



31: When Godly Men Sin (2 Samuel 11-12:15)

Even godly people can fall farther than they ever imagined - but 2 Samuel 11-12 shows that hidden sin never stays hidden, and God lovingly confronts what we try to cover. Today we hear this sobering and hope-filled message about the danger of sin, the mercy of repentance, and the Savior who meets broken people with real forgiveness.

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

CATCH THE CONTEXT

David and his army had just conquered the Arameans on a couple of different occasions - the final battle resulted in their humiliating defeat, subjects to David and never to fight against the Israelites again. And now that the Arameans are out of the way, David sets his sights back on the Ammonites who started all this trouble when their new king belittled, mistreated, and humiliated David's emissaries he had sent in peace.

2 Samuel 11:1

In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel. **They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah**, but David remained in Jerusalem.

This is **the spring when kings march out to war**, the rains are gone, warmer weather is back, and the roads are better for traveling with troops, food, and horses. They **besieged Rabbah**, keeping people from going in or coming out. This process of starving the people inside would usually take months. That reality will become important later.

It seems like David had earlier gone off to battle when they took the 150+ mile trek north to defeat the Arameans (2 Sam 10:17). But now, **David sent Joab** and **all Israel** while **David remained in Jerusalem**. *This is not specifically condemned, it is spotlighted* by the author for what is coming next. While David's army was off to war, **destroying the Ammonites** and **besieging** their capital city...

2 Samuel 11:2

One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing—a very beautiful woman.

Most likely, David saw Bathsheba giving herself a sponge bath.

What David originally caught a glimpse of, is not the problem. THAT he continued to look and lust...IS the problem.

☀️ "You can't keep the bird from flying over your head, but you CAN keep it from nesting on your head."

🕒 It's the lingering thought & pursuit in the mind that is a sin.

Jesus said...

Matthew 5:27-28 You have heard that it was said, *Do not commit adultery*. But I tell you, **everyone who looks** at a woman **lustfully** has already **committed adultery** with her **in his heart**.

The word translated "**beautiful**" here is **tov** - typically translated as "**good**" or "**desirable**". More on the significance of this language in a few moments.

2 Samuel 11:3

So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, "Isn't this **Bathsheba**, daughter of Eliam and **wife of Uriah** the Hethite?"

At this point, the lust in the mind should not have gone any further. After all, David finds out that this is the **wife of Uriah** - one of his 37 most trusted warriors (2 Sam 23:39, 1 Chr 11:41). His name, 'û-riy ya(h), "ur"=light "yah"=Yahweh, meaning "flame of Yahweh" or "my light is Yahweh."¹

Bathsheba or **BatSheva** (Hebrew) likely means "daughter of seven" or "daughter of an oath".²

¹ Francis Brown, Samuel Rolles Driver, and Charles Augustus Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 22.

² A. L. Breslich, "Bath-Sheba," in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed. James Orr et al. (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 416.

At this point, **David has 7 wives**. His sexual desires could have been fulfilled with one of them. And although David knew what the Scriptures said, “Do not covet your neighbors wife (Ex 20:17) and do not commit adultery (Ex 20:14), David bypasses God’s commands and acts as if there will be no consequences for his disobedience.

2 Samuel 11:4

David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, **he slept with her**. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Afterward, she returned home.

David’s adulteress thoughts, turned into adulteress actions against Uriah one of his loyal troops, and the name of Yahweh that he (Uriah) bore. Further, his action has now undoubtedly left Bathsheba with incredible guilt & shame, having caused “daughter of an oath” to *break her oath* to her husband.

The bathing beauty **had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness**, a phrase referring to a woman cleaning up after her period. The author makes it clear that she was NOT pregnant at the time she goes to see David.

2 Samuel 11:5

The woman conceived and sent word to inform David, **“I am pregnant.”**

This is TROUBLE. Remember that David’s men **besieged Rabbah**, which would usually take months. When Bathsheba’s husband returns, he will know that it wasn’t HIM that caused her to become **pregnant**. Instead of being honest, repentant, and seeking forgiveness, David comes up with a foolproof plan to get him out of this predicament.

2 Samuel 11:6–8

David sent orders to Joab: **“Send me Uriah** the Hethite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David. When **Uriah came to him**, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going. Then he said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king followed him.

Many interpreters understand the phrase, **“wash your feet”** to be a euphemism for sex. David expects Uriah to go enjoy a night with his wife, so it looks like the baby comes from him.

2 Samuel 11:9-11

But **Uriah slept at the door of the palace** with all his master’s servants; he did not go down to his house.

