

“The Penitent Response of God’s Chosen People” Psalm 19:12-14, Sermon Notes
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Introduction

Well, we finally come to the end of this great Psalm and I’m having hard time to let go! These three weeks have really been a delight for me, kind of been like a kid in a candy store! I trust our journey through Ps 19 has been fruitful for you as well. But these three weeks have also reminded me just how hard our Pastors labor for us each and every week. Sunday’s do seem to come with amazing regularity! It’s only been three weeks for me and I’m exhausted and I suspect you may be too with the lengthy messages. Today should be shorter and less intense but I won’t promise you that!

Last week I said that David engaged our senses in vv. 1-6 and that he would engage our minds in vv. 7-11. This week David is going to engage our emotions in a very powerful way. In the first 11 verses of Ps 19, David has presented God’s self-disclosure in creation and in the Scriptures. David easily could have stopped right here and the Psalm would have been complete but this isn’t David’s practice. David never views God or the Scriptures in the abstract. Instead he is keen to apply what he has learned to his life. And this is precisely what David is going to do for us this week in the final three verses of Ps 19. Through his words in vv. 12-14, David is going to show us how we should respond to God’s general revelation in the natural world and His special revelation in the written Word. In the first 11 verses, David has been trekking up this mountain of a Psalm. It has been a long and arduous journey to reach the summit. As we arrive at v. 12, David is standing on the mountain top as close as he can physically be to God and he is going to respond to God’s self-disclosure.

If you can remember all the way back to our first week together, I said that the central idea of Ps 19 is that God’s revelation demands our penitent response. In other words, Ps 19 is all about God’s divine revelation in nature and in Scripture and our acceptable response! And now, in vv. 12-14, as David is standing at the summit of God’s revelation, he will give voice to the penitent word of God’s chosen people. In these three verses, David is going to respond to what he has learned about God with really intense emotions. He begins with contrition, he follows that with prayer, and then closes in adoration. Let me say it this way:

1. In the first line of v. 12, David is going to cry out to God in contrition;
2. In the second line of v. 12 through the first line of v. 14, David is going to plead to God in prayer; and then
3. In the final line of v. 14, David is going to bow down to God in adoration.

OK – so only three points today. But before I get to them, let’s review our journey to the mountain top.

Contextual review of vv. 1-11

The Unspoken Word of the Created World (vv. 1-6)

David began with God's self-disclosure in creation. In the first six verses of Ps 19, we saw how God reveals Himself in the Unspoken Word of the Created World. David showcased two aspects of creation, the skies and the sun. The canvas of the sky is God's glorious handiwork. It is God's unspoken witness of Himself. Through the testimony of the skies, we learned that God is continuously and abundantly communicating to us without saying a single word. The sky is a silent testimony to God's grandeur and majesty in creation. We then learned that the skies provide a universal testimony to all people, of all nations, throughout all of time.

David follows this with the most prominent feature in the sky, the Sun. The radiance of the sun is also a universal testimony. But David uses the witness of the sun differently. He uses it to declare four attributes of God's essential nature; His sovereignty over everything He has created; His omnipotence -God's all-powerful essence that enables Him to do anything that is consistent with His nature; His immutability, meaning that God does not change; and His omnipresence: God is everywhere and there is nowhere we can go to hide from Him.

The Spoken Word of God's Written Word (vv. 7-11)

Last week we covered God's self-disclosure in the Bible in vv. 7-11. Last week was a mind bender, hope you fully recovered. Unlike creation, the Scriptures have a loud and audible voice .They speak to us of God and, particularly, His plan to redeem us. In vv. 7-9 David told us that Scripture is completely sufficient, and then in vv. 10-11 he reflects on Scripture's incomparable excellence.

