

## Lesson 2      October 14, 2012

### David's Sin and Repentance

**Lesson Scope:** [2 Samuel 11 and 12](#)

#### Lesson Focus

King David had subdued the enemies that threatened Israel's security, thereby enlarging his kingdom. When the king of Ammon died, David sent messengers with his sympathies to Hanun, the king's son. At the urging of his princes, Hanun spitefully used the messengers of David and prepared to fight against Israel. It was while Israel was subduing the Ammonites that the event of this lesson took place.

David was a man after God's own heart. He was careful in seeking God's will, careful in respecting the Lord's anointed, and careful in judging justly. He was faithful in his role as leader, tender in his relationship with Mephibosheth, and worshipful in response to God's goodness. He was a model ruler.

Yet David sinned. Although God graciously forgave him, he had to accept the bitter consequences of sin. David brought upon himself and his family a bitter reaping. Strife and bigotry, immorality, hatred, and murder mar the family record from that point onward. What should have been a virtuous family was blighted ever after.

All men are candidates for failure through the enticements of evil. One sin often leads to another, so that even the mightiest can be entangled.

King David was one of the best kings of Israel. He was called "a man after [God's] own heart." But David had his faults and was prone to failure. We wish we could draw a veil over this account, since it places a black mark on an otherwise faithful servant of God. Yet examples of failure "were written for our learning," so that he that thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall.

A lesson such as this calls for some propriety. We live in a decadent society where morals are rapidly deteriorating. Marital infidelity and immorality are commonplace, and we may become accustomed to all the corruption around us. It is one of Satan's lies that sin can bring pleasure. We must stress the importance of purity of life and also the awful consequences of sin. Let this lesson be a fair warning of the de-

ceitfulness of sin and a reminder that the greatest and the mightiest are not immune to failure.

**Lesson Aim:** To see the deceitfulness of sin and the way back to God.

**Theme Verses:** [Psalm 139:23-24](#). Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

## Lesson Text

### Sin and Concealment

[2 Samuel 11:1-4](#) <sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup> And it came to pass in an evening tide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. <sup>3</sup> And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Elim, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? <sup>4</sup> And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

[2 Samuel 11:14-17](#) <sup>14</sup> And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. <sup>15</sup> And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die. <sup>16</sup> And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men *were*. <sup>17</sup> And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell *some* of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

[2 Samuel 11:27](#) <sup>27</sup> And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.

## Parable and Reaction

**2 Samuel 12:1-6** <sup>1</sup> And the LORD sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. <sup>2</sup> The rich *man* had exceeding many flocks and herds: <sup>3</sup> But the poor *man* had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. <sup>4</sup> And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. <sup>5</sup> And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, *As* the LORD liveth, the man that hath done this *thing* shall surely die: <sup>6</sup> And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

## Penalty and Repentance

**2 Samuel 12:7-14** <sup>7</sup> And Nathan said to David, Thou *art* the man. Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; <sup>8</sup> And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if *that had been* too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. <sup>9</sup> Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. <sup>10</sup> Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. <sup>11</sup> Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give *them* unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. <sup>12</sup> For thou didst *it* secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun. <sup>13</sup> And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. <sup>14</sup> Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *that is* born unto thee shall surely die.

## **Questions for Study**

### **Sin and Concealment**

1. What were the steps of David's descent into sin?
2. Why is a lethargic and negligent attitude dangerous?
3. Why is maintaining a pure thought life important?

### **Parable and Reaction**

4. Why was David so critical of the rich man in the parable?
5. Why does God move to expose sin?

### **Penalty and Repentance**

6. Why is sin in the life of God's people so serious?
7. What were some consequences of David's sin?
8. What makes repentance genuine?

## **Analyzing the Passage**

"After the year was expired" and "when kings go forth to battle" likely refers to the passing of winter. It was in the spring that kings set forth on new conquests, as the weather was most favorable then. David's tarrying at Jerusalem when his men were at war seems inconsistent. We do not, however, know the exact reason for his staying behind. It was his lack of self-restraint that caused him to sin, but unwarranted idleness may have weakened his resistance to temptation.

Nathan's courage in confronting David with his sin indicates his faithfulness and his uncompromising character. He had received direction from the Lord, and he unflinchingly delivered the message.

David's words "He shall restore the lamb fourfold" reflect his knowledge of the Law (Exodus 22:1). This law appears to hold true in his own wrongdoing. He murdered Uriah, and he lost four sons himself—the young child, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.

Slain (12:9) is a strong word meaning "to smite with deadly intent."

## **Principles and Applications**

### **Sin and Concealment**

1. A lethargic attitude toward the threat of the enemy paves the way for failure (11:1). While other kings were preparing for battle, David seemingly was indulging himself with an easy life at home. Even if he had legitimate reasons for tarrying at home, he seems not to have had the spirit of concern and zeal manifested by his faithful servant, Uriah

(11:11).

The old adage "Idleness is the devil's workshop" is very applicable to this account. When a person is too much at ease, he places himself in the way of temptation. The slothful are very prone to fall prey to the devil, especially those who are slothful in their spiritual life.

2. Contemplating sin will result in committing sin (11:3-4). David, in an unguarded moment, chose to look and lust. Instead of turning away and avoiding evil, he allowed his carnal passions to rule, and he ended by yielding to the flesh.

We must be careful to avoid all evil sights and to rid our minds of evil thoughts. Even though we can be forgiven, impure thought life can lead to actions that will cause regret for life.

3. One who sins often entangles others in wrongdoing as well (11:4, 14-16). David sent and inquired after Bathsheba, which resulted in her becoming guilty of sin. Joab aided David in slaying Uriah, thus indirectly becoming guilty of murder along with David.

