

LESSON 11

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11

But the thing David had done was evil in the Lord's sight, 2 Samuel 11:27.

Class Overview: 2 Samuel 11 marks a turning point in David's life. Up to this point, the story has been filled with faith, courage, victory, and kindness. But here, the tone shifts. When other kings went to war, David stayed home. From a place of comfort and idleness, he saw Bathsheba, desired her, and committed adultery. When she became pregnant, David tried to hide his sin, eventually arranging the death of her husband, Uriah, one of his most loyal warriors.

This chapter illustrates the slow, tragic progression of sin: desire leads to action, action to deception, and deception to destruction. David's downfall demonstrates that even the most faithful can be overtaken if they let their guard down. It also sets the stage for the grace and repentance that will be explored in the next chapter. 2 Samuel 11 is a story of warning. It reminds us that sin grows fastest in moments of ease, that cover-ups never work, and that hidden sin always hurts innocent people. Yet even here, God is not absent — His displeasure at the end of the chapter shows that He will not leave His servant in darkness.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain the circumstances that led to David's fall.
 2. Recognize the pattern of temptation and sin shown in this chapter.
 3. Describe the contrast between David's choices and Uriah's faithfulness.
 4. Understand how sin spreads when concealed rather than confessed.
 5. Apply the warnings of this chapter to personal holiness, integrity, and accountability.
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Introduction:

Near Second Samuel 11 begins in an unusual way: *"In the spring when kings march out to war... David remained in Jerusalem."* That single decision, to stay home when he should have been leading, created the opening for everything that followed. Sin rarely starts with dramatic moments; it usually begins with small compromises.

From his rooftop, David saw Bathsheba bathing. The glance became desire, desire became action, and action became sin. When Bathsheba sent word that she was pregnant, David chose not repentance but deception. He brought Uriah home, hoping Uriah would cover the affair without knowing it. But Uriah's integrity shamed David. Uriah refused to enjoy the comforts of home while the ark and God's people were at war.

When David couldn't manipulate Uriah, he arranged his death. What began with a look ended in adultery, lies, and murder. Sin never stays small.

Chapter 11 is a warning to every believer. It shows how quickly the heart can turn when vigilance gives way to ease. It shows the cost of hidden sin. But it also prepares us for chapter 12 — where the mercy of God confronts sin, calls for repentance, and restores the broken.

David's Neglect and the First Steps Toward Sin (11:1-5)

The chapter opens with a simple detail that carries a heavy warning. It was the time of year when kings went out to battle, but David stayed in Jerusalem. That one decision placed him in the wrong place at the wrong time. Sin often begins that way, not with open rebellion, but with small choices that weaken our guard.

One evening, David walked on the roof of his palace and saw Bathsheba bathing. The text does not blame her. The focus is on David, on how he allowed his eyes to linger and his desire to take root. The glance became a thought. The thought became a longing. And the longing became action.

David sent for her, learned who she was, and still proceeded. She was the wife of Uriah, one of his most loyal soldiers. But desire had already taken over. David sent messengers, brought her to the palace, and slept with her. The Bible states the fact plainly without softening the sin. Power was abused. Boundaries were broken. A marriage was violated.

A short time later, Bathsheba sent a message back to David with three devastating words: "I am pregnant."

In just five verses, David moved from neglect to temptation, from temptation to sin, and from sin to the beginning of a cover-up. The fall didn't happen suddenly; it happened step by step. This section stands as a warning that when the heart grows careless, even the strongest believer can fall.

David should have been with his men. Instead, he was alone, idle, and unprotected. And sin took advantage of the moment.

David's Deception and Uriah's Integrity (11:6-13)

When David learned Bathsheba was pregnant, he didn't confess. He didn't humble himself. Instead, he tried to control the situation. Sin always pushes us toward hiding rather than honesty.

David sent word to Joab: "*Send me Uriah.*" His plan was simple, bring Uriah home, make it look like the child was his, and bury the whole matter under a lie. But David had not counted on Uriah's character.

Uriah arrived in Jerusalem, and David pretended that everything was normal. He asked about the war, the men, and Joab. Then he told Uriah to go home and "wash his feet," a polite way of saying, *enjoy the comforts of home*. David even sent a gift after him. But Uriah refused. He slept at the entrance of the palace with the servants. When David questioned him, Uriah's answer cut through the entire chapter like a sharp blade:

“The ark, Israel, and Judah are dwelling in tents... how can I go to my house, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife?”

Uriah would not enjoy home pleasures while his fellow soldiers were suffering. His loyalty and integrity stand in painful contrast to David’s selfishness. David tried again. He invited Uriah to dinner, got him drunk, and hoped weakened judgment would change his decision. But Uriah remained true to his principles. Even in a compromised state, he would not go home.

This part of the chapter reveals a tragic reversal of roles:

- Uriah, the soldier, showed the honor David should have shown.
- David, the king, plotted, deceived, and manipulated.
- Uriah refused comfort to honor God’s presence and his brothers.
- David abused comfort to hide his sin.

Uriah’s integrity exposes David’s sin far more than any preacher or prophet could have. When even a drunk soldier has more moral clarity than the king, the king is far from God.

David’s Crime and Uriah’s Death (11:14-25)

When David realized he could not manipulate Uriah, he took the darkest step of all. He wrote a letter to Joab, a death order, and sent it *by the hand of Uriah himself*. Uriah unknowingly carried his own execution papers. That detail alone shows how far David had fallen. The man he wronged now hides his sin.

The instructions were cold:

“Set Uriah at the front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.”

