

THE LORD'S FORGIVENESS

CORE PASSAGE: 2 SAMUEL 11:1-5,14-17; 12:7-14

CONTEXT

After declaring His covenant with David, God helped David continue to subdue his surrounding enemies. David also sought out a way to show kindness to the family of his friend Jonathan, who had died with his father, Saul. David even attempted to show kindness to the new king of the Ammonites after his father died, but the new king humiliated David's ambassadors and ignited another war. For one part of this war, David led his troops to victory. But at a later time, when kings normally went out to war, David chose to send out his army while he stayed behind in Jerusalem. Sadly, this decision set the stage for a downfall into grievous sin.

KEY CONCEPT

God desires our repentance.

As you read 2 Samuel 11:1-5,14-17; 12:7-14:

- Reflect upon the truth that little steps of carelessness often will lead to bigger steps of sin.
- Recognize that the Lord forgave David after his repentance, but he would still experience dire consequences for his sin.



TIMELINE

David Becomes King of Israel (2 Samuel 2–5)

God Gives David Victory over His Enemies
(2 Samuel 8)

SESSION STUDY: David Sins Against God
and Repents (2 Samuel 11–12)

God Makes a Covenant with David
(2 Samuel 7)

David Fights the Ammonites
(2 Samuel 10)

David Experiences the Consequences of His Sin (2 Samuel 12–20)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** 2 Samuel 11–15

☐ **Day 4:** 2 Samuel 22–24

☐ **Day 2:** 2 Samuel 16–18

☐ **Day 5:** 1 Chronicles 20–27

☐ **Day 3:** 2 Samuel 19–21

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 51



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Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

2 SAMUEL 11:1-5,14-17

EVERYONE, EVEN ONE CLOSE TO GOD, IS SUSCEPTIBLE TO SIN.

Underline David's actions in the passage.

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. **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. **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?” **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. **5** The woman conceived and sent word to inform David, “I am pregnant.” . . . **14** The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. **15** 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. **16** When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. **17** 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.

It may seem insignificant when we think about modern battles that often occur without any soldiers on the ground, but in David's day, kings often led their armies into battle. On this occasion, David sent his men to fight under the leadership of his commander Joab. David remained in Jerusalem. Against the backdrop of all his troops fighting against his enemies, we find David alone, strolling on his roof one evening.

When we fail to embrace the assignment God has given us, becoming idle in our calling, we open ourselves to temptation. In Ephesians 5:15-16, we are reminded, "Pay careful attention, then, to how you walk—not as unwise people but as wise—making the most of the time, because the days are evil." When we neglect our responsibilities, we often end up in the wrong place at the wrong time and set ourselves up for a fall.

In what areas of your life might you be neglecting a responsibility and creating room for sin to grow?

Up to this point, David had been a shining example of a king who followed the Lord, truly a man after God's own heart. Though David was God's chosen king and leader over all Israel and the recipient of one of

God's covenants, he still fell to the desire of his flesh, choosing adultery and then murder to cover it up.

There are two lessons here. First, we must be careful about placing leaders on proverbial pedestals. They are only human and susceptible to temptation, just as we are. Second, if the greatest leaders are capable of diving into sin, so are we. We should not look down with condemnation on the sin of others when it is exposed. Rather, we should take steps to protect ourselves from falling into temptation and sin (1 Corinthians 10:12).

Read Galatians 5:16-26. What are some ways walking by the Spirit can help you avoid temptation?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

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"For one who keeps silent (that is, who does not confess), their bones quickly grow old, that is, their powers in which they formerly stood in good things are always reduced more and more by sins. For sin that is not washed away by repentance soon draws to another sin by its own weight."¹

—Martin Luther (1483–1546)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

2 SAMUEL 12:7-14

REPENTANCE IS THE RIGHT RESPONSE TO SIN.

Circle David's statement of repentance, and highlight the Lord's response.

7 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. **8** 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. **9** 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. **10** 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.' **11** 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. **12** You acted in secret, but I will do this before all Israel and in broad daylight.'" **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. **14** However, because you treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

REPENTANCE: Repentance is a response to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine sorrow for one's sin (Luke 5:1-11), a turning away from one's sin toward Christ (Acts 26:15-20), and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation (Psalm 119:57-60). It is the human counterpart to God's work of regeneration; in other words, the human side of our conversion.

Sometime after the events of chapter 11, the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan told of a rich man who stole a poor man's only and beloved sheep, and David wanted to execute judgment on the rich man who had shown "no pity" (12:1-6). David seemingly was blind to the fact that he had stolen a man's wife! Our sin often blinds us from seeing what's really going on in our heart. When we fail to recognize our own deep need for grace and forgiveness, we often become quick to condemn others for their sins.

How have you experienced your sin blinding you from seeing the truth?

After Nathan declared David's sin and punishment to him, David acknowledged his sin and repented. Though David's sin impacted Bathsheba, Uriah, Joab, and several others—and that could not be ignored—Nathan revealed the root of David's sin: he treated the Lord with contempt (v. 14). Because of David's repentance, the Lord forgave David, taking away his sin and withholding his rightful punishment of death.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Because of sin, we are bound for death and destruction. But when we repent and trust in Jesus to forgive us, turning from our old ways, He forgives and restores our relationship with Him.

While David was forgiven, his sin still had dire consequences. From this moment on, from David's home to his throne, no area would be untouched by sin's effects. The son born to Bathsheba would die. Rape and murder would plague his family. And the disaster foretold in verses 11-12 would involve an open rebellion by his son Absalom that led to David once again fleeing for his life. From David's example we should learn that our sin will have consequences. We cannot continue in sin and remain undisciplined as a child of God.

What lessons should we as believers learn from David's sin and repentance?

TRUE REPENTANCE

Read the passages listed. In the space provided, sketch or write out the differences between Saul's acknowledging his sin and David's repenting of his sin.

DAVID "I have sinned against the LORD." (2 Samuel 12:13)

SAUL "I have sinned. I have transgressed the LORD's command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them. Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can worship the LORD." (1 Samuel 15:24-25)

What are steps we can take to respond appropriately when we do give in to temptation?
What are steps we can take to confront a believing friend when they give in to temptation?

Key Concept: God desires our repentance.



HEAD

What keeps you from taking your sin as seriously as you should?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Pray through Psalm 51, confessing your sin to God and agreeing with Him regarding the grievous nature of sin. Pray through these words with hope, knowing that Jesus died and rose again to wash away our guilt and cleanse us from our sin (v. 2).



HEART

How can we develop a posture of repentance in our heart so that we are quick to repent of our sin?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What attitudes or practices do you need to rethink and reorder to strengthen your fight against temptation and sin?

