

# The Way Back to God

by John Wesley

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*The way back to God is through a broken spirit and contrite heart, which is more valuable than many sacrifices.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:18, Psalm 51:1-6, Psalm 51:17, Isaiah 57:15, Matthew 5:3, Luke 15:10, Romans 12:1, 2 Corinthians 12:9, James 4:10, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Brokenness", "Repentance"

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## Description

John Wesley emphasizes that the path back to God is through a broken spirit and a contrite heart, as illustrated in Psalm 51:17. He explains that God values our heartfelt sorrow for sin more than ritual sacrifices, highlighting that brokenness allows God to enter our lives. Wesley draws parallels between physical brokenness and spiritual renewal, noting that it is through our vulnerabilities that we can experience God's grace and mercy. He encourages believers to approach God with honest repentance and a commitment to change, reflecting on the importance of sincere mourning for our sins. Ultimately, Wesley calls for a humble heart that seeks restoration through God's love.

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## Transcript

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Psalm 51:17 The way back to God has always been and still is, through sacrifice. What can we bring as a sacrifice to our God who in Christ sacrificed Himself for us? In the context of the times when David wrote this Psalm, he was making the discovery that God is happier with a heart that mourns for sin than with a sinner's perfect bull bleeding under the priest's knife. Wesley says of this verse: "a broken spirit is of more value than many sacrifices."

God seems to use broken things. Someone has pointed out that it takes broken soil to produce a crop, broken clouds to produce rain, broken grain to give bread and broken bread to give strength. It is the broken alabaster box that gives forth perfume. It is the broken Peter, weeping bitterly, who returns with greater power than ever. But not only is our broken heart the way back to God, it is God's way into us; God says through the prophet Isaiah: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite."(57:15) Our brokenness is the crack, the opening through which Jesus can enter into our situation.

While this applies in all the areas and ways in which we can be broken in this life (draw comfort from this truth) our context is spiritual poverty and holy mourning. Psalm 51 is a model of holy mourning in a spiritually poor heart that seeks to return to the Lord. Verses 1-6 model honest and heartfelt sorrow for our

sins, throwing ourselves at God's loving and compassionate mercy. Verses 7-12 model pleading for forgiveness, as opposed to just asking for it. Verses 13-19 reflect a commitment to walking in God's way in the future.

The key to honest turning back is our text verse. O that I could repent! With all my idols part, And to thy gracious eye present An humble, contrite heart! An heart with grief oppressed For having grieved my God; A troubled heart, that cannot rest Till sprinkled with thy blood! (99)

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