In expressing the Scriptures complete sufficiency, David points to their comprehensive nature in vv. 7-8 and then their intended influence on our lives in v. 9. David's concise poetical clauses first tell us what Scripture is, that is its attributes, followed by what Scripture does, its beneficial effect. David highlights four fundamental truths about Scripture's sufficiency:

1. Scripture's instruction inspires repentance. David says it this way: *"The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul."* Scripture is singularly unique in its ability to convert a soul; to transform a soul; and to refresh a soul.
2. Next, David says that Scripture's witness instills wisdom. He says it this way: *"The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."* The Bible is God's own testimony, His words about Himself, not man's words about God. God's testimony is the very foundation of truth and it has the ability to make us wise as we submit to its authority in our lives.
3. In the first line of v. 8, David says that Scripture's prescriptions bring joy to our heart. Again, David says it best: *"The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart."* In addition to Scripture's ability to save, it provides us with God's principles and guidelines which grant us everything pertaining to life and godliness. But like any prescription we would receive from a medical Doctor, God's precepts will do us no good unless we are obedient to "take the medicine." When we do, it produces a joyful heart. This does not mean that we will not experience difficulty in life. Rather, when trouble comes, if we cling to God's word – His prescriptions – we can experience joy even in the midst of trials.

4. And last, David says that Scripture's decrees generate illumination. As I said last week, if God's prescriptions are good for us, then His decrees are authoritative over us! God's prescriptions are general guidelines, so in a sense they depend upon our choices. His decrees on the other hand are binding – they will happen with or without our consent. God's commands, His divine decrees, generate illumination. Or as the Psalmist says in Ps 119:105, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path.*"

What a wonderful and amazing economy of words David displays in vv. 7 and 8. Then in v. 9 David switches from the fundamental truths to their intended influence in our lives. If you remember from last week there were two: First, they are intended to produce in us *the fear of the LORD* – or, as I further explained a reverential awe for God. In fact, this is precisely how Jesus tells us to start the "model prayer" in Matthew's gospel. You remember ... "*Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name.*" This is a great place to start. One great way to "hallow His name" is to pray the names God gives for Himself in the Bible. I count at least 16 in the OT and another 3 in the NT. Try it sometime. It will make you find the names and it will reveal wonderful things about God's nature.

Second, the fundamental truths are intended to inspire respect for God's standards of justice. God is altogether righteous. He is completely fair in His acts of justice, for the simple reason that they are based on His precepts and His commands set forth in Scripture. We could summarize it this way, *Scripture is God's revealed standard for administering His righteous judgments.*

Then in vv. 10-11, David turns to reflection. He begins to process all that God has revealed in nature and in the Bible. As he does, David recognizes both the surpassing worth and the practical utility of the Scriptures. In v. 10 David says that the *Scriptures are to be valued over and above anything we can possess or experience in the natural world.* They are more valuable than gold and sweeter than honey! Then in the first line of v. 11 he endorses Scripture's ability to warn us against the corrosive effect of sin along with the lies and deceptions of the world spread by Satan. David concludes with the present benefits ... the "*here and NOW benefits*" ... of keeping God's commandments. He says there is *great reward* in living a submissive life that is obedient to God's word ... because the righteous are already blessed in their righteousness!

Which leads us now to our text for today ... Let me read vv. 12-14.

"Who can discern *his* errors? Acquit me of hidden *faults*.¹³ Also keep back Thy servant from presumptuous *sins*; Let them not rule over me; Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be acquitted of great transgression.¹⁴ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Thy sight, O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer." (Psa 19:12-14 NAS)

Introduction to the Text

There is such a beautiful progression in this Psalm. David starts with revelation which leads him to reflection and then to response. Or maybe we could say it this way, David starts with *discovery*, then he *meditates* on what he has discovered, which moves him to *act* on what he has learned! This is a very typical pattern for David in almost every one of the Psalms he wrote. David closes most of his Psalms by turning to God after he has poured out whatever issue, challenge, joy, or discovery he is dealing with. David knows that God is always the answer, and I think this is a very instructive pattern for us to follow as well!

David's response to God's revelation is threefold: First in v. 12a, David will cry out to God in contrition; then in vv. 12b-14a he will plead to God in prayer; and finally, in v. 14b, he will bow down to God in adoration! Let's see how he does this.

Exposition of the Text (vv. 12-14)

David cries out to God in contrition (v. 12a): David starts the final section of Ps 19 with an interesting question. We could take David's question to be a rhetorical question that introduces this final section, and this would not be entirely wrong. But I don't think this fully captures David's mindset. Stop and think about what David has just said in vv. 1-11 – the magnificent revelation of God in nature "Wow, look at the skies!"; then the sufficient revelation of God in Scripture "Wow, God wrote a book for me!"; and then its surpassing worth "Wow, this is good stuff! It's pure gold!" Now, if you were David, do you think your next statement would reflect rational indifference? I think not! Verses 12-14 are the climax of the Psalm. And David is introducing the climax with a deeply emotional lament over his spiritual condition. The Scriptures have revealed God's precepts and commands and David knows he falls short. The literal Hebrew translation of v. 12a is this, "ERRORS, WHO CAN DISCERN?" David laments his ability to even begin to perceive or recognize the full extent of his sin. David is deeply convicted of his sin and he is crying out to God in contrition.

