

HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 24 NUMBER 11



the Song of a Soul Set Free PSALM 32 Allen Webster

Marghanita Laski, a well-known secular humanist, once said, “What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me.”¹

David was one of Scripture’s great saints. He was also one of Scripture’s great sinners. He seduced his soldier’s wife and had him killed in battle (2 Samuel 11). He was haunted by those sins.

Eventually, he confessed and requested: “Restore to me the joy of Your salvation” (Psalm 51:12). Psalm 32 shows that his prayer was answered. It teaches that sin brings sorrow, confession brings forgiveness, and forgiveness brings joy.

Every accountable person is guilty of sin (Romans 3:10–23). Therefore, all need God’s forgiveness (Isaiah 53:5; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:7–9; 2:1; 3:5). If we die without it, then we cannot be with God (Revelation 21:27).

Therefore, forgiveness is the most important thing to obtain in life. Receiving forgiveness requires faith, repentance, confession, and baptism (Acts 8:35–40). To remain in God’s favor, one must avoid backsliding (Acts 8:22). David is an example of one that fell back into sin.

Psalm 32 is the “Song of a Soul Set Free.” A shipwrecked sailor was rescued. Sitting by the fire, he began to talk. He first spoke of gratitude—how fortunate and thankful he was to be rescued. Next, he told of his shipwreck. Last, he described how these things would change him. David’s psalm follows the same stages in their natural order:

- The happy state of the justified person (32:1–2).
- The unhappy state of the man hiding sin (32:3–4).
- The content state of the obedient man (32:5–11).

SIN IN THREE WORDS (PSALM 32:1–2)

We will never seek God’s forgiveness until we see our behavior as God does. The word *sin*, in various forms, occurs 825 times in Scripture, averaging once every two pages. David uses three terms for sin:

Transgression signifies apostasy—tearing away from God as a horse breaks its traces and bolts. Sin is rebellion, refusing to submit, going beyond boundaries, departing from God (1 Samuel

15:22–23; Psalm 51:4; 1 Corinthians 8:12; 2 John 1:9–11). It is the prodigal leaving home for the far country (Luke 15:11–32). David’s sin with Bathsheba was unplanned, but his sin against Uriah was premeditated.

Sin means to miss the mark (Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 15:34; Ephesians 4:26). It is falling short of what God intended. God made man to walk and talk with Him, to love Him and learn His ways. Then man sinned and hid from God (Genesis 1:26–27; 3:1–8).

Iniquity is moral crookedness; perversion, distortion. It is presenting a false front so one can look good. Its opposite is simplicity and sincerity (2 Corinthians 1:12; cf. John 1:47; 1 Peter 2:1). David’s deceit and guile—cover up, falsehood, hypocrisy—is classic iniquity.

BACKSLIDING IN THREE WORDS (32:3–4)

An unpardoned man is a miserable man. Yet unconfessed sin is an unnecessary misery (Genesis 3:8–19; 2 Samuel 11:27–12:12; Jeremiah 31:18–19; Luke 15:15–16). For about a year, David tried to forget what he had done. He craftily hid sin and pretended nothing was wrong, but inwardly he was miserable. He describes his emotions at this time:

He felt like an old man: “When I kept silent, my bones grew old.” Guilt squeezed the energy from him and made him continually tired and ill (32:3–4; 38:2–8). A soul conscious of sin drags along a weary body.

He was heavy with sorrow: “Your hand was heavy upon me.” The king ruled his subjects, but he could not rule his conscience. Perhaps he tried to still its voice by busying himself with state business or entertainment, but there was no joy in work, study, or play.

He felt like land in a drought: “My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.” Sin-stress affects the body. Millions take pills to tranquilize anxiety. Guilt is the number one cause of mental illness and suicide. Psychiatrist Karl Menninger said if he could convince psychiatric patients their sins were forgiven, seventy-five percent could walk out the next day.²

Sin’s price tag is high. Garrison Keillor said, “Guilt is a gift that keeps on giving.” The way of transgressors is hard (Proverbs 13:15).

CONFESSION IN THREE WORDS (32:4–5).

