

Ten Lessons from David's Great Sin with Bathsheba and Uriah

2 Samuel 11-12

By

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1. Sin often happens when you are not where you are supposed to be (11:1). David was supposed to be on the battlefield with his men (v. 1). It was the time when kings went to war; instead, David was hanging out at the palace, while his General led the men in war.

2. Adultery normally (always) begins in the mind (11:2). Jesus spoke of lust in the heart as adultery. "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Look at Proverbs 6:25-29:

Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes; for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. Can a man carry fire next to his chest and his clothes not be burned? Or can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; none who touches her will go unpunished.

What did David see? David saw a beautiful woman (v. 2). Job said, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?" (Job 31:1). David knew what Job wrote. What did he think when he saw this beautiful woman bathing on the rooftop? Could he have stopped dwelling on intimacy with this beautiful woman? Could he have returned his attention to one of his wives? Could he have redirected his thoughts?

3. It takes two to tango (11:4). Bathsheba has some degree of personal culpability. The text does not say how modest she was as she moved on the roof, but it does say she slept with the king. She came to him. Perhaps she is innocent; we don't know if he ordered her to sleep with him, but today no one has the power to order you to sleep with them. It takes two to tango. A smile back, a reply to a text, a wink, or any flirtatious act brings culpability to the person receiving the attention.

4. Sin often has unintended consequences (11:5). Bathsheba became pregnant as a result of this one night stand with the king while her husband was at war. In chapter 12, the prophet tells David the sword will not depart from your house. David loses three sons to the sword: Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. Absalom will rebel against his father to the point of sleeping publicly with David's concubines. "The LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David and he became sick" (v. 15) to the point of premature death.

5. Alcohol is often used as a means of lowering inhibitions (11:13) to get someone to do what they would not do sober. David got Uriah drunk hoping that in a state of drunkenness he would sleep with his wife (v. 13). The first reference to wine in the Bible is associated with Noah getting drunk and being found naked (Genesis 9:21). How many freshman girls lose their virginity in a state of drunkenness? How many people have said something or done things they otherwise would not have done if they would not have been drunk?

6. Sin often leads to more sin (11:15). David stopped at nothing to cover his sin. He wrote a letter in order to have Uriah placed in the thick of the battle and further shows his depravity by having Uriah carry the orders back that would eventually lead to his death. Moreover, General Joab can't think of a way for only Uriah to be exposed and killed thus he uses a tactic that causes others besides Uriah to be exposed to mortal fire from the enemy. Innocent men beside Uriah are also killed—more unintended consequences!

7. Sin displeases God (11:17). God is just. He is not 'ok' with taking another person's wife and conspiring to murder someone. The world would have you to believe that there is nothing wrong with two consenting adults engaging in an affair—but David's sin displeased the LORD (11:27). First and foremost David sinned against the LORD. God ordains what is right and wrong, and when we do wrong we are sinning against God. Sin must be judged.

8. The LORD sent the prophet Nathan to confront David's sin. "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23). Sometimes it takes another human to cause us to see our sin (12:7). Nathan created a fictional story, an illustration, to help David see what he had done in taking Bathsheba, someone else's wife. The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin (John 16:8). Before David can receive forgiveness he must see himself as a sinner. Pray that the LORD would show you your blindspots.

9. Genuine repentance of sin normally includes words of confession (12:13). David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." In Psalm 38:18 David said, 'I confess my iniquity; I am sorry for my sin.' See Psalm 51 and 1 John 1:9.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! ³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. ⁴ Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. ⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. ⁶ Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. ⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. ⁸ Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. ⁹ Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. ¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. ¹¹ Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me ...¹⁷ The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; *a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

10. Even this far-reaching evil can be forgiven (12:13). Do you desire God's forgiveness? Are you broken? Is your heart contrite? God forgives David's sin—he isn't killed by God for this sin. Nathan tells David "the LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die" (2 Samuel 12:13). The substitutionary atoning death of Christ on a cross made the putting away of our sin possible. According to Hebrews 9:26b, Christ "has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."