We must never be the cause for others to stumble. We also need to guard against those who would want us to yield to sin. "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not" (Proverbs 1:10).

4. Sin invokes God's displeasure (11:27). David's action displeased the Lord. God had clearly given direction in the Law against this very sin and had given the death penalty for it.

God's holiness cannot tolerate sin in any form. Any sin, no matter how great or small, will come under God's judgment.

### **Parable and Reaction**

5. God is ever reaching out in mercy to those who have sinned (12:1). God sent his prophet, Nathan, to expose David's sin. In pardoning David when he should have been stoned as the Law required, God showed His great mercy. Likewise, through the work of the Holy Spirit and His Word, He is attempting to convict sinners and offering them freedom from sin.

6. Sin, being deceptive, is often seen more readily in others than in oneself (12:5-6). Human nature tends to despise in others what we may excuse in ourselves. God views sin as deadly and loathsome, and we should too. Sin in our lives must be dealt with before we can pass judgment on others (Matthew 7:1-5).

## **Penalty and Repentance**

7. Moral failure brings untold suffering to one's family (12:10). Nathan prophesied that, because of his failure, David's house would experience sorrow and grief. David ultimately lost four sons, three of whom were murdered. Strife and immorality began to stalk his family.

Moral failure brings much heartache and grief. Many homes and marriages have been shattered because of infidelity. Jealousy and mistrust almost always follow such actions. Life seldom returns to previous norms for one who commits such sins, even though he may be forgiven.

8. The repentant heart acknowledges wrongdoing (12:13). David was quick to admit his guilt and accept responsibility for his actions. He did not defend or excuse himself. Psalm 51 reveals the attitude of his heart.

May we likewise accept responsibility for our failures. To excuse ourselves or shift the blame is not a sign of true repentance and will not let the power of God's pardon work in us.

9. God is ready to forgive the repentant (12:13). When David confessed his sin, Nathan declared that the Lord would pardon him and not require his death as the Law prescribed. We too can claim the promise of forgiveness of sins when we confess them and seek the pardon available through the work of Christ. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins" (1 John 1:9).

10. One cannot sin and escape the consequences (12:13-14). God will never overlook sin. If sin is not dealt with in time, God will punish the sinner during all eternity. "You can't do wrong and get by."

11. Sin mars the testimony of God's people and must be dealt with (12:14). When a child of God falls into sin, those who are opposed to Christianity may conclude that Christians are no different from the ungodly. It may signal that God's grace is inadequate for us to overcome sin. Sin must be dealt with so that the testimony of the church can remain bright in this dark, evil world.

## **Important Teachings**

1. A lethargic attitude toward the threat of the enemy paves the way for failure (11:1).

2. Contemplating sin will result in committing sin (11:3-4).

3. One who sins often entangles others in wrongdoing as well (11:4, 14-16).

4. Sin invokes God's displeasure (11:27).
5. God is ever reaching out in mercy to those who have sinned (12:1).
6. Sin, being deceptive, is often seen more readily in others than in oneself (12:5-6).
7. Moral failure brings untold suffering to one's family (12:10).
8. The repentant heart acknowledges wrongdoing (12:13).
9. God is ready to forgive the repentant (12:13).
10. One cannot sin and escape the consequences (12:13-14).
11. Sin mars the testimony of God's people and must be dealt with (12:14).

### **Answers to Questions**

*1. What were the steps of David's descent into sin?*

He tarried; he saw; he inquired; he sent; he took. This is the same pattern that James 1:14-15 describes. Contemplated sin always has its roots in the heart, which will eventually lead to wrong actions.

*2. Why is a lethargic and negligent attitude dangerous?*

Slothfulness and a negligent attitude often carry over to a person's spiritual life, thus producing a weak character. Satan targets the weaknesses in people to trip them and lead them into sin. Diligent people will be much more able to discern their weaknesses and address them so they can better avoid temptations.

*3. Why is maintaining a pure thought life important?*

Pure thought life is essential to overcoming evil. Our thoughts reveal what is in our hearts and will eventually lead to actions. If our actions are to be holy and pure, then our thoughts and our hearts must be holy and pure. Dealing with wrong thoughts with God's help will go a long way in leading a pure life in an immoral society.

*4. Why was David so critical of the rich man in the parable?*

We tend to abhor in others what we excuse or overlook in ourselves. In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addressed this tendency to judge others (Matthew 7:1-5).

*5. Why does God move to expose sin?*

In His great mercy, God works with the hearts of those deceived by sin. A deceived heart may not even be aware of his sin or consider its consequences. Thus God, through the Holy Spirit and through His Word, deals with the sinner to bring him to repentance before it is eternally too

late.

*6. Why is sin in the life of God's people so serious?*

God's people are the light of the world, showing others His goodness and the blessing of living in His will. Sin dims the witness of truth and gives occasion for the enemies of God to blaspheme and to regard Christians in general as merely a group of hypocrites.

*7. What were some consequences of David's sin?*

David lost four of his sons, three of whom were killed by the sword. His wives were defiled publicly. His life was no longer peaceful, but was disturbed by unrest and rebellion.

*8. What makes repentance genuine?*

Admitting the wrong, rather than defending the sin or feigning ignorance, is a mark of true repentance. Taking full responsibility and understanding the awfulness of sin is also a characteristic of genuine repentance. Psalm 51 shows us David's right attitude.

### **Summarizing the Lesson**

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him .... But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren (James 1:12, 14-16).

### **Research Guide**

1. *Old Testament Bible History* by Alfred Edersheim may offer helpful insights to this lesson.
2. Read Psalm 51, which is David's confession after this sin.