Guilt is constructive if it produces positive change. Like an electric fence, it can shock one who steps over God’s bounds. Confession means:

Acknowledging sin to God. Guilt is like a huge block of ice. Kept in a dark, cold place it remains hard, but when brought into light, it soon melts. Confession is opening up to God with no attempt to conceal. Some excuse sin as weakness or human nature. A nationally known preacher resigned, explaining: “I stepped over the line of acceptable behavior with some members of the congregation. I tried to face unspecified childhood issues and had been involved in years of denial and faulty coping techniques.”³

David did not say, “How blessed is he whose unspecified childhood issues are forgiven and whose faulty coping techniques are covered. How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute stepping over the line of acceptable behavior.”

David poured out his heart before God. He held nothing back. No unclean thing was hidden in his tent. He opened all rooms and gave God all keys.

Agreeing with God about sin. Before repentance, David and God were on opposite sides. God condemned his sin; David excused it. Confession acknowledges that God is right. The more we see God’s view, the more serious sin is. Sin put Jesus on the cross.

Accepting responsibility for sin. It is a sham to confess sin and not forsake it. Accepting responsibility includes confessing and making restitution to those we wronged (Matthew 3:8). When the church’s integrity and influence are compromised, confession must be public (James 5:16).

FORGIVENESS IN THREE WORDS (32:1–2)

Forgive means to carry away a load. Sin is heavy (Genesis 4:13; Matthew 11:28). Sin has only two places it may be: either

it lies on the sinner’s back, or on Christ’s shoulders. If it lies on the sinner, he is burdened; if it lies on Christ, he is free.

On the Day of Atonement the high priest laid hands on a scapegoat, signifying transferring a penitent’s sin to the animal which was sent into the wilderness (Leviticus 16:20–22). Jesus is the scapegoat that bore humanity’s sins away (Isaiah 53:6). As the Passover Lamb, He died for sin; His blood fully satisfied God’s demands (John 1:29; Romans 8:1; 3:25–26; Galatians 4:5).

Covered means to put out of sight. Sin is loathsome and shameful (Proverbs 13:5), so God digs a grave and buries it. God’s first act of grace after the fall was to cover the first couple’s shame with clothes (Genesis 3:21). He casts sin behind His back (Isaiah 38:17) and into the sea (Micah 7:19) where grace submerges it beneath the depths. David covered his sins on earth, but he could not cover them in heaven. God’s forgiveness removed his sin’s record from heaven’s book.

Not counted (not imputed) means sin is not charged to our account. God keeps a record of all we do (Matthew 6:12) which will be used at judgment (2 Corinthians 5:10). Sin incurs God’s wrath (Psalm 32:6–10), so after sin, there must either be pardon or punishment. Moses warned, “Be sure your sin will find you out” (Numbers 32:23). Nothing is more terrible than having God for an enemy (cf. James 4:4).

If we want forgiveness, then we must ask for it. God is ready to pardon, able to deliver, and willing to guide (Nehemiah 9:17). When Christians confess, God wipes the record clean (1 John 1:9). The account is settled. Sin is cancelled—it ceases to be in evidence; it no longer influences God’s opinion of us (Micah 7:18–19; Luke 7:47; 15:20–23; Acts 13:38–39; 2 Corinthians 5:19–21; Ephesians 4:32). Jesus bears away, covers, and cancels it and never brings it up again. It is as though it never happened.

God goes a step further. He not only cancels the debt; He issues a credit. Christ exchanges our sins for His righteousness. Abraham “believed in the Lord, and He

accounted [credited]it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Justice gets a penalty. Mercy avoids a penalty. Grace gets a reward.

There is a window of opportunity for repentance, when God appeals to the conscience. If we refuse, we can become hardened beyond remedy (Hebrews 6:6). A time comes when God cannot be found (Psalm 32:6; Proverbs 1:24–26; 29:1; Ecclesiastes 12:1; Matthew 25:1–12). Death can come suddenly (Luke 12:20); Jesus will return in the twinkling of an eye (1 Corinthians 15:52).

David ends Psalm 32 by contrasting wicked people, who have many sorrows, with the righteous, who are surrounded by love.

A factory in Waterford, Ireland, makes Waterford crystal. The glassware is beautiful, but if dropped, it shatters easily. Even if glued back, it never looks the same. Some see sinners as crystal—lovely till they fall, but always damaged afterward. This underestimates God. His grace remakes us into someone even more beautiful than before.