Now if you are not convinced, turn with me to Romans chapter 7 where we see the Apostle Paul does something similar. After a long discussion on being dead to sin and alive to God starting back at the beginning of chapter 6, in chapter 7, beginning in v. 14, Paul wrestles with the ongoing conflict between his new nature and his sin tainted flesh. In v. 15 Paul states the dilemma this way – "For what I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate." Paul then pours out his frustration over this struggle in vv. 16-23 and concludes this way in v. 24, "Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from this body of death?" Paul laments his "wretchedness." And like David, he then proceeds to his hope in the next verse, "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!" Yes, there a rhetorical element to the question but the emphasis is on his condition; giving way to the only possible solution. Paul, just like David, was sick over his sin – both of these spiritual giants were completely contrite!

I want to expand on this word contrite. I was originally thinking to use the word despair, but when I checked the definition it was absolutely the wrong word to use. Someone "in despair" has a complete loss or absence of hope. This does not reflect David or Paul's emotion. Rather, David, like Paul, is experiencing utter contrition. Contrition is a state of feeling remorseful and penitent! This is exactly what David is expressing in his first response to God's revelation in Scripture! One of the most prominent things that David and Paul shared in common was their complete and utter lack of any pretense of innocence in their lives. These spiritual giants knew who they were. They knew they were full of sin. And they whole-heartedly cry out to God in contrition.

Turn with me to Psalm 51 and let me show you what this looks like. As you are turning, let me provide a footnote to the phrase pretense of innocence, that I just used. I took it from a recent message given by Jon Anderson of GIBC so I need to credit him with the phrase. But I unashamedly borrow it because it is the perfect way to characterize David's view of himself ... he maintains no pretense of innocence. Let's see how David describes it in vv. 1-5:

“For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin. ³ For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, And done what is evil in Thy sight, So that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, And blameless when Thou dost judge. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me.” (Psa 51:1-5 NAS)

The context, as the heading tells us, is the aftermath of David’s sin with Bathsheba. Notice how he starts:

1. Vv. 1-2: He starts by reflecting on who God is and appealing to His attributes – *grace, lovingkindness, compassion* – to cleanse his sin. David recognizes right up front the only true and lasting source of recourse for his sin is bound up in the very nature of GOD;
2. Vv. 3-5: Then David reflects on who He is in vv. 3-5! Look what he says:
 - a. He knows he is a *transgressor* – v. 3a;
 - b. His sin is *ever-present* before his eyes – v. 3b;
 - c. He recognizes that all sin, ultimately, is against God! – v. 4a. David is not ignoring, or minimizing, what he has done to Bathsheba and Uriah (her husband), but rather correctly noting that all sin is evil in God’s sight;
 - d. Then in v. 4b. he acknowledges that God is completely just in His judgments ... sounds kind of like v. 9 of Ps 19, right?; and
 - e. Then the climax in v. 5 – David acknowledges that he was born in sin – this is a statement of his depravity; not that his mother sinned in conceiving him!

David is completely contrite over his sin. He is sorrowful and he is penitent, which is the pathway to repentance. David first needed to recognize and acknowledge sin in his life in order to seek forgiveness. It really must be the same way for us. Just like David, we have to release any denial or excuse for our sins. That is, any pretense of innocence to fully experience God’s forgiveness. We have to recognize just how stubborn sin is and also how oblivious we can become to its presence in us! As the prophet Jeremiah says, *“The heart is more deceitful than all else, and is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds” (Jer 17:9-10)*. But, like David – we have hope, and that hope is to plead to God in prayer as David now does in vv. 12b-14a ... *RE-READ vv. 12b-14a*.

David pleads to God in prayer (vv. 12b-14a): These verses form the core of David’s penitential response to God’s revelation. Marked off by three imperatives David urgently pleads, or appeals, to God for three things.

1. In the second line of v. 12, David pleads to be freed from concealed iniquity;
2. In v. 13 David pleads to be restrained from willful rebellion; and
3. In the first line of v. 14 David pleads to be made acceptable to God.

