

# Challenge

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**PRAYER LETTER OF CHALLENGE LITERATURE FELLOWSHIP (AUST.) INC.**

We live in a society that is filled with people who are looking for acceptance by their family, by their friends and or by their peers. It is amazing how much energy goes into the pursuit of this acceptance. This longing for acceptance, for significance is what fuels things like the fashion industry. It is what causes people to walk into a shop and pay the most outrageous price for a garment that has cost a few dollars to get into the country. It is what drives us to succeed, to seek that all-important promotion, to ascend the ladder of ambition. However, it is interesting to note how few people are interested in their acceptance before God. This is the motivation behind the writing of Psalm 32 by King David.

He had found himself in unfamiliar territory when at home resting he found himself looking at a beautiful woman and before he knew it he had committed adultery and followed it up with murder. For a whole year he tried to function as if everything was just fine but it didn't work out as he had hoped for. The breakthrough came via the prophet Nathan which brought David to the place of confession. Four things are worth noting from this psalm:

1. **The blessing of acceptance** verses 1-2. David opens the psalm with a series of beatitudes. We are blessed when our transgressions are forgiven. The word transgression means to cross the line separating obedience from disobedience. When David crossed the line he went through a process that every one of us go through when we sin. In 2 Samuel 11: 2-4 we read that David **saw** a woman bathing. Then we read that David **inquired** about the woman, which is a polite way of saying that he **covered** her for himself. Lastly we read that he **took** her and lay with her. This is exactly what happens to us when we step across the line and transgress. David was declaring his relief at knowing God's forgiveness. His sins were covered which is another way of saying his sin was no longer counted against him. Sin is an archery term which means to miss the mark. Iniquity means to be twisted which is exactly what happens to our character when we step across the line.

2. **The cost of unforgiveness** verses 3-4. For a year David worked hard to try and pretend that his life was on track, when in reality it was a disaster, because sin is always costly. The fact is that sin is invariably much more costly than what was first anticipated. Charles Spurgeon puts it so well when he said, "God does not permit his children to sin successfully." John Donne wrote; "Sin is a serpent, and he who covers sin only keeps it warm, that it may sting more fiercely, and disperse the harm and venom more effectively."

The problem with unconfessed sin is that it haunts our minds and our bodies. I am sure that many of the illnesses that afflict so many people can be tracked back to them carrying a burden they were never meant to carry – the burden of unconfessed sin, the burden of guilt. This is why when someone comes into a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus they will often describe their first response as if a great weight was lifted off their shoulders. That weight is the weight of unconfessed sin and its associated guilt.

This was the problem David faced and it played havoc with his spiritual, physical and emotional health. He had become a physical wreck underlined by the expression that his bones were growing old and groaning all the day long. Then we see that his vitality was turned into the drought of summer. When we are carrying unconfessed sin it saps our spiritual and physical vitality and we end up with lives that are cracked and marred. This is why God will chasten us to get us back into a right relationship with Him, because being out of fellowship with God is not only costly but hard.

3. **The way of deliverance** verses 5-7. The way of deliverance is not complex. We first of all need to be honest with ourselves, because unless we are we are never going to be honest with God, even though He already knows the truth. Then we need to confess our sin or sins specifically to God. Then we need to accept God's forgiveness, which includes forgiving ourselves, and move on. Once we do this the way is open to again enjoy fellowship with God. David began to once again know a communion with God through prayer and praise. It was as if he was trumpeting the chorus: *I'm forgiven!* This forgiveness is then marked by a trust in God for His ongoing victory in our walk with God, and for His care and protection.

There is something that we should note here in amongst all this elation at being forgiven. Forgiveness does not necessarily deliver us from the consequences of our sin. David's life after his sin with Bathsheba was marred by family upheaval and intrigue. I am sure there were times when David asked himself the *(Please turn over)*

question: "Was my sin really worth all the trouble and headache that has come as a consequence of it?" I think we can all answer that one fairly quickly.

4. **The joy of obedience** verses 8-12. There were three things that happened as a result of David rejoicing in being right with God. He could know God's instruction. One sure way to know if someone is in tune with God is if they are teachable or not. The Christian out of fellowship with God is often marked by an arrogance that is difficult to deal with. Then the obedient Christian can know God's guidance and will gladly follow. They are not like the mule who was marked by stubbornness. Then last but certainly not least the obedient Christian will revel in the mercy of God. When we do we will be glad and shout for joy in the Lord.

If you have been drifting in the wilderness of unforgiveness then God is saying to you to come back into a right relationship with Him, come back into the joy of the Lord today!

— Carl Carmody, Editor of Challenge



## Praise

1. We are rejoicing in the Lord for a wonderful gift that we have received lately of \$20,000, to enable us to pay off our Challenge vehicle. We worship a wonderful God.
2. We have also received some other amazing gifts along with the above in recent weeks. They have been incredibly encouraging to the Challenge team.
3. We continue to thank God for all that He is doing through the African edition of the paper. We continue to be staggered by the number of responses that we are seeing on a consistent basis.
4. Praise God for the excellent response to the Impact Africa mission trip coming up July 1-19. At this stage we have 25 people coming and looking forward to a really life changing trip.
5. Continue to praise God for Harold Peasley and his Multi Ministry team, who are doing a fantastic job in South Africa, Zimbabwe and Botswana, with crusades, training and evangelism of various sorts, which includes the distribution of the Challenge newspaper.

## Prayer

1. As always prayer is needed to see the paper's distribution expand in Australia, New Zealand and southern Africa. We have been printing about 55-60,000 newspapers in Australia for some time now and we would like to see that figure grow to 70-75,000 by the end of the year. New Zealand distribution is done by the Challenge Weekly team and is going through some testing times.
2. Please pray for Carl and Carolyn Carmody as they travel to various States and Churches in the USA. Pray for protection in travelling and for some good contacts and cementing of relationships with some of the folk that they were ministering to the last time they were there.
3. Pray too for the Carmody teenage girls during the absence of their parents for wisdom and God's guidance and protection for them.
4. Continue to pray for the Impact Africa Mission team as they prepare to leave in July. Pray for each of the team members as they gather their prayer partners together and prepare themselves for a very exciting time of ministry.
5. Pray for each of the staff families. Pray that we will each keep close to the Lord in all areas of our lives. It is a real privilege to be able to see Him at work here in so many ways. Pray too for our regular volunteers who come in each month. Without them the work would be made much more difficult.



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