"DAVID AND BATHSHEBA"
2 Samuel 11:1-27

If you were to boil David's life down to three major events during his 70-year life, what would you include?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

King David was God's chosen leader. He was a brilliant, bold, and brave military leader as well as a wise and winsome king. Everything he touched seemed to turn to gold because the hand of God was upon him. Now living in a stately palace in the historic city of Jerusalem with his many wives, concubines, and children—he seemed to have it all together. He had moved from good to great.

In the first two verses of this chapter, I see three relevant details that reveal how this great king could get himself in such a mess . . .

2 Samuel 11:1–2… **Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out *to battle*, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. But David stayed at Jerusalem. 2 Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.**

David Was _____.

Life is actually pretty good for David at this point. The kingdom is established. He's a hero and everyone seems to love him. He been on the winning side of numerous

battles (2 Samuel 10). Does it surprise you that his sin pops up at this time of great blessing?

The danger in blessing is that we tend to forget just how dependent we are on God. In the Sunday sermon—"Playing God"—we considered the importance of *resisting the illusion of control.* When we're showered with blessings, we're tempted to take credit for it. As a result, we are prone push God to the margins of our lives. This is why the author of Proverbs wrote . . .

> **Proverbs 30:8–9**… Keep deception and lies far from me, Give me neither poverty nor riches; Feed me with the food that is my portion, **9** That I not be full and deny *You* and say, "Who is the LORD?" Or that I not be in want and steal, And profane the name of my God.
>
> **1 Corinthians 10:12**… Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.

The more self-sufficient we feel, the closer we are to disaster.

David Was _____.

David had just sent Joab and the whole army out to battle. But where was David? At the time of year *when kings go out to battle*, David was back at home. David the warrior had become David the vacationer, and his lack of engagement made him susceptible to cheap thrills.

The way to successfully resist the enticements of this world isn't merely to have a strong will to say "no." It's to be fully engaged with a higher purpose. For many people their lives are so empty, so pointless, so devoid of something more, that the excitement of sex promises a fulfillment they desperately crave. It's not always that sin is incredibly alluring; it's often that we're so unbelievably bored and we lack significance.

- **Do you have a vision for what God has done FOR YOU?**
- **Do you have a vision for what God has done IN YOU?**
- **Do you have a vision for what God wants to do THROUGH YOU?**

We simply weren't designed to live our lives on the sidelines. God created us to be engaged in the battle, to pursue His ministry with zeal and courage. David would have found it a bit more difficult to sleep with Bathsheba if he had been 50 miles away, in Rabbah with his troops.

David Was _____.

That fateful night the moon was shining, the stars were shining, the birds were singing, and the fresh spring breeze pushed gently through the windows into David's stately bedroom. Who could remain cooped up on a night like this?

If only we could look within the heart of this man as he approached 50 years of age, we would see the discontent and disenchantment of mid-life creeping in like a thief in the night. Instead of sharpening his sword for war, he was lounging in the lap of luxury. Then, it happened. The razor-sharp teeth of temptation snapped shut and the man after God's own heart messed up royally!

> **It's easier to avoid temptation than it is to resist sin! Therefore, the Bible teaches that in times of temptation to our flesh there is one command—flee. Flee youthful lust. Flee worldly temptation. If you're feeling under pressure and on the verge of something—an emotion is welling up within you—what does the Bible say? Run. No human being has within them the strength to resist such overpowering emotions. (*Temptation*, 116–17).**[1]

If only David had gotten alone with God and done a thorough spiritual evaluation of his heart, he could have seen areas of neglect that had punched holes in his spiritual life and left him in vulnerable state. Are you willing to take an honest look at your own life? Do you see any areas of your life where you are neglecting God?

[1] J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 213–15.

- **Quiet time**
- **Stewardship**
- **Quality time with your spouse/your children**
- **Ignoring the principles of God's Word**
- **Worship and involvement in a Connect group**
- **Serving the Lord**

Don't allow the enemy to blind you concerning areas of neglect. Is the Holy Spirit convicting you about some things that are out of order in your heart and life? Today if you hear His voice do not harden your heart!

2 Samuel 11:3–5… **So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house. 5 The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."**

As the great king gazed over the city that night, his eyes caught sight of a beautiful woman bathing. Instead of turning away, his eyes locked onto this woman and lust began to fill his heart. No doubt Satan was fanning the flame, and, sure enough, lust burst into sin.