Let's explore these three appeals:

A plea to be freed from concealed iniquity (v. 12b): David is going to make two distinctions about the sin in his life between this verse and v. 13. Here David is going to address a category of sin, or faults that he calls *hidden* and he is going to plead to God to *acquit* him of them. The translation of the Hebrew verb is quite unfortunate because the primary meaning of *acquit* indicates a judicial environment. To be acquitted of something is to receive a not guilty verdict from a judge or a jury. And this meaning would seem to be inconsistent with David's view of God's justice in judging – He would be asking God to go against what is “all-together righteous.”

A more literal translation will help us understand David's meaning. What David literally says is this – “*from faults kept hidden* (meaning the errors he cannot discern – v. 12a) *keep me innocent.*” David's appeal is to be completely innocent. By innocence David means to be free from moral wrong; not corrupted – like the innocence of a child. David doesn't want sin to have any perch in his heart, but he knows himself and he knows he is harboring sin. In Ps 51:10, David pleads to God this way. He says, “*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.* David wants to “start over – to be “recreated” with a new heart and an accompanying spirit that will help him withstand sin. He wants to be completely free of sin – He wants any vestige of sin to be eliminated from his heart. David takes God's command seriously – “*You shall be holy, for I the LORD you God am holy*” (Lev 19:2).

Now, you might be thinking – I'm not like David. You might be maintaining a ***pretense of innocence*** or think I'm not harboring a bunch of hidden sin! Well, allow me to disabuse you of your folly with a few examples to choose from:

1. There may be hidden sin in you due to *ignorance* ... Maybe you are a new or newer Christian and you just don't know any better. This is why we need to be committed to regular time in our Bibles, and to maintain fellowship with other Christians to encourage one another daily as the writer of Hebrews says in 3:12-13.
2. There may be hidden sin in you due to *complacency* ... Maybe you are not serious about sin – it's not that big a deal. You are feeling smug about yourself and you think that compared to “most Christians” you are pretty good! Well – sorry to tell you, but God doesn't grade on a curve!
3. There may be hidden sin in you due to *indifference* ... Indifference follows this kind of thinking. It's just a small thing – no one will notice. Or God is not concerned about that. Or, I'll just do it this once ... it won't own me.
4. There may be hidden sin in you due to *self-delusion* ... King Solomon says it this way in the book of Proverbs, “*All the ways of a man are clean in his own sight, But the LORD weighs the motives*” (Prov 16:2).
5. There may be hidden sin in you due to *idolatry* ... This is a big one. Idolatry is sneaky. There are the obvious “no-no's.” We don't covet or make possessions our master. But what about the “good things” that become idolatry ... Like trying to be *Picture Perfect* – I think some of you ladies have just gone through this book. Or maybe being puffed up about what you know about the Bible – I call it the “big head-small heart” syndrome.

6. And my favorite – There may be hidden sin in you because it is too *characteristic to register*. This is the category of habitual sin. You have become so numb to its effects that you don't even notice it any more. Like maybe having a sharp tongue ... or being quick to anger ... and justifying these behaviors with "that's just the way I am!"

I'm sure that you can add to this list – but you get my point. David wants God to keep him from even the "little stuff." David is serious about sin. But now David moves on to the big stuff.

A plea to be restrained from willful rebellion (v. 13): In v. 13, David implores God to keep him from volitional sin. The OT called this sinning with a high hand. It is premeditated sin for which there is no better example than David's sin with Bathsheba. David could have short circuited the entire process if he had chosen to look away when he first saw Bathsheba bathing, but instead desire gripped his heart. And just as James tells us in 1:13 ... once desire conceives it brings forth sin.

