

# **Bible Study July 24, 2024**

## **2 SAMUEL 11 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)**

David could have chosen to stop and turn from this spiral of sin at any stage along the way. But once the cycle of sin and cover-up gets moving, it is difficult to stop (James 1:14-15). The deeper the mess, the less we want to admit having caused it. It's much easier to stop sliding down a hill when you are near the top than when you are halfway down. By then you are moving at such a fast pace that you're at the bottom before you know it. The best solution is to avoid sin before it starts.

### **David and Bathsheba**

***<sup>1</sup> In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.***

Winter is the rainy season in Israel, the time when crops are planted. Spring was a good time to go to war because the roads were dry, making travel easier for the movement of troops, supply wagons, and chariots. In Israel, wheat and barley were ready to be harvested in the spring. These crops were an important food source for traveling armies.

This successful siege put an end to the Ammonites' power. From this time on, the Ammonites were subject to Israel.

### **Let's Identify the Steps of Sin With A Few People In The Bible:**

#### **DAVID:**

***2 Samuel 11:2-4 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. <sup>3</sup> And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" <sup>4</sup> So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.***

#### **EVE:**

***Genesis 3:6 (KJV) <sup>6</sup> And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.***

#### **ACHAN:**

***Joshua 7:21 (KJV) <sup>21</sup> When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.***

As David looked from the roof of the palace, he saw a beautiful woman bathing, and he was filled with lust. David should have left the roof and fled the temptation or perhaps sensitively sent word through a trusted messenger to make the woman aware that she was visible. Instead, he entertained the temptation by keeping his eyes on her and then inquiring about her. The results were devastating.

Take these actions in order to flee temptation: (1) Ask God in earnest prayer to help you stay away from people, places, and situations that may tempt you. (2) Memorize and meditate on portions of Scripture that combat your specific weaknesses. (At the root of most temptation is a real need or desire that God knows you have and can be filled in a proper way, but you must trust in his timing.) (3) Find another believer with whom you can openly share your struggles, and call this person for help when temptation strikes.

The progression of this story makes it plain that David was clearly wrong. David used his position of power and authority as king to exploit Bathsheba, and ultimately to manipulate Joab and take advantage of Uriah. David treated her as an object to fulfill his lust. (In the Hebrew text, Bathsheba's name isn't mentioned until 11:5; David himself does not address her nor refer to her by name.) Until this point in his reign, David had been submissive to both the law and God, but here he disobeyed both. With this act, David began to behave like the kings of all the other nations by taking from his people whatever he wanted without thinking through the consequences.

Leaders in our churches and institutions often find themselves caught in the same grasp of power that David did, which frequently leads to sin. Godly leaders should behave in a manner that protects and respects those in their care and under their leadership. When we witness or experience exploitation or manipulation by our leaders, we need to be willing to step forward and stop what is happening, regardless of the consequences, much like the prophet Nathan does in 2 Samuel 12:1-12.

The phrase "she had just completed the purification rites" means that Bathsheba had just completed the ritual bathing that Israelite women had to carry out following menstruation. Thus, she could not have already been pregnant by her own husband when David slept with her. Leviticus 15:19-30 gives more information on these rites that Bathsheba had to perform.

**James 1:14-15 (ESV)**

***<sup>14</sup> But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. <sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death***

***<sup>5</sup> And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."***

**Leviticus 20:10 (ESV)**

***<sup>10</sup> "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.***

***<sup>6</sup> So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a***

**present from the king. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup> When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" <sup>11</sup> Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." <sup>12</sup> Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. <sup>13</sup> And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.**

**<sup>14</sup> In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup> In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."**

David put both Bathsheba and Joab in difficult situations. Bathsheba knew it was wrong to commit adultery, but to refuse a king's request could mean punishment or death. Joab did not know why Uriah had to die, but it was obvious the king wanted him killed. We sometimes face situations with only two apparent choices, and both seem wrong. Bathsheba had to decide between committing adultery and disobeying the king. Joab's obvious choices were to disobey the king or deliberately put one of his soldiers in harm's way. When such a dilemma arises, we must not lose sight of what God wants. The answer may be to pray and seek out more choices. By doing this, we are likely to find a choice that honors God.

**<sup>16</sup> And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. <sup>17</sup> And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died.**

Uriah and several other soldiers died as a result of David's scheme. Sin often hurts innocent bystanders. When you are tempted to do something that is wrong, remember the people who could be hurt by your sin, and resist the temptation.

#### **1 Timothy 6:6–8 (ESV)**

**<sup>6</sup>But godliness with contentment is great gain, <sup>7</sup> for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. <sup>8</sup> But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.**

**<sup>18</sup> Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. <sup>19</sup> And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, <sup>20</sup> then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' <sup>21</sup> Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"**

**<sup>22</sup> So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell.**

**<sup>23</sup> The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. <sup>24</sup> Then the**

**archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.”<sup>25</sup> David said to the messenger, “Thus shall you say to Joab, ‘Do not let this matter displease you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.’ And encourage him.”**

David’s response to Uriah’s death seems flippant and insensitive. While he had grieved deeply for Saul and Abner, his rivals (2 Samuel 1; 3:31-39), he showed no grief for Uriah, a good man with strong spiritual character. Why? David had become callous to his own sin, hardening his heart against guilt and shame. The only way he could cover up his first sin (adultery) was to sin again (murder), and soon he no longer felt guilty for what he had done. Feelings are not reliable guides for determining right and wrong. Deliberate, repeated sinning had dulled David’s sensitivity to God’s laws and the rights of others. The more you try to cover up a sin, the more insensitive you become toward it. Don’t become hardened to sin, as David did. Confess your wrong actions to God before you forget they are sins, and better yet, stay away from what is tempting you.

**<sup>26</sup> When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. <sup>27</sup> And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.**