How To Live Above Your Regrets  
Psalm 51:1-17 (NKJV)

Please open your Bibles to PSALM 51, and just leave your Bibles open to that passage; we will be reading from it in just a few minutes.

INTRODUCTION

In today's message we are going to learn HOW TO LIVE ABOVE YOUR REGRETS.

Who among us here this morning doesn't have more than a few regrets in life? Who among us hasn't wished at times that we could turn back the CLOCK to a certain day or a certain period of time in our lives and UNDO or CHANGE a certain CHOICE we made or FAILED to make?

It is interesting that the word for REGRET in the original Hebrew language is the same as the word for REPENT.

The Hebrew word nacham (nah-shaum) literally means, “to change one's mind afterwards,” “the desire to improve or amend one's actions or choices.”

To put it into today's vernacular we would say that when we have REGRETS or we are REPENTANT it means “we would like a DO-OVER.”

Are you living with a haunting regret over something you DID or FAILED TO DO in your past? Does your mind frequently dwell on thoughts such as.....

* “I wish I hadn't.............”

* “I wish I would have.........”

* “Why did I do that?”

* “Why didn't I do that?” (YOU FILL IN THE BLANKS!)
In this 51st Psalm, David teaches us **HOW TO LIVE ABOVE OUR REGRETS.**

You remember while ago I told you that in the original HEBREW language, the word REGRET and the word REPENT are the same........... the word: nacham (nah-shaum)

If you will notice beneath the PSALM 51 chapter heading in your Bible you will see the title: **A PRAYER OF REPENTANCE or A PSALM OF REPENTANCE.** This 51st Psalm could also be called **A PSALM OF REGRET.**

In this Psalm, David addresses the biggest regret of his life and that was his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, and that he had sent her husband Uriah to the front-line of a war to have him killed, so he could have Bathsheba for himself.

How could David live with himself after committing such a deplorable sin? How could ever rise above the regret of what he had done?

As we study this 51st Psalm, David teaches us two valuable lessons on **“How To Live Above Our Regrets”**

First of all, to live above regret............

I. **Let Go Of Your Past!**

**PSALM 51:1-9 (NKJV)**

1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness;
   according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

4 Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—
   that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge.
5 Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.

6 Behold, You desire truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part You will make me to know wisdom.

7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

8 Make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones You have broken may rejoice.

9 Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

1. I want you to notice one thing that is noticeably absent in these verses, and that is not one time does David ask God for a chance to go back and undo what he had done in the past.

   *He doesn't say, “Lord, if you would just wind the clock back to that day on the roof, I wouldn't look at Bathsheba a second time.”

   *He doesn't say, “Lord, if you will just allow me to go back in time, I would not send my servant to bring Bathsheba to my palace.”

   *He doesn't say, “Lord, if you would just wind the clock back in time I would take back that order I gave to send Uriah to the front-line of the battle so he wouldn't be killed, and he and Bathsheba could live happily ever after.”

2. NO, David knows he can't GO BACK IN TIME and UNDO any of the horrible choice he made.
3. But rather than LIVING IN THE PAST and trying to UNDO what he can’t undo, David does the very best thing he could possibly do............HE REPENTS OF HIS SIN........HE DOESN’T BLAME BATHSHEBA OR ANYONE ELSE FOR WHAT HAPPENED........HE TAKES COMPLETE OWNERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT HE DID.

4. Brothers and sisters, there isn’t a single one of us here today who doesn’t have at least one thing we REGRET from our PAST. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of GOD!”

5. Nothing will ever change so long as you choose to LIVE IN THE PAST.

* Beating yourself up over your regrets isn’t going to change a thing!

* Kicking yourself in the seat of the pants over and over again isn’t going to change a thing.

* Wallowing in GUILT and SHAME isn’t going to change a thing.

6. The only way we can ever LIVE ABOVE OUR REGRETS is to genuinely repent of what we did by acknowledging our sins to the LORD and accepting FULL RESPONSIBILITY and OWNERSHIP for our sins, and STOP POINTING THE FINGER OF BLAME at someone else.
7. In the eyes of YOUR LOVING, FORGIVING, MERCIFUL heavenly FATHER, YOUR PAST IS “DEAD” AND IT IS TIME TO BURY IT ONCE AND FOR ALL!

Psalm 103:13 (NKJV) As far as the east is from the west so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

HEBREWS 8:12 (NKJV) “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”

8. Do you want to LIVE ABOVE YOUR REGRETS? Then accept GOD’S wonderful promise of FORGIVENESS AND LET GO OF YOUR PAST!

Secondly, to live above your regrets...........

