

Fasting guide

day 15. confession

Psalm 51 (NLT):

Have mercy on me, O God, because of your unfailing love. Because of your great compassion, blot out the stain of my sins. Wash me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I recognize my shameful deeds; they haunt me day and night. Against you, and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight. You will be proved right in what you say, and your judgment against me is just. For I was born a sinner; yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. But you desire honesty from the heart, so you can teach me to be wise in my inmost being.

Purify me from my sins, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Oh, give me back my joy again; you have broken me, now let me rejoice. Don't keep looking at my sins. Remove the stain of my guilt. Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a right spirit within me. Do not banish me from your presence, and don't take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me again the joy of your salvation, and make me willing to obey you. Then I will teach your ways to sinners, and they will return to you. Forgive me for shedding blood, O God who saves; then I will joyfully sing of your forgiveness. Unseal my lips, O Lord, that I may praise you. You would not be pleased with sacrifices, or I would bring them. If I brought you a burnt offering, you would not accept it. The sacrifice you want is a broken spirit. A broken and repentant heart, O God, you will not despise. Look with favor on Zion and help her; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then you will be pleased with worthy sacrifices and with our whole burnt offerings; and bulls will again be sacrificed on your altar.

Consider the things that come between you and God, and starting with the words below, hold them up to God as a confession. Confession causes us to face our nature, and can be a frightful thing, but it is also a bridge to God. Sincere confession is always followed by God's drawing near in forgiveness. As you read, don't be limited by what is written here. Add your own words as you are moved to. Holy and merciful Father: We confess to You... that we have sinned by our own fault in thought, word and deed; by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart, and mind, and strength. We have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not forgiven others as we have been forgiven. We have been deaf to Your call to serve, as Christ served us... We have grieved Your Holy Spirit. Father, I confess to You my great pride, impatience, self indulgence, prejudice, contempt, cruelty and dishonesty. I confess my exploitation of others, envy of those more fortunate, lust for worldly goods and comforts, negligence in prayer and worship, and my failure to stand firm and be a witness to Your reality. Father, by way of the cross and passion of Your Son our Lord, teach me the joy of resurrection.

As the scripture says, *"If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong"* (1 John 1.9). Now is the time to search our hearts and to be fully known by God. As we focus on the cross and resurrection, we need to be honest with God, hiding nothing. Remember as well that there is no darkness too deep for God: His own Son suffered death on a cross under a greater burden than any have known before or after Him – He descended deeper into the darkness. There is no depth to which we may sink, where He has not been, or where we will be out of reach of the mercy of God.

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Suggestion: For fasting from various media, continue the practices from last week and add to them if you can. Cut back on, or eliminate, TV, the radio, the internet, the computer, etc. And finally, whenever you have free time because you have given something up, be sure to give the time to God.

- Have you acknowledged your sinfulness to our Most Holy God?
- Have you repented and turned from your ways?
- Please spend time asking God to reveal the sins you need to confess. Name the sins and take ownership of them. After listening for His Spirit to reveal your sins repent and turn from those sins.
- After you are finished, please close with this prayer.

Prayer:

Father, I often find myself buried under the weight of my own dark thoughts, and so fearful of these thoughts that I cannot even face them. But Lord, You promise that because of what Jesus did, I am not to be punished according to my sin. With this promise and the hope of freedom, God help me to face my own heart: shine Your light inside of me. I want to be known by You. Help me to let You in.