David's plea is twofold: first, for God to guard him from even starting down the path toward conscious, volitional sin; and second, for conscious sin not to be David's master. Yes, we know from Ps 51 that we can confess and repent – but our real goal should be as David's ... to just stay a million miles away from it! As Samuel said to a sinning Saul – *"Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices (that is the payments for sin) as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice (1 Samuel 15:22)*. This is David's request in v. 13 – to live obediently. From the 11th verse of Ps 19 we already learned there is great reward in keeping God's precepts and commands in the "here and now," but David states it again to conclude v. 13. Paraphrasing, he says – *absent willful rebellion to God's statutes, I will be blameless and innocent of great transgression*. Bottom line – in all sin, BIG or small, David's target was to be blameless in God's eyes. Which leads us to v. 14 and David's final plea ... *to be found acceptable to God!*

A plea to be found acceptable to God (v. 14a): I don't know what jumps out for you as you read this verse, but for me it is the mouth-heart parallelism. David knows and understands the connection between the mouth and the heart. He knows that to be found acceptable to God the "thoughts of his heart" and the "words of his mouth" must be aligned because they are closely connected – they are hardwired together. Jeremiah says *the heart is desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9)* ... and Jesus says that *the mouth is its messenger*. Jesus says it this way – turn with me to Matt 12:33– *READ vv. 33-37*. Seems pretty clear doesn't it ... *"for the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart ... good (words) from the good treasure of the good man and evil (words) from the evil treasure of the evil man."* Let me say it in plain and simple language – Your words reveal your heart's character! There is no getting around it.

God knows what's in your heart. He measures not only what we say, but also the "heart" behind our words. Solomon says it this way, *"As in water face reflects face, so the heart reflects man" (Proverbs 27:19)*. Or maybe even better in 4:23-24 – *"Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth and put devious speech far from you."* How do we get rid of deceitful and devious speech? Clean up your heart. There is no other way. You can't just change your behavior – that is superficial. Ultimately, you have to change your heart. Clean yourself up on the inside. You may think you can cover up your heart with a smooth tongue, but you can't. That just makes you a whitewashed tomb. One of the seven woes Jesus pronounced on the scribes and Pharisees in Matt 23. Jesus says it this way in v. 27, *"Woe to you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but on the inside are filled with dead men's bones and all uncleanness."* I'm sure that everyone here has had the experience of someone speaking to you and you know

that what is coming out of his mouth is not what is in his heart. Let's take an apology for instance. Their mouth may be saying *I forgive you*, but their heart is saying *I'm going to get you back big time!* I'm guessing we may learn more about this when Pastor Marc starts in on his forgiveness series.

Anyway, David's singular focus is to be acceptable to his God. He knows that both the inside and the outside, that is both his actions and the motivations that drive his actions, must be in sync. David knows that "*he who loves purity of heart and whose speech is gracious, the king (LITTLE "k") is his friend*" (Prov 22:11). How much more should we aspire to this unity of heart and speech to be The King's (BIG "K") friend.

David now closes with a doxology of sorts – He bows down to God in adoration in the final line of v. 14 ...

David bows down to God in adoration (v. 14b): The Bible leads us to see our sin, but thankfully it does not leave us there. Instead it also leads us to the only ONE ... God ... who can redeem us from our sin! This God is the very one that has gloriously revealed Himself in creation and spoken to us in Scripture. David ends this marvelous Psalm "on the rock of his salvation." He ends in humble submission, bowed down to God in adoration for who He is. In expressing his adoration, David acknowledges three things about God. The first is seen in the nature of his relationship to God expressed by the name he uses to address God, and the following two as attributes that flow out of that relationship.

David ends by calling out to God, addressing him as LORD. First, and most fundamentally, God is David's LORD. David is not expressing the idea of Lord and master here ... though both are certainly true. If this was his intent he would have used a different Hebrew word. Instead, David addresses God by the personal and covenant name that God revealed to Israel – *YHWH*. David has a "corporate" covenantal relationship with God along with his fellow Israelites. But David's covenant relationship goes even deeper. God made an individual covenant with David and his descendants to rule over Israel, forever – called the Davidic Covenant – in 2 Samuel 7:8ff. David fully and completely belongs to God.

My rock: As LORD, God is David's foundation – He is David's rock. The word *rock* is a frequent OT metaphor used for God, expressing strength and shelter, along with being a source of protection and deliverance. Turning back just one Psalm to Psalm 18 – David gives an extensive discourse praising God for deliverance from his enemies. In v. 2 he identifies God as his rock, David says, "*The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*" I think the symbolism is pretty straightforward – God is a virtual "mountain of a rock." He is strong, formidable, powerful; He is the foundation that David stands on and takes refuge in.

