

**TIME FOR A CHANGE:
WHEN YOU'RE LIVING A LIE
Psalm 51:6-9**

Ferdinand Demara, who became the subject of a book and a movie both titled “The Great Impostor,” made a career out of posing as other people, even working as a surgeon despite never attending medical school. Born in the early 1920s in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Demara dropped out of high school and ran away from home to join an order of monks. In the early 1940s, he enlisted in the Army followed by the Navy, but went AWOL from both. He went on to assume a series of aliases and was a college instructor, prison warden and law student, among other occupations. During the Korean War, Demara pulled off his boldest hoax after stealing the credentials of a doctor he knew and masquerading as a surgeon with the Royal Canadian Navy. Working aboard a destroyer, Demara performed a number of surgical procedures, including the extraction of a bullet lodged near one soldier’s heart. (He later said he’d consulted medical textbooks to figure out what to do.) Demara’s success eventually brought media attention that led to him being exposed as a fraud; however, the Canadians did not press charges. Demara’s life was the subject of a 1959 best-selling book, “The Great Impostor,” that was adapted into a 1961 film starring Tony Curtis. The man of multiple identities died in California in 1982.

I. THE BURDEN OF THE CHARADE

- A. This plaintive psalm of David reveals the heaviness of heart that came with the ongoing charade. *Let the bones which You have broken rejoice.* There was a physical, emotional, and spiritual burden to be carried in the aftermath of his encounter with Bathsheba. He had done everything he could to give a sense of normalcy and respectability to his sin. Yet, he failed. ¹ *Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, “There*

were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. ² “The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. ³ “But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him. ⁴ “Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.” ⁵ Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. ⁶ “He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.” ⁷ Nathan then said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. ⁸ ‘I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! ⁹ ‘Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. ¹⁰ ‘Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ ¹¹ “Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight. ¹² ‘Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.’ ” ¹³ Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.” And Nathan said to David,

“The Lord also has taken away your sin; you shall not die. 2

Samuel 12:1–13 (NASB95)

- B. David’s sin affected his life, his family, and his nation. The burden was overwhelming.
- C. When we purposefully attempt to hide from God, we pay a price. When we play a part in an ongoing fictional drama, we pay a price. Like David, we experience a burden of sin that can play out physically, emotionally, and spiritually. *¹³ He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion. ¹⁴ How blessed is the man who fears always, But he who hardens his heart will fall into calamity.* Proverbs 28:13–14 (NASB95)

II. THE DISCOMFORT OF THE CONFESSION

- A. David slowly navigated the path of confession toward forgiveness. *⁷ Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities.* There was that season in David’s life when lies won out over the truth. In time, the conviction of sin became so overwhelming that he relented and cried out for God’s forgiveness. Hyssop was a bush whose leaves and branches were used to apply the blood to the doorposts when the Israelites were preparing to leave Egypt. It was used for the cleansing of a leper and for those who had come into contact with a dead body. The implication is clear. David had been defiled by his sin. He was cast from the presence of the Lord. The estrangement was overwhelming. He cried out for purification from his sin. He wanted to be made clean. The taint of his sin was ever before him. He needed to be made clean.

- B. Nathan told him that he was the man. David was the offender. At some point, David had to come to the point where he was willing to acknowledge that he was the one. He couldn't blame it on anyone else. He was the one.
- C. It is a difficult thing to confess our sin. We lie about it. We try to place the blame for it on others. We try to escape its responsibility. However, if we are to find healing and hope for our future, we must claim our responsibility. There is no need for an inappropriate demonstration. There is a need for humility. There is a need for honesty – with yourself and with the Lord. There is a need for confession – to yourself, to the Lord, and to those you might have involved in your sin. Then, there can be forgiveness and restoration.

III. THE LIBERATION IN THE TRUTH

- A. David began this section with an acknowledgement of God's character. ⁶ *Behold, You desire truth in the innermost being, And in the hidden part You will make me know wisdom.* God desires truth because he is truth. He has given us his truth, a body of teaching, and he is truth. He wants us to have the same appetite for truth that he does.
- B. Jesus talked about the power of the truth. ³¹ *So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."* John 8:31–32 (NASB95) God's truth brings freedom from sin's guilt and shame; freedom from sin's bondage; freedom from sin's power.