When it was reported to David, “Uriah didn’t go home,” David questioned Uriah, “Haven’t you just come from a journey?

Why didn’t you go home?” Uriah answered David, “The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in tents, and my master Joab and his soldiers are camping in the open field. **How can I enter my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife?**

As surely as you live and by your life, **I will not do this!”**

Earlier we saw that David and his troops did NOT engage in sexual activity with their wives during missions (1 Samuel 21:4-5). So, while David’s men are on a military mission, away from family, living in tents, and abstaining from sexual activity, David has stayed in his palace, *not only involved in sexual activity, but sexual activity with ANOTHER MAN’S WIFE...the wife of one of his faithful troopers who refused to go home and enjoy the pleasures of his bride.*

Uriah - is FAITHFUL to David and his military brothers, so *TRUSTWORTHY*, David has to find another way to TRICK him!

2 Samuel 11:12–13

“Stay here today also,” David said to Uriah, “and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and **David got him drunk**. He went out in the evening to lie down on his cot with his master’s servants, but he did not go home.

Now, *the Godly man* who was seen trusting & seeking Yahweh so consistently - *the shepherd of Israel, decides to sacrifice one of his faithful sheep...because of his SIN & SELFISHNESS.*

2 Samuel 11:14–15

The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In the letter he wrote:

Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then **withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies**.

Faithful Uriah will be carrying his own DEATH WARRANT in his hands. And with that letter, David betrayed one who would have been willing to die for him.

2 Samuel 11:16–21

When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. Then the men of the city came out and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle; **Uriah the Hethite also died**. Joab sent someone to report to David all the details of the battle. He commanded the messenger, “When you’ve finished telling the king all the details of the battle—if the king’s anger gets stirred up and he asks you, ‘Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn’t you realize they would shoot from the top of the wall? At Thebez, who struck Abimelech son of Jerubbesheth? Didn’t a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the top of the wall so that he died? Why did you get so close to the wall?’—then say, **‘Your servant Uriah the Hethite is dead also.’”**

2 Samuel 11:22-25

Then the messenger left. When he arrived, he reported to David all that Joab had sent him to tell. The messenger reported to David, "The men gained the advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we counterattacked right up to the entrance of the city gate. However, the archers shot down on your servants from the top of the wall, and some of the king's servants died. Your servant **Uriah the Hethite is also dead.**" David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this matter upset you because the sword devours all alike. Intensify your fight against the city and demolish it.' Encourage him."

David continues to *LIE* and *JUSTIFY* his actions, and now the action of **Joab** - his conspirator. **Don't let this matter upset you...**that you just murdered a FAITHFUL man, but...**Don't let this matter upset you. What has happened to David!?!**

Isn't that what we always ask when we are blindsided by the reality *when Godly people sin?*

☘ **"Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay."**

2 Samuel 11:26-27

When Uriah's wife heard that her husband, **Uriah, had died**, she mourned for him. When the time of mourning ended, David had her brought to his house. She became his wife and bore him a son. However, **the LORD considered what David had done to be evil**.

All was not well. David might have tried to sweep the dastardly deed under the rug, but God didn't. Yahweh was about to bring some serious discipline to his anointed, *SINFUL*, king.

2 Samuel 12:1-6

So **the LORD sent Nathan to David**. When he arrived, he said to him: There were two men in a certain city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had very large flocks and herds, but the poor man had nothing except one small ewe lamb that he had bought. He raised her, and she grew up with him and with his children. From his meager food she would eat, from his cup she would drink, and in his arms she would sleep. She was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man could not bring himself to take one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for his guest.

David was infuriated with the man and said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, **the man who did this deserves to die!** Because he has done this thing and shown no pity, he must pay four lambs for that lamb."

Unbeknownst to David, he has put his own neck in the noose. Now God is about to confront him.

2 Samuel 12:7-10

Nathan replied to David, "**You are the man!**" This is what **the LORD God of Israel** says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I rescued you from Saul. I gave your master's house to you and your master's wives into your arms, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah, and if that was not enough, I would have given you even more. Why then have **you despised the LORD's command by doing** what I consider **evil**? You struck down Uriah the Hethite with the sword and took his wife as your own wife—you murdered him with the Ammonite's sword. Now therefore, **the sword will never leave your house** because you despised Me and took the wife of Uriah the Hethite to be your own wife.'

Wow! What guts! The prophet puts his own life into God's hands, as David could have killed him too!

Instead, Nathan speaks the truth that God has revealed to him and doesn't back down.

Biblical scholars point out an evil pattern mentioned 4 times in the Scriptures. Here are 3 where *the pattern of the Hebrew words "see-good-take"* are highlighted **before God brings judgment**.