My Redeemer: Last, and probably most significant, is David's recognition of God as his Redeemer. The Hebrew word used here for *Redeemer* is the same one used to describe Boaz in the book of Ruth. As Ruth's nearest relative, Boaz had the right – in fact the duty – to take as his own the burden that his distressed kinsman (Ruth) was bearing. The sense of being family is the underlying motive for performing your duty as the kinsman-redeemer. God is David's kinsman-redeemer. Just as Boaz redeemed Ruth, God, in an eternally more efficacious and important way, redeems his chosen children from their sin. David is clear on his source of salvation!

I really can't think of a better way for David to end this Psalm. God has revealed himself in creation and in Scripture. David has reflected on the surpassing value of God's written word and the great reward in obeying it; He acts on what he has learned about God in his penitential response ... and then he ends with three adoring affirmations about his God; He is – *LORD, rock, and Redeemer*. He is the SINGULAR ONE from whom all blessings flow and before whom we bow down in humble adoration.

Conclusion

I can't believe we are finally done! What a rich and wonderful time we have had in Psalm 19. I was wondering how to put a bow on this gift of Scripture – wondering how in the world to conclude? God's word is so rich and His Spirit graciously enlightens our eyes. As I reflect on what David has told us, three thoughts come to my mind ... one handle, if you will, to hold onto for each of the three sections of Ps 19.

Summarizing vv. 1-6, my first thought is this: Run to God, not from Him.

There is no escaping God. He can be seen all around us in the created world. In fact, if the created world were a crime scene ... and it's not ... we would find God's fingerprints everywhere!!!! I can't say it any better than the Apostle Paul in Romans 1:20 – *“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, SO THAT they are without excuse.”* How is it that the *heat of the sun*, like the porridge from the nursery rhyme Goldilocks and the Three Bears is ... just right, not too hot and not too cold? Because God designed it that way – the sun is just the right distance away so as not to burn us up or put us in a deep freeze. How is it that everything that comprises our earth is so perfectly balanced to sustain all the different life forms ... animals, birds, fish, flowers, trees, and people? Because we have a Creator God who designed every last detail. There is no escaping God because there is no escaping what He created. So *run to God, not from Him – and I promise you that you will never regret it!*

Summarizing vv. 7-11, my second thought is this: The Bible is God's love letter to you!

As hard as it may be to remember, there was a time when the average communication was something more than the 140 characters of a “tweet!” For those of us who either wrote or received a love letter, I'm sure you can vividly remember how you examined every word over and over again! I can still remember my first sweetheart from my Junior year in High School. The entire romance – puppy love I should say – lasted less than 3 months because she moved away. Man, I can still remember reading a couple letters she wrote to me after she left, along with running to the mailbox in anticipation of more. I poured over every word analyzed it, re-read it, thought about it. It was like picking the petals off a daisy – *“she loves me, she loves me not.”* But like most human infatuations it quickly passed. Not so with the Bible. It is God's very personal and perpetual love letter to us. In it He pours out His heart to capture our heart. He instructs us, He guides us, He warns us, He pleads with us, He disciplines us. In the words of Steve Lawson, the Bible is able to *“convict us, convert us, counsel us, and comfort us.”* ... And to add one more of my own – *to revive us!* So why don't we read it with the same voraciousness as a human love letter? Why doesn't it create the same anticipation for more – every day? The Bible is God's special revelation to us – and as David says so well in v. 10 there is nothing that we can possess or experience that has greater value. So, *read it as God intended it – As His love letter to you!*

And summarizing vv. 12-14, my final thought is this: Don't cling to a pretense of innocence!

Make David's goal your goal! Our biggest problem is not sin itself, but rather our predisposition to excuse our sin! Stop and think about that statement for just a minute. Yes, the actual sin itself is bad, and worthy of God's wrath – but are you really broken over your sin to the same degree that God is grieved by it? Do you really understand your penchant for sin? Has it become so familiar to us as to go “unnoticed?” Have you become numb to sin? Have you become so good at rationalizing sin that you just don't take sin seriously enough? I hope not. Rather, God's revelation should move us to bow down in humble adoration and willing obedience before Him. This is our *“living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is our spiritual service of worship”* as Paul says in Romans 12:1. We achieve this through *the renewing of our minds*, and by *putting off the old and putting on the new* (Eph 4:22-24). And all of this can only be brought about by conformance with the special revelation of Scripture. The word of God and only the word of God can change you. When you conform to it, you are transformed by it, and you please God. *And when you please God, you glorify Him and enjoy Him forever.*

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