

Honest to God

**Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.
Surely You desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost
place.**

--Psalm 51:5-6

It's a simple truth. One you've known in your head ever since you were first taught God's word: You're a sinner.

Yes, you know it's true in your head. But do you know that truth in the deepest places in your heart? Or do you deep down believe you're basically good, and just need God to forgive you for the occasional mistakes you've made? When God confronts you with your sin, do you rationalize or repent?

When we rationalize our sin, we do so because we think it will make us feel better. Problem is, it doesn't. It just leaves us feeling uneasy and anxious and lame, because we've chosen to reject the conviction of the Holy Spirit within us. But God's word promises that if we will accept the truth, the godly sorrow it produces over our sin will bring repentance and leave no regret. A feeling of peace that surpasses understanding characterizes the person who has confessed his sinfulness to God and felt the full force of God's mercy at work in him.

In Psalm 51, which was written by David after the greatest failure and sinfulness of his life, we see that for repentance to be real, and deep enough to bring a change of the heart, we have to know the truth at the deepest parts of our being.

A friend once told me about how hard it was for her to quit a particular sinful habit, until she admitted to herself and to God how much she enjoyed committing that sin. In that moment she started being honest to God. She admitted how deeply sinful her heart was, and became willing and able to surrender to God as a result. Then He empowered her to quit.

The Christian who lives the victorious Christian life isn't in denial about the depths of depravity to which his heart is willing to sink. He admits to God, that apart from God's mercy and sustaining grace, he is utterly sinful to the core. He says, along with Paul, "I know that nothing good lives in me."

We were all stillborn, spiritually speaking. Dead in our transgressions from day one, because the blood of Adam flows through us all. We are all morally impotent and repentance cannot do its full work within us until we are truthful about our complete inability to produce righteousness in ourselves.

Is there some sin that keeps a strong hold on your life no matter how hard you try to break free? If so, have you been honest to God about it? Or do you try to bargain with God, saying things like, "Give me time and I'll work harder and change." That attitude isn't what God wants from you. He knows that you won't change yourself. He knows that you can't. He wants you to move your pride out of the way, so that He can change you. You will never become good in your own strength. So stop striving and struggling, and surrender to God. Then He will be able to work through you, by His powerful grace, to produce the fruit of righteousness in you.