Won't you let Him? When the Judge of the Universe pounds His gavel and proclaims, “Not guilty,” an undeserving sinner experiences pure joy.

Come, join us in singing the song of a saved soul.

Endnotes:

¹ <https://www.azquotes.com/quote/712841>

² *Today in the Word*, March 1989, p. 8.

³ *Los Angeles Times* [2/22/93], p. B1.

Things about the Church of Christ That Surprise People

Communion is a part of worship every Sunday. Those who are unfamiliar with the church of Christ, after a few visits with a congregation, have been heard to say, “You know, the one thing I notice about the church of Christ is that they have communion every Sunday.” This is surprising because most religious groups partake of it quarterly, semiannually, or annually. Early church historians speak often of the Lord’s supper involving weekly participation. They verify what the Bible teaches regarding its frequency—that the disciples partook of the communion when they assembled (1 Corinthians 11), and that they assembled on the first day of every week (1 Corinthians 16:2; Acts 20:7).



God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16

Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37

Christian's Work: James 2:24

Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian's Endurance: Revelation 2:10



We Are We; They Are They

Rudyard Kipling once wrote about families, “All of us are we—and everyone else is they.” A family shares things like dreams, hopes, possessions, memories, smiles, frowns, and gladness. A family is a clan held together with the glue of love and mutual respect. A family is shelter from the storm, a friendly port when the waves of life become too wild. No person is ever alone who is a member of a family.

—Fingertip Facts

God’s Child

She searches the crowd for him. Is he listening? Is he behaving himself? It was such a short time ago when she would complain, “I did not hear a word the preacher spoke,” but now her thoughts are distracted for another reason. Now her children are not beside her—they are “too big.” Her arms ache for a child squirming there all through church. She stands to sing and her body sways as if rocking a child. Where did the years go? Was it worth all those frustrating Sunday mornings? Sunday nights? Wednesday nights? Oh, there he is; look at him . . . he’s singing. His eyes are attentive. She feels so much joy. Look! There’s my child. No, he’s God’s child!

“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth”

3 JOHN 1:4

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Some Tests for the Home

1. The Leadership Test. Does the husband and father assume his God-given place as head of the family? Does he provide the spiritual leadership? Does he take the lead in bringing up his children in the Lord’s way?

2. The Discipline Test. Do children respect and obey their parents? Do parents expect and deserve such obedience? Is discipline consistent, fair, loving, and firm?

3. The Togetherness Test. Does the family plan to do things together? Does it usually eat two meals a day together? Do members of the family enjoy each other’s company?

4. The Literature Test. Does the family subscribe to and read Christian literature? Is other literature in the home wholesome? Is the Bible read frequently?

5. The Devotion Test. Does the family pray, sing, and study God’s word together? Is the tempo and temper of the family relationship one that encourages and develops devotion to God?

6. The Communication Test. Do all members of the family know they can

freely discuss their problems and worries and find a sympathetic ear? Can they talk about their hopes, plans, and aspirations?

7. The Temperament Test. Do all try to develop and maintain an even-tempered, patient disposition? Are outbursts of temper rare?

8. The Associates Test. Does the family approve of those with whom each associates? Do parents know their children’s best friends? Do husband and wife approve of each other’s close associates?

9. The Thoughtfulness Test. Is each one as kind and considerate of members of his own family as he tries to be with others?

10. The Vacation Test. Does the family remember God while on vacation? Is the Bible read less frequently, services attended less faithfully, and spiritual things thought about more rarely? Does the family plan vacations for their spiritual renewal also? —Darrell E. Beard

“The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain”

PROVERBS 31:11



Religious Standards

People today follow all kinds of religious standards and have all kinds of ideas about what God will and will not accept when it comes to beliefs, practices, and moral conduct.

Some believe that as long as they live up to the Ten Commandments, they will be acceptable to God.

Some believe that if they live by the Sermon on the Mount or just the Golden Rule, they will be acceptable.

Others think that as long as they are true to their own conscience, they will be acceptable.

One lady was heard to say, "I don't know much about the Bible, but I know what I believe." Therefore, "what I believe" was her standard.