II. Live In The Present

PSALM 51:12 (NKJV)

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

1. Realizing he couldn’t do anything to UNDO HIS PAST, David focuses on WHAT HE CAN DO IN THE PRESENT and that is to RE-BUILD HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. That was his TOP PRIORITY!

  v. 12 Restore to me the Joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit.
2. You notice David didn’t say, “LORD, I'm going to make this up to you by doing this and this and this.” In fact notice what David says down in **VERSES 16, 17**

Psalm 51:16,17 (NKJV) For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, You will not despise.

**Illustration**

I remember one particular woman in one of my ministries who had lived a very sinful life and had lots of regrets over her past. To make up for her regretful past, she volunteered for everything in the Church, from teaching a Sunday School class, to working with a youth group, to helping out in the nursery. In her mind, doing all these things would erase all her past regrets. But it doesn’t work that way!

3. David realized he had to take care of “first things first.”
   He realized before he could move on with his life he had to be reconciled to GOD and focus on rebuilding his relationship with GOD.

4. And the same is true for you and me as well. If we want to rise above our regrets, we must tend to “first things first,” and that is to **RE-BUILDING OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD!**

**Let Go of The Past**
**Live In The Present**
And finally, if we are to LIVE ABOVE OUR REGRETS we must……

III. Lay Hold of The Future

1. Having begun his work of re-building his broken relationship with GOD, David now makes a commitment to future service to GOD.

   Let's move on to VERSES 13-15............

   Psalm 51:13-15 (NKJV)

   13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You.

   14 Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, the God of my salvation, and my tongue shall sing aloud of Your righteousness.

   15 O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

1. David doesn’t just make a commitment not to repeat the sins of his past, he makes a commitment to help others learn from his mistakes so they won’t go down the same sinful path.

2. One of the best ways to rise above our regrets is to pass along the wisdom we learned from our own mistakes to save them from the same misery and pain we experienced.
ILLUSTRATION

When I graduated from JOHNSON BIBLE COLLEGE, I served as the YOUTH MINISTER at WINDSOR CHRISTIAN CHURCH in Windsor, Illinois for one year. When I went there, the Church had a large teenage choir called THE ONE WAY SINGERS that went around the area doing special programs. One of my duties as Youth Minister was to direct that choir.

After several months I found out one of the teenage boys in the group was smoking pot. I went to the Senior Minister and asked him what I should do. Without any hesitation he said, “I’d send him a letter and kick him out of the group!” Being young, foolish and in-experienced, I took that preacher’s advice and went straight to my office and typed out a letter to that young man informing him he was no longer in the ONE-WAY SINGERS and I explained the reasons why.

It turned out to be one of my “biggest regrets” in my ministry. Although the boy was smoking pot, I should never have listened to that preacher’s advice to handle the situation by letter. It led to a great deal of heartache and misunderstanding with the boy’s parents.

While I deeply regretted the way I handled that situation, I learned wisdom from it. Over the years I have had a number of preacher friends come to me with a problem situation they were dealing with in their Church wanting my advice on how to handle it. And the first thing I have always told them is never do it by letter or phone, do it face-to-face.

4. Brothers and sisters, we can’t CHANGE THE PAST, but WE CAN CHANGE THE FUTURE by steering others down the path of righteousness and helping them to avoid the same regretful mistakes we made in the past.
“THE CITY OF REGRET“

I had not really planned to take a trip this year, yet I found myself packing anyway. And off I went, dreading it. I was on another GUILT TRIP TO REGRET CITY.

I booked my reservation on WISH I HAD Airlines. I didn’t check my baggage.....you see everyone carries his own baggage on this airline.....and I had to drag it for what seemed like miles in the REGRET CITY AIRPORT.

And I could see that people from all over the world were there with me, limping along under the weight of the baggage they had packed themselves.

I caught a cab to the LAST RESORT HOTEL, the driver taking the whole trip backward, looking over his shoulder. At the LAST RESORT HOTEL I found the ballroom where my event would be held: THE ANNUAL PITY PARTY. As I checked in I saw that all my old colleagues were on the Guest List:

-There was the DONE FAMILY............Woulda, Coulda and Shoulda.

-Both of the Opportunities.....................Missed and Lost.

-All the Yesterdays...............there were too many of them to count, but all would certainly have their sad stories to tell.

-Shattered Dreams and Broken Promises would also be there, along with their friends, Don’t Blame Me and Couldn’t Help It.

And of course, hours and hours of entertainment would be provided by that renowned story teller, IT’S THEIR FAULT.
As I prepared to settle in for a really long night, I realized that one person had the power to send all those people home and break up the PITY PARTY.........ME!

All I had to do to get out of REGRET CITY was start today living the ABUNDANT LIFE CHRIST desires me to live!

Let Go Of The Past
Live In The Present
Lay Hold Of The Future

And that's “How To Live Above Your Regrets!”