

A HEART OF REPENTANCE

Do you remember the first time you did something bad, knowing what you did was wrong but doing it anyway? As a boy (I forget exactly how old I was), my mom and I stopped at the corner convenience store on our way home. I wanted some Bazooka bubblegum. My mom said yes, but I could only have one piece. I had already grabbed three pieces and, instead of putting two back on the shelf, I quickly shoved them into my back pocket.

The rest of that day, I was tormented by those pieces of gum. The next day I finally confessed to my mom what I had done. You know when you have to “come clean” about something and you begin with, “Now please don’t be mad” - that’s how I did it. She took me back to the store and made me hand them to the owner personally and say I was sorry for stealing them.

I remember wrestling with the feelings of guilt, remorse, and fear. Once the situation had been dealt with and resolved, I remember feeling great relief and a conscious awareness that I did not want to go through all of those things again.

We all fail the test from time to time. How we process and deal with our failures is vital to our relationship with God and others. Psalm 6 is a poetic look at how David dealt with failure, remorse, trials, and tribulations. Spend some time with Psalm 6 and meditate on the poem that David wrote as he struggled to work through some of the same thoughts and feelings as we do.

Whenever someone knows that they have done something wrong and felt the guilt and struggled with their conscience and decided they must make it right, it may be easy to feel like the one to whom they are confessing is being too hard on them. Maybe it’s because they have already “beaten themselves up” getting to the point of taking action. Like David, someone may have spent many nights in deep sorrow - sobbing uncontrollably or crying until they feel like there are no more tears to cry.

That’s when we need to remember that God is rich in mercy and abundant in grace. While there may be consequences to face and work through, he will hear us and answer our prayers. We also need to realize that there may be relationships and influences that need to be laid aside so we can focus on doing things that are pleasing to God. How sad it would be to forfeit my relationship with the Lord because I couldn’t let go of worldly and negative influences in my life.

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