"I don't see anything wrong with it" is the standard of many, and that becomes the justification for a multiplicity of religious beliefs and practices.

Political correctness and the constantly evolving preferences of contemporary culture serve as the standard for many, be it to justify same-sex marriage, so-called gender equality in the church, or some other current issue.

"I believe God wants me to be happy" is the standard of those who want to justify their actions, regardless of what the Bible may say about those actions—a series of marriages, divorces, and re-marriages in search of the "right" mate or situation.

Many adhere to the religion of their parents and ancestors. Theirs is a hand-me-down religion, with never a question or a doubt as to whether it is pleasing to the Lord.

The pope, the diocesan bishop, or the local priest is the authority for many.

The Book of Mormon, the writings of Charles T. Russell and Joseph F. Ruth-

erford, and the numerous protestant creeds, church manuals, and catechisms authored by fallible humans are the standard for many others.

For many, "My own mind is my own church" (to quote Thomas Paine).

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God, declared, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18). He alone is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6; cf. Acts 2:36). He alone is the head of the body, the church (Ephesians 1:22–23; Colossians 1:18). "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son" (2 John 1:9). Only in His name is there salvation (Acts 4:12). —Hugh Fulford

"I will build My church"

MATTHEW 16:18

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 24:11

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Chapter to Chapter - 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State: _____

Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 24:9 *Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection:* 1. Golgotha (Matthew 27:33–35) 2. Sour wine mingled with gall (Matthew 27:27–34) 3. David (Psalm 22:18) 4. Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Luke 23:38) 5. Two (Matthew 27:38) 6. Down, believe (Matthew 27:42) 7. 3 (Matthew 27:45) 8. Veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints were raised (Matthew 27:51–53) 9. "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54) 10. 22 (Psalm 22:7–22) 11. Joseph of Arimathea (Matthew 27:57–60) 12. The chief priests and Pharisees (Matthew 27:62–66) 13. To anoint Jesus with spices (Mark 16:1) 14. An angel (Matthew 28:5–6) 15. Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9) 16. Jesus (Matthew 28:9) 17. The eleven went to Galilee and worshipped Him; but some doubted (Matthew 28:16–17)

V. 24:10 *Who Said It?* 1. Abram (Genesis 13:8) 2. Cain (Genesis 4:9) 3. Jesus (Matthew 22:1–21) 4. The Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well (John 4:7–29) 5. Paul (Philippians 1:1–21) 6. Thomas (John 20:24–25) 7. Mordecai (Esther 4:13) 8. Ruth (Ruth 1:16) 9. Peter (Acts 2:38) 10. Jesus (John 3:10–16)

Snakes and Fiery Serpents

Directions: Find your answers in Genesis 3:13; Exodus 4:1–5; Numbers 21:5–9; 2 Kings 18:1–4; Proverbs 23:31–32; Luke 11:11; Acts 28:1–6; 1 Corinthians 10:1–9; Revelation 9:17–19; 12:9. Answers taken from NKJV.

1. What reason did Eve give to God for why she had eaten the fruit of the tree? _____
2. Jesus used the illustration of a son asking for _____ and being given a serpent.
3. In Revelation, what creatures had tails like serpents? _____
4. Of what does Proverbs say, "At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like a viper"? _____
5. What was the name of "that serpent of old" that was cast out to the earth? _____
6. Who amazed the people of Malta by surviving a viper bite? _____
7. Who had a rod that God turned into a snake? _____
8. Why did God send poisonous snakes among the Israelites? _____
9. After many people of Israel died, what did the people do? _____
10. What was Moses' first response? _____
11. Of what metal was the serpent made that Moses put on a pole? _____
12. What was the snake that Moses put up called in the time of King Hezekiah of Judah? _____
13. How were the Israelites saved from venomous snakes? _____
14. In 1 Corinthians, Paul tells us not to tempt _____ as the Israelites did and were destroyed by serpents.
15. What did Hezekiah later do to the serpent that Moses had lifted up? _____

—<http://quiz.christiansunite.com>

TIMELESS QUESTIONS.

SATISFYING ANSWERS.

The Bible gives satisfactory answers to timeless questions.

