these responses ineffective and unnecessary (See **Psalm 51.16**)?
- e. Read **Psalm 51.17** What is God looking for, that he might deliver you from the guilt of sin, and guide you in the paths of righteousness (See also **Psalm 51.13-15**)?
- f. How is God speaking to you today? What do you need to do about it?

## Day 11 – Thursday 5th March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, Psalm 23:3b***

Please read **1 John 1.5-10** and note your answers to the questions below in your journal.

- a. What additional light does this passage shed on our responsibility and God's responsibility in the matter of forgiveness, purity and fellowship?

The following is adapted from John Ortberg's book.

*"A distinction must be made between three kinds of forgiveness: forgiveness available, forgiveness applied, and forgiveness enjoyed.*

*God makes forgiveness **available** to all people, but it is not applied or enjoyed by those who haven't humbly trusted Christ for that forgiveness. Forgiveness is **applied** to all believers when they ask for, and are given, grace and forgiveness from God, through the merits of Christ.*

Forgiveness is **enjoyed** as we receive and accept the grace given by God, and begin to to live in God's Grace in walking with God.

Consider this analogy: A rich aunt sets aside £1 million for you in her will (it's **available**, though not yet). Upon her death, that money gets transferred to your account (now it's **applied**). Yet you will not **enjoy** it until you access the money and begin to use it.

Likewise, when we confess our sins regularly, and receive God's forgiveness, we are simply "making withdrawals" from the gracious resources of our heavenly Father. He's already transferred into our account a complete pardon (See **1 John 1.7**). However, in addition, verses like **1 John 1.9** teach us how to enjoy God's gracious forgiveness in our experience daily.

Confession of individual sins is not some sort of mechanical process—put in a pound coin, and out comes forgiveness; rather, we live under the umbrella of a secure relationship with God. Our adoption by God isn't threatened by any of our failures. We need to enjoy and live freely in the forgiveness that is ours – both the complete pardon, and the daily forgiveness.

Regular confession of sin doesn't obtain for you anything new; it makes real in experience what's been yours since the day you came to Christ.“

- b. Please journal your reflections on this adapted John Ortberg quotation?

## Day 12 – Friday 6th March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, Psalm 23:3b***

**For His Name's sake** - When God forgives our sin and leads us in "paths of righteousness," it reflects his character and honours His Name. That's why David says it not only blesses him, it is fundamentally "for His name's sake."

Please read **Psalm 51:3-4**, **Psalm 106:6-8** and **Ezekiel 36:33-36** today.

- a. With these passages as your reference, note in your journal – What is your understanding of how God's forgiveness of your sin and guidance into righteousness reflects his character and honours his name?
- b. How does it alter your view of the importance of dealing with sin in your life?
- c. How does this truth enrich your walk with God?

## Day 13 – Saturday 7th March

***He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake, Psalm 23:3b***

### **Spiritual Exercise**

Set aside a block of time today to engage in personal review and confession. Allow the outline below to guide you. Use your journal to record your thoughts and feelings as you go along.

## **Preparation**

Place yourself under the guidance, protection, and care of God, asking for his light to shine in the right places with the right intensity. Perhaps pray the following prayer or one like it:

*"Precious Saviour, why do I fear your scrutiny? Yours is an examination of love. Still, I am afraid ...afraid of what may surface. Even so, I invite you to search me to the depths so that I may know myself—and you—in fuller measure".* —Richard Foster, Prayer

## **Self-Examination**

When Did I Sin?

Prayerfully reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and actions during the past week. Remember, confession will be growth-producing and grace-giving only if you let down your defences.

Be candid and concrete. What were some specific points of departure—moments when you clearly left God's paths of righteousness, choices you made that do not reflect life as Jesus would live it? (Note: Sometimes, we deviate from the path to pursue an activity that is wrong; other times, we sidestep an activity that is right. Both kinds of sins—commission and omission—take our feet off the road God wants us to walk.)

## **Perception**

Why Did I Sin?

Ask God to give you fresh insight and understanding regarding your sin.

Are there any patterns of which you need to take note?

Are you able to discern why you departed from God's path?

Is there a legitimate need behind your choice to stray?

What might be a God-honouring and God-wise way to meet that need?

## **Make way for a New Feeling**

What Were the Results of My Sin?

Can you feel the pain or hurt of any you offended—including God?

Allow yourself to experience appropriate, godly sorrow.

## **Make way for A New Resolve**

What Are My Intentions Now?

Resolve that, with God's help and the help of others in Christian community, you will embrace confession, forgiveness and pursue godly change. Commit to doing whatever may be necessary to make it right.

## **Experience Healing Grace**

Allow your forgiving, grace-filled Shepherd to "cut the burden from your back."

Picture the load of sin, the weight of guilt and shame falling from you into a deep cavern.

Hear it crash far below you and then feel the earth shake as a landslide covers it up

By the grace of God, feel yourself stand up straight, forgiven, tall, and free – ready to walk with God today in the fellowship and beauty of holiness.

**Close your time by reading David's Psalm 103.**

**Day 14 – Sunday 8th March**

**Sermon – Grace for Regrets**

**Your own notes from the Sermon today...**