



# abc links

connecting personal and small group studies with this week's sermon

For the sermon on **March 15-16, 2008**

Part Seven of a Seven Part  
Sermon Series

## "Spiritual Deficiency"



### this week's coreverse

*"But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins."  
2 Peter 1.9 NIV*

### usingablinks

#### Personal Bible Studies (inside pages)

- Personal studies explore Scripture passages related to this week's sermon. They are broken down into three or four days. Some days, you will simply read, meditate or think about a passage from scripture. Other days, you'll be asked to dig into a passage through reading, studying and answering questions.

#### Small Group Discussion (back page)

- Small group questions that connect with the sermon and your personal Bible study. This series of questions acts as a funnel to help your group discussion flow in a purposeful point.
- If you are not in a small group, contact one of our small group staff members for more information on ABC Small Groups or go to [adabible.org](http://adabible.org)>ministries>small groups.

See [adabible.org](http://adabible.org) for **abclinks** archives.

"Hey, Phil! I decided that I want to be baptized." Those were words I heard from a fellow baseball coach who was just finishing his practice. I had just begun to get to know Steven through Ada Bible Church but more so from a local baseball league where we both coached. He was just packing up his equipment bag when I walked by to say hello. His announcement was exciting to me as I had recently learned his spiritual journey.

Steven had grown up with a religious background that was very hurtful to him. His mind and heart were filled with horrible memories regarding church. The experiences he had as a child had left him very angry. As he grew older and began his family, Steven opened his heart to attending church again, not for himself but for his wife and kids. Ada Bible Church was in the neighborhood, so it seemed like a logical place to visit. Before long, they called ABC home and even joined a small group. God was at work in Steven's heart and anger from his past was ready to break loose.

As Steven shared his story of the ugly things in his past, his small group leader very compassionately said, "You know Steven, when you were experiencing those things, God was there with you. He was weeping with you. He loves you." This may have been the beginning of Steven letting go of his anger and embracing a new relationship with God. Steven's life was filled with regret. Being angry for 25 years causes some damage. Steven was beginning to experience not only God's empathy but also His forgiveness.

"That's awesome, Steven!" I responded to his announcement. "So, what's leading you to do it now?" Steven paused to think a moment and then said, "***I just want to be washed clean.***" Then something happened that still astounds both of us. Steven would tell me later that the words I chose next, led him to spend several minutes weeping in his truck after we parted. I frankly don't remember saying it. Apparently, God wanted it said more than I remember. According to Steven I said, "***You know, you're already clean.***"

Steven had given his anger, his past and his life to Jesus. At the very moment he submitted those things to Jesus and accepted God's gift of forgiveness, Steven was washed clean from the inside out. His sins and his past, in the eyes of God, were as white as snow. God was seeing him as clean but Steven was not seeing himself as God was. "***You know, you're already clean.***" Those words rocked his emotions and cut deep into his soul. God wanted him to know how perfectly clean He had made him. The guilt, regret and shame began to deteriorate in his soul. Several weeks later, Steven celebrated his new, cleansed life in a baptism tub with his small group leaders helping him into the water.

What a huge moment for Steven to come to a new clarity of God's cleansing power in his life! Something I don't think he'll ever forget.



ada bible church

8899 cascade road se; ada, mi 49301

616.868.7005

[adabible.org](http://adabible.org)

#### Author information

Phil Niekerk, senior small group pastor



# personal bible studies

---

Last week, we discussed the disciplines required to increasingly grow in the seven areas outlined by Peter. Peter promised that those who consistently grow in **goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness and love** will be effective and productive. But Peter pauses in verse 9 to give an assessment of those who don't possess these qualities. It has to do with what they had forgotten.

## dayone

***“For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is nearsighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins.”*** **2 Peter 1.8-9 NIV**

Define nearsightedness from a physical perspective. What limitations do nearsighted people have?

Peter, in verse 8, is talking about spiritual nearsightedness. What does that mean?

What are limitations of the blind or nearsighted from a spiritual perspective? What would these people focus on?

What does Peter say they have forgotten? List some reasons why someone could forget such an important thing.

How does not forgetting the cleansing of your sins connect with possessing the seven areas of growth?

Have you been through a time in your life when knowing that your sins have been cleansed, lost its importance in your life? How did this happen? What were the causes? How did this impact your growth?

**Read 2 Peter 1.10-11.** What hope do these verses give your pursuit of growth? What direction do these words give? What steps will you take?

---

---

## daytwo

One person who understood the importance of having the dirtiness of sin cleansed from his life was King David.

### **Read 2 Samuel 11.**

Take a few minutes to chronicle David's progression of sin. List the sequence of his failure.

King David was also a song writer. The book of Psalms is filled with poems or songs that David wrote in response to events in his life. Following David's sin being exposed, David wrote a song of repentance and remorse.

### **Read Psalm 51.**

Circle all the words in this passage that refer to cleansing or the removal of sin. Why do you think the imagery of cleansing was so important to David?

---

---

## daythree

As we close the book on 2 Peter and this series called *How We Grow*, it is important to end by determining what action you'll take as a result of the past seven weeks. Find a quiet place and read 2 Peter 1.3-11 one more time. Read it slowly and deliberately. In the space below, write the words and phrases that jump off the page to you.

What disciplines will you embrace that will lead to growth?

Write a prayer of commitment to God to close this study. In your prayer, mention the promises God made in this passage that you desire and expect Him to fulfill as you pursue growth in your character.



# small group discussion



---

## leanin

When have you been the most physically dirty? What were you doing? How did it feel and how did you clean up?

---

---

## lookdown

Have someone read 2 Peter 1.3-9 aloud. Re-read verse 9.

Peter compares the blind and nearsighted to people who don't possess the seven qualities. Why do you think Peter uses this imagery? What have they forgotten?

Have someone tell the story of David's sin from 2 Samuel 11. What was the progression and how did he hide his sin?

---

---

## lookout

How do you see most religious people treating the concept of being cleansed from their sins? Defend your answer. What are the implications for each?

- consistent attitude of gratefulness that leads to a desire to grow.
- not sure they really believe their sins have been washed away.
- tend to take it for granted. Forgiveness comes cheap and easy.

---

---

## lookin

Spend a few minutes reviewing the seven qualities from verses 5-7. What disciplines (weight room) have you adopted in order to grow in these areas? What life circumstances (operating room) are causing you to grow in one or more of these areas?

Have someone read Psalm 51. What changed in David's heart? What words or phrases talk about cleansing? How does this Psalm connect with you today?

Share a time in your life when you may have taken God's cleansing gift of salvation for granted. What caused you to drift from this important concept? How did or how are you seeking to keep the cleansing of your sins at the forefront of your memory banks?

What has been the most important thing you've learned, realized or relearned through this series? What new steps are you committing to take?

---

---

## lookup

If they desire, have a few people share the prayers they wrote on DayThree. If some fit the whole group, pray them for the group. If not, pray for each other in the specific requests that come out of these prayers.

discover  
more

**Baptism!** This weekend, a dozen ABC attenders are being publicly baptized in one of our services. Baptism is a wonderful celebration of the cleansing that God has done in someone's life. The water symbolizes the washing of our sins. We go down into the water dirty and come out clean. We like to say that baptism is an outward expression of what has already transpired in someone's heart.

If you've not been baptized as an adult, and this weekend has been a motivation for you to take this step of obedience and celebration, please contact us. We will be celebrating baptism two more times in the next few months. Contact Phil Niekerk at 622-3120 or email [pniekerk@adabile.org](mailto:pniekerk@adabile.org).

**Easter!** Due to the holiday, *ABCLinks* will not be available next weekend.