Joab followed David’s order, though he understood its corruption. He placed Uriah near the wall of Rabbah, where archers would kill him quickly. Not only did Uriah die, but several soldiers also fell with him. Innocent men lost their lives in David’s attempt to cover his guilt.

After Uriah’s death, Joab sent a report back to David. He knew David might question the risky strategy, so he instructed the messenger to mention Uriah at the end. As expected, David did not rebuke Joab’s actions. Instead, he said:

“Don’t let this matter upset you... the sword devours one as well as another.”

This was not the voice of the shepherd-king we saw earlier. It was the voice of a hardened man willing to accept casualties to protect his image. What began as lust had now turned into calculated murder.

Bathsheba mourned her husband. After her time of grief, David took her into his house, and she became his wife. To the public, it likely looked like a compassionate act, the king caring for a fallen soldier’s widow. But the truth was far darker.

David believed he had covered everything. But the final sentence of the chapter reveals the only verdict that mattered:

“But the thing David had done was evil in the Lord’s sight.”

Men were fooled. Israel was fooled. Joab cooperated. Bathsheba was silent. But God saw. And He was not pleased. Hidden sin always leads to deeper sin. It destroys integrity. It harms others. It blinds the heart. And it always invites God’s correction.

The Lord’s Verdict (11:27)

The chapter ends with one quiet but devastating sentence:

“But the thing David had done was evil in the Lord’s sight.”

Everything in chapter 11 builds to this moment. David thought he had covered every track.

- Bathsheba was now his wife.
- Uriah was gone.
- The baby could be passed off as legitimate.
- Joab was too compromised to accuse him.
- The public likely believed David had acted honorably by caring for a grieving widow.

But God was not fooled. Hidden sin is never hidden from Him. David’s actions were evil — not tragic, not unfortunate, not complicated... evil. This is the divine verdict.

This final line teaches several important truths:

1. **God always sees what man cannot.**
Even when the world applauds us or never suspects wrongdoing, God knows the truth. Reputation may remain intact, but character does not escape His sight.
2. **Sin does not disappear because time passes.**
David moved on as though the problem was solved. But sin unresolved is sin alive.
3. **God is faithful to confront sin in His people.**
The Lord loved David too much to let him remain in this darkness. Chapter 12 will show God sending Nathan to expose the hidden sin and bring David to repentance.
4. **God’s verdict matters more than anyone else’s.**
David held the throne, commanded the army, and controlled the narrative — but none of that could silence the voice of God.

This final sentence hangs over the chapter like a shadow. It marks the lowest point in David’s life and prepares the reader for the painful but necessary confrontation that follows. Grace is coming, but not before truth is spoken.

Practical Application

1. **Small compromises open the door to greater sin.**

David's fall didn't begin with adultery. It began with staying home when he should have been with his men. Idleness, comfort, and isolation weaken the heart. Sin grows in the spaces where discipline fades.

2. **Guard your eyes and your heart.**

David saw Bathsheba, and instead of turning away, he allowed desire to take root. Temptation begins with what we allow ourselves to look at, dwell on, and entertain. What we feed in the heart eventually becomes action.

3. **Sin always leads to secrecy.**

Once Bathsheba was pregnant, David tried to hide everything: first through manipulation, then through deceit, then through murder. Sin pushes us to cover up rather than confess. And cover-ups always lead to more destruction.

4. **Integrity stands out even in dark moments.**

Uriah is the bright spot in this chapter. His loyalty, discipline, and devotion contrast sharply with David's selfishness. His example shows what faithfulness looks like even when others fail.

5. **The consequences of sin always affect others.**

Uriah died. Other soldiers died. Bathsheba suffered. Joab was drawn into corruption. Sin never stays personal. It harms people we never intended to hurt.

6. **God sees what we try to hide.**

David fooled the army, the nation, and likely Bathsheba's neighbors. But he could not fool God. Nothing is hidden from His sight. That truth should lead us not to fear, but to honesty and repentance.

7. **Failure does not erase God's mercy — but mercy begins with truth.**

Though this chapter ends in darkness, the next chapter will show God's faithful grace. But grace only comes when sin is brought into the light. The God who sees sin also offers forgiveness — when we confess it.

Conclusion

Second Samuel 11 stands as one of the most sobering warnings in the Bible. A man after God's own heart, a king who showed courage, kindness, and justice, fell into sin because he let his guard down. One moment of idleness led to a look. The look became desire. Desire became action. And action became a desperate attempt to hide the truth.

The fall of David reminds us that no one is beyond temptation. It shows how the heart drifts when vigilance is neglected. It warns us that sin always spreads, deceives, destroys, and harms others. Yet this chapter also sets the stage for the grace of God, a grace that confronts, disciplines, and restores.


David tried to cover his sin, but God saw it all. His verdict was clear: *"The thing David had done was evil in the Lord's sight."* This gentle but firm declaration prepares us for chapter 12, where God will confront


David's sin and invite him to repentance. Even in the darkest moments, God does not abandon His people. He calls them back to Himself.


Chapter 11 ends in silence and shadow, but grace is standing just on the edge of the next chapter.


For Discussion

1. How did David's decision to "remain in Jerusalem" open the door to temptation?


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2. What stands out to you about the way David responded once Bathsheba became pregnant?


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3. Why is Uriah's integrity so important in this story?


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4. In what ways does hidden sin grow in secrecy?

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5. Why is the statement “the thing David had done was evil in the Lord’s sight” so important?



6. What does this chapter teach us about the danger of unchecked desire and the importance of confession?



7. How can we guard ourselves against the same pattern of sin seen in David’s life?

