



“REASONS TO REJOICE”

*“Your Words were found, and I ate them,
and Your Word was the joy and rejoicing of my heart.” Jeremiah 15:16*

I and II SAMUEL Lesson 18

Last week’s lesson we read about David’s conquests and triumphs throughout the land. Things were going pretty good for David. He was experiencing military success, he was popular among the people, and he was prospering. Yes, David was doing well. Perhaps he got too comfortable in his palace, or with his successes, but David does some things when he’s at the height of his reign that he will regret the rest of his life.

As we read this next chapter, be careful not to point your finger or react too harshly to David. Although we may not have committed adultery or murder, we all have given in to our flesh and stepped over the line into sin. David’s sin progresses deeper and deeper, going from one sin to another. Sin kills.

First Day

- 1. Read II Samuel 11:1-27. List the facts. What new characters are introduced?*

- 2. What is the main point of this chapter? What would you title it? What verse would you pick out to summarize the chapter?*

- 3. Where is this story taking place?*

4. *What did David first do wrong, according to verse 1?*

5. *What are some reasons that David may have remained in Jerusalem?*

6. *Name David's sin(s) in verses 1-5.*

As we read these verses, our hearts break. We feel like screaming a warning to David, "Don't do it! Stop!" We see the disaster that lies ahead. We see the trap that is set for him, and he steps right into it. David should have been out to battle with his men. It was spring, which was a good time to go to war because the winter rains had stopped and roads were dry, making it easier to travel for the troops. The male population was also not yet involved in harvesting. David was resting and being idle instead of fighting, and when he wakes up, he goes out onto his roof, or the balcony of his palace. The roofs in those days were flat, and people gathered there to socialize, sleep, and escape the heat. As he looks around, he sees a beautiful woman. Instead of looking away and fleeing temptation, he allows his gaze to linger. David forgets about what's right, about God, or about anything else. David's only thoughts seem to be fulfilling his passions immediately.

David finds out who she is. Even when his servant tells him that she's a married woman, and to get involved with her was against Jewish law, (Leviticus 20:10, Deuteronomy 22:22) and punishable by death ... he wants her. He saw her, he wanted her, he took her.

7. *According to verse 5, what was the result?*

Verse 4 says that she was "cleansed from her impurity." This shows that Bathsheba had just completed her ritual purification after her menstrual period, according to the law (Leviticus 15:19-33), before having sexual relations with David. This shows that she was not already pregnant before she slept with David.

8. *What part do you think Bathsheba played? Was she responsible at all? What options did she have?*

“It’s interesting to note that the Hebrew word for lay is ‘shakab’, meaning to rest or lie down for sexual relations. Contrasted with this word is ‘anah,’ which is the word for Ammon’s rape of Tamar. There is no mention of force in David’s tryst with Bathsheba.” (Charles Swindoll)

9. *Read James 1:13-15. Explain how this story is a perfect example of this Scripture.*

10. *What should David have done when he saw Bathsheba? Was he in sin when he was tempted?*

11. *Read 2 Timothy 2:22. Are you being tempted in some area right now? What should you do? Will you do it?????*

We’ll end here for today, but we’ll pick it up right here tomorrow. There are so many lessons to learn from this chapter. The power of our flesh is so clearly seen in this chapter, and, to be honest, is frightening. How dangerous it is to lay aside our armor, even for a minute. I pray that we take heed, lest we fall! (1 Corinthians 10:12)

Memory Verse of the Week: *“Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgression.” Psalm 51:1*

Second Day

Practice your memory verse. We need His mercy, don't we?

1. *Review II Samuel 11 again. Concentrate on verses 6-13. Whom does David call for?*

Bathsheba's husband is out to battle, where he should be, I might add. David seems to get a little nervous, and comes up with a plan. It's unusual to find David trying to cover up his sin.

2. *Why does Uriah think he's been called home from battle? Explain the real reason David summons him.*

3. *What does David tell Uriah to do?*

The phrase “wash your feet” could refer to a ritual releasing a soldier from the vow of sexual abstinence during a military campaign. David seemed to be doing his best to get Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba so people would think the baby is his. Unfortunately for David, Uriah is too loyal to even think of violating his vow.

4. *When that doesn't work, what does David try next? (vs 13)*

5. *Describe Uriah's character. Compare his discipline with David's indulgence.*

Someone once said that “Uriah drunk was more pious than David sober.” It’s interesting that Uriah is often referred to as “the Hittite” in contrast to “the king of Israel,” as if to bring out the differences between the two.

6. Read the rest of the chapter. When Uriah still wouldn’t sleep with Bathsheba, what does David try next?

7. What do you think David was feeling at this time?

Notice that Uriah carries his own death wish to Joab. David is now pulling someone else into his sin, asking Joab to help him get Uriah killed. He’s now asking someone to actively be a part of his sin. David is actually plotting a murder. He is definitely guilty.

8. Does his plan work?

9. What do you think Joab thought when he read the note? (Remember how upset David was when Joab killed Abner?)

Joab instructs the messenger on how to tell the king that Uriah and some of the other men died in the battle. The soldiers of Israel knew the dangers of approaching too close to the city walls while they were in battle (Judges 9:50-57), so if David was to get angry, the messenger was supposed to let him know that Uriah died too. This would surely calm the king down, since the death of the Hittite was his wish.