What is the meaning of life? In Ecclesiastes, King Solomon experimented with possessions, pleasures, and philosophy to find meaning in life. He tried money, sex, and power. He became disillusioned, then cynical, and finally concluded that life is meaningless “under the sun.” Only “under God” did he find meaning (Ecclesiastes 12:13–14).

Where does evil come from? Genesis introduces Satan, temptation, and sin.

Why do bad things happen to good people? Job’s experience sheds light on this question. (See also Psalm 73.)

The Bible explains how we got here, what God did to save man after the rebellion in Eden, and how we can please our Creator, have purpose in life, and live forever in heaven.

Embark upon a study of the Bible. See the big picture and how you fit into it.

“Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law”

PSALM 119:18

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource



The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

I want to learn more **about the Bible!**

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

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Prayer requests or comments: _____

I would like:



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New Tracts!

- The Great Invitation
- Five Secrets to Friendship
- Overcoming the Spiritual Blahs
- The First Christian in Europe



More subjects:



What Sins Should Be Publicly Confessed?



The Unpardonable Sin



Walking in Confidence



How to Deal with Negative People



Is the Church of Christ Unique?



5 Fellowships a Week



What Does For the Remission of Sins Mean?



5 Links in God's Chain of Fellowship



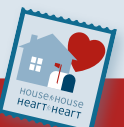
The Seven Best Ways to Die



I Would Go to Church, but All They Want Is Money

Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.

VOLUME 24:11



Can We All SEE the Bible Alike?

YES!



MOSES

said we could
DEUTERONOMY 29:29



DAVID

said we could
PSALM 119:104



JOHN

said we could
JOHN 20:30-31



JESUS

prayed we would
JOHN 17:20

All these spokesmen for God declared that through study of the Scriptures, we are enabled to see them alike.

But there are some things that can cloud our vision and hinder our understanding.



RELATIVES

MATTHEW 10:34-37; 19:29



THE CROWD

EXODUS 23:2;
MATTHEW 7:13-15, 21



PRIDE

PROVERBS 14:1; 16:18;
REVELATION 3:17-18



FALSE DOCTRINE

MATTHEW 13:14-15;
2 THESSALONIANS 2:9-12



SATAN

2 CORINTHIANS 4:3-4

If we will accept only the Word of God (1 Peter 4:11), we should not only see the Bible alike, but understand and practice it alike (1 Corinthians 1:10).

The Teacher

Jesus was the world's preeminent teacher (John 3:2).

No teacher or personality has ever inspired others the way Jesus has. Socrates taught for 40 years, Plato for 50, and Aristotle for 40. Jesus taught for 3 ½.

Yet the influence of Christ's ministry infinitely transcends the impact left by the combined 130 years of teaching from those great philosophers.

Jesus was an unusual teacher. On one occasion, the Pharisees stirred up the chief priests to send officers to arrest Jesus. The officers came back without Him. When asked why, they said, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (John 7:45-46).

When He spoke, people listened, "for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). His teaching is perfectly pure, without any component of error (John 1:17; 8:32; 14:15).

The magnificent teachings of this humble carpenter from Galilee also lift Jesus into a category by Himself. Consider His standard of "Love your enemies" or "Pray for those who spitefully use you" or "Give, and it will be given to you" (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:38).

This world would be a far better place if everyone followed the teachings of the Nazarene. —Author Unknown



A New Leaf or a New Life?



Nature forms us. Sin deforms us. Schools inform us. Prisons reform us. But only Christ transforms us.

The Bible says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A Christian is not just somebody who has become nice; he has become new. He doesn’t just turn over a new leaf; he receives a new life. A Christian is not like a tadpole that has become a frog. A Christian is more like a frog who has received the kiss of grace and become a prince. We are changed radically and dramatically.

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” “What will they put on your headstone?” Such questions accompany us all along the road of life. We want to have significance, to serve a purpose, to matter. Christians should take life seriously.

Life is a journey toward eternity. We are on a path. “The path of the just is like the shining sun, that shines ever brighter unto the perfect day” (Proverbs 4:18). There are only two destinations (Matthew 7:13–14). This world is not our home (Hebrews 11:13–16).

Ready for a new life? —Author Unknown



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11/19

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