- Eve **sees** the fruit, calls it **good/beautiful**, and **takes** it (Gen 3:6). God brings judgment and the death cycle begins for humanity.
- When God tells the Israelites to destroy Jericho and not keep anything, one man **sees** things he views as **good/beautiful**, and **takes** them (Jos 7:21). God brings judgment and he is killed.
- HERE, where David sees Bathsheba (2 Sam 11:2), that she is good/beautiful (2 Sam 11:2), and takes her for his own (2 Sam 12:9). And now, the judgment is about to be handed down on David.

2 Samuel 12:11-12

This is what **the LORD says**, "I am going to bring disaster on you from your own family: I will take your wives and give them to another before your very eyes, and he will sleep with them in broad daylight. You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight."

That sounds awful! How in the world will that happen? We will see that play out later in a future study.

The weight of God's knowledge & God's judgment on David finally brings David to his knees.

2 Samuel 12:13

David responded to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."

Then Nathan replied to David, "**And the LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.**"

That's GREAT NEWS, because the Scriptural standard for both adultery & murder...is DEATH!

But Yahweh will spare David, taking away his sin.

2 Samuel 12:14-15

However, because you treated the Lord with such contempt in this matter, **the son born to you will die.**" Then Nathan went home. **The LORD** struck the baby that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became deathly ill.

Remember that God is the one who allowed this pregnancy to occur. The child **will die** and be with Yahweh, but...David will have to deal with this first round of consequences for his sin, but there's more to come.

🕒 **God will always forgive repentance of sin, but He will not always cancel the consequence of sin.**

Had David trusted this truth as he first gazed at Bathsheba, is this where the story would have ended up?

❓ **How about us?** Do we really believe that SIN spits in the face of our Creator?

GOOD NEWS! Matthew starts his **GOOD NEWS** by writing these words to his Jewish audience...

Matthew 1:1

An account of the genealogy of **Jesus Christ**, the **Son of David**, the Son of Abraham:

Matthew lists the generations, starting with Abraham through David, and finally with Jesus who is called the Messiah (**Mt 1:16**). *That family tree has some serious sinners.* Jesus' own family was full of sinful men & sinful women. And this is why Jesus was born, lived as a human, and went to the cross. God told Joseph about the baby inside of her, saying...

Matthew 1:21

She will give birth to a son, and you are to **name him Jesus**, because **He will save his people from their sins.**"

If you're still breathin', there's still HOPE! Jesus really died to pay for YOUR sin and MINE! Yes, forgiven sin may still leave scars on earth, Jesus' death means no condemnation in eternity (**Rm 8:1**). Surrender to Jesus today!

If you've been living as a Godly man or woman, but have stumbled in sin. Call out to the Lord Jesus. Seek forgiveness. Tell a brother or sister who can help pick you up. Then...get UP and get back to following in the footsteps of Jesus!

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. **Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.** What part of David's fall in 2 Samuel 11 surprises or sobers you the most, and why?

2. **Read James 1:14-15; 2 Samuel 11:2-17.**

Where do you see the progression of sin in this story—from desire, to action, to cover-up, to destruction?

3. **Read 2 Samuel 11:1; 2 Samuel 10:17-19.**

Why do you think the author emphasizes that David stayed in Jerusalem while others went to war?

4. **Read 2 Samuel 11:8-13; 1 Samuel 21:4-5.** What stands out to you about the contrast between David and Uriah?

5. **Read 1 Corinthians 10:12.** How does this passage warn us against assuming that past faithfulness guarantees present safety?

6. **Read 2 Samuel 12:1-7; Proverbs 27:5-6; Galatians 6:1.**

What does Nathan's confrontation teach us about the importance of loving, truth-telling people in our lives?

7. **Read 2 Samuel 12:13.** Why is David's short confession in 2 Samuel 12:13 so powerful?

8. **Read 2 Samuel 12:13-15; Hebrews 12:5-11; Galatians 6:7-8.**

What does this story teach us about the difference between forgiveness and consequences?

9. **Read: 2 Samuel 12:9-10, 14; Psalm 51:4.** How does David's sin ultimately show contempt for God, not just harm toward people?

10. **Read Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11-12; Matthew 1:1, 6.** Why is it good news that the Bible honestly records the sins of its heroes?

11. **Read Matthew 1:1, 6, 16, 21; Romans 5:20-21.** How does Matthew's inclusion of David in Jesus' genealogy magnify the grace of God?

12. **Read Psalm 139:23-24; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Matthew 5:27-30.**

What should a believer do immediately when he or she realizes sin is gaining ground in the heart?