10. What hypocritical consolation does David offer?

David puts up a good front for the usual week of mourning that Bathsheba needed to go through for her husband, and then he swoops in and takes her as his wife. This might have appeared to be a noble thing to some of the people in the kingdom, but to Joab, and those who knew, it was a master cover up.

11. How do you think Bathsheba may have been feeling during this time?

12. We may wonder why David gets away with this whole scheme. What phrase in verse 27 lets us clearly know what God thinks about this whole thing?

David must have known that he had blown it, so he does whatever he can to cover it up. Someone once said, that “secret sin on earth is open scandal in Heaven.” David’s great sin begins a series of heartbreaks for him. I believe that because David broke God’s law and practiced polygamy, the door was wide open for this type of sin. When we disobey, the enemy gets a foothold into our life.

13. List the progression of David’s sin.

Tomorrow we will look at this story more fully, drawing out the ways that we can apply this chapter to our own life. Remember that no sin is ever done in secret. ALL sin will always be brought out into the light. That’s a promise.

Third Day

What’s your verse? How does it encourage you?

Let’s take some time searching our heart to see what God has for us in this story.

1. What do you think David could have done to protect himself from this?

9. *Read what Job has to say about it in Job 31:1-8. Write your thoughts on these verses. How can we keep our heart from “walking after our eyes”?*
10. *Uriah showed a remarkable amount of self-control. Do you show discipline and exhibit self-control? In what areas do you think you are a little too “self-indulgent”?*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes what happens when we let our desires control our life, like David did: “At this moment God is quite unreal to us, he loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real; the only reality is the devil. Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God. The lust thus aroused envelops the mind and will of man in deepest darkness. The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us. Our desires can take many forms -- sexual desire, ambition, vanity, revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money.”

11. *Has any desire caused you to “forget God” lately?*

I pray that we won't forget God because our desire for something or someone else is so strong. We are not to love the things of this world more than the Lord. I pray that our desire will be for Him, and Him alone.

Fourth Day

Are you practicing your memory verse?

This chapter reminds us just how strong the passions of our flesh are. It doesn't matter how old we are, temptation is no respecter of persons. Our sin can destroy our life and the lives of those around us. We need to strive to be holy, as He is holy (1 Peter 1:16).

Romans 13:14 says to "make no provision for the flesh," and 2 Timothy 2:22 tells us to "flee youthful lusts." Charles Swindoll offers some ways to put these principles into action:

1. *"Establish boundaries that keep you out of compromising situations."*

A. *What boundaries do you need to set up for protection? (Identify your weakness and build a fence!)*

2. *"Don't wait until you're tempted to weigh the consequences of your actions. Consider the consequences ahead of time."*

B. *Explain why this is such an important principle.*

3. *"Invite someone you trust to hold you to your standards."*

C. *Do you have someone who holds you accountable? If not, pray about whom you should ask.*

4. *"Cultivate healthy pursuits that keep your thoughts on things that are honorable and pure and good." (Phil. 4:8)*

D. *What do you do with your free time? Does it keep your mind healthy?*

5. *“Most importantly, cling to the Lord in daily dependence.”*

E. Read Deuteronomy 30:20. What is Moses’ exhortation to the children of Israel? Are you clinging?

6. *In II Samuel 11:27, we are told that the thing that David had done displeased the Lord. The man who was “after God’s heart” seemed to break His heart. Is there anything in your life today that God is displeased with?*

We are devastated as we read this chapter, but we are encouraged as we read the next. If our lesson ended with the tragedy of David’s sin, we would be left without hope. But chapter 12 brings us the fresh wind of repentance from David’s heart.

7. *Read II Samuel 12 :1-31. What are your first thoughts?*

8. *What character is mentioned? What role does he have in David’s life?*

9. *Explain the analogy Nathan uses to reveal David’s sin to him.*

10. *How does David respond? What punishment did he think the rich man should receive?*

11. *According to Nathan, what judgment will come upon David and his house because of his sin? Why will it be done openly?*

We're going to stop here for today. Let's rejoice that no matter how far we fall, God can lift us up!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. How did it minister to your heart?

1. *Review II Samuel chapter 12. Does David repent of his sin? Who does he rightly say he sinned against?*
2. *David lied, committed adultery and murder, and caused others to sin as well. According to verse 14, what else did he do? Why is this such a big deal?*
3. *Is this still happening today? Give examples. (Is your life giving others a reason NOT to come to Jesus?)*

4. *Read and meditate on Psalm 51. David wrote this song after he was confronted by Nathan. What insight does this give us on how David was feeling? How does this psalm speak to your heart?*

5. *Has God ever used a “Nathan” to reveal your sin to you? Did you receive it?*

God may want to use you as a “Nathan” to restore someone to fellowship with the Lord by revealing their sin. Although we must be open to that, we shouldn’t be eager! It took courage for Nathan to stand up to the king. He could’ve been killed, but he obeyed the Lord and took that risk.

6. *Is God calling you to be a “Nathan” to someone? Are you willing? In what spirit and attitude should you go? How do you reconcile Matthew 7:1-5 and Ephesians 4:15? Can you give any other Scriptures to support your answer?*

Next week we’ll continue in chapter 12 and see the consequences David will face because of his sin. Even though he repents, there are consequences to his actions. Let’s keep our hearts pure before the Lord this week, shall we?

***“For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before Me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight ...”
Psalm 51:3-4***