



THE WORK GOD HAS DONE

You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart. (Psalm 51:16-17, NIV)

AS THE HOLIDAY SEASON APPROACHES, we have a tendency to reflect on the events of the past year. We reflect on our best golf rounds of the year and our best shots—we might even remember some of the best shots we witnessed this year. For the first time in more than 30 years of golf, I witnessed my playing partner make a double eagle, a two on a par-5. It is sweet to remember.

Even though my NC State Wolfpack is having a terrible football season this year, I will always have fond memories of my time there. Specifically, I recall waking up at 9:30 PM on a Saturday night my freshman year at State. There had been a football game earlier that day, and I had engaged in certain activities before the game, so much so that I had no recollection of how I got back to my dorm. I woke up feeling physically sick, but more importantly, felt empty inside. Similar to how David felt after being confronted by Nathan regarding his sin with Bathsheba, waking up in my college dorm room I had “a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.”

Out of our lowest moments, the Lord moves powerfully.

God convicted me of my sin that night and the self-centered trajectory of my life changed directions as I looked up for help. Having been raised in a church background, my head knowledge of God turned into a heart knowledge as I prayed a simple prayer, saying “God I know you are out there. I pray that you would come into my life and guide me.” My broken and contrite heart led me to turn to God, and he definitely answered my prayer.

Reminiscing of the work that God has done in your life is a sweet adventure. Better than any round of golf or golf shot we have hit is the relationship that we can have to God through faith in Jesus Christ. God promises in the Old and New Testament that if we seek we will find. Let’s all remember and be thankful for what a great work God has done in our lives as we have sought him with a broken and contrite heart. This is good practice any time of the year, but in this season, faith-filled reflections can awaken others to see God.

Opening questions: Looking back

What good memories do you have from this year? What causes you to say that God had a hand in any or all of these?

David’s contrition

Read Psalm 51, to see how David reflected on his own sin. What words and phrases indicate David’s contrition? How difficult do you find it to use such expressions when you know you have sinned before God?

God’s forgiveness

Read 1 John 1:8-10. How sure is the mercy of God when we recognize and admit our sin?

Conversely, what happens when we pretend to be sinless?

Read Romans 7:14 - 8:2. How did Paul speak of his sin? What credit did he give to Christ for salvation? How does this encourage contrition in us?