> **James 1:13–15**… Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Quickly he called for one of his servants and asked who this gorgeous woman was. ***"Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"*** the man said. This is the author pointing out to us—even if David didn't catch it—that

Bathsheba wasn't just a sexual object. She was the wife of one of his brave and elite soldiers. She was also the granddaughter of one of his trusted advisers.

The anonymous person who answered David was trying to say, ever so subtly, *"David, I know what you're thinking. And someone is going to get hurt."* [2] Don't you see? This woman should have been protected and respected by the king, but he ended up taking advantage of her!

The Bible states that she came to him when he sent for her. Perhaps she was naive or simply lacked the will to resist the powerful king's request. Or perhaps she desired to be unfaithful to her husband. The writer's omission of an explicit motive behind Bathsheba's action reinforces the conviction that this story is not so much about Bathsheba's actions but David's.[3]

Look closely at verse 4—***"He lay with her, and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house."*** Take note of the hypocrisy here. Bathsheba was purifying herself according to the Levitical law. It's as if she and David are seeking to ignore their adultery because they are going through the motions religiously. Don't we do the same? Aren't we tempted to think God is willing to overlook what we do on Saturday night as long as we show up for church on Sunday? [4]

It is not a sin to be tempted, but it is a sin to give in to temptation. I want you to know that you, as a born-again believer, have the supernatural ability to say "NO" to the devil. Listen to God's Word . . .

> **1 Corinthians 10:13**… No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what

[2] J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 215.

[3] Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 364–65.

[4] J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas, *Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel* (Nashville, TN: Holman Reference, 2016), 216.

you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

2 Timothy 2:22… Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

- **Are you tempted to cheat on your spouse? Run!**
- **Are you tempted to view pornography? Run!**
- **Are you tempted to siphon off money from your employer? Run!**
- **Are you tempted to reach for an artificial high? Run!**

In the midst of out-of-control passion, David ignored God . . .

- **He disregarded the fact that God had chosen him to be king of Israel.**
- **He overlooked the great victories God had given him.**
- **He forgot the amazing blessings God had poured out into his life.**
- **He disobeyed the clear direction of the Word of God.**
- **He failed to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit.**

If only he had counted the cost. Sin wreaked havoc in his family, in his kingdom, and in his reputation as a godly man. David hatched a series of plans in order to hide the result of his sin.

David attempted to trick Uriah into thinking the baby was his . . .

2 Samuel 11:6–13… **Then David sent to Joab, *saying,* "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10 Now when they told David, saying, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" 11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in temporary shelters, and my lord Joab and the servants of my**

lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." 12 Then David said to Uriah, "Stay here today also, and tomorrow I will let you go." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 Now David called him, and he ate and drank before him, and he made him drunk; and in the evening he went out to lie on his bed with his lord's servants, but he did not go down to his house.

Here we see the devious side of David's sinful nature. First, he sent Uriah home with a special gift. Surely, he couldn't resist being with his beautiful wife after a prolonged absence. However, Uriah was more honorable than David. This bold, faithful soldier slept at the king's door with the servants of the king.

David ordered Uriah to spend one more day in Jerusalem so that the king could try a different strategy. This time David would employ a scandalous tactic: the king would make Uriah drunk, hoping that his servant would then sacrifice principle for pleasure. David could have learned this technique, ironically enough, from a study of the Torah's account of the origins of the Ammonites (Gen 19:30–38), the very people Uriah was now fighting.[5]

Uriah again refused to compromise his values. Instead of going home to sleep with Bathsheba, he spent the night among his master's servants." This placed David in a real pickle. Uriah's wife was pregnant. Uriah was a man of strong convictions. He would not touch his wife and sacrifice his integrity as long as his fellow soldiers were engaging the enemy while being separated from their wives and kids. I want you to see the depths someone will go to when they're trying to conseal their sin.

2 Samuel 11:14–17… **Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent *it* by the hand of Uriah. 15 He had written in the letter, saying, "Place Uriah in the front line of the fiercest battle and withdraw from him, so that he may be struck down and die." 16 So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there *were* valiant men. 17 The men of the**

[5] Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 366.

city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.

This must have been one of the most difficult nights in David's life. The next morning the king *"wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah."* Undoubtedly the letter that Uriah carried was either parchment or papyrus, sealed with the king's royal signet ring so that its contents would have been unknown to anyone but Joab. *Uriah was unwittingly carrying his own death warrant*.[6]

Joab obediently ordered Uriah to attack the city at its strongest point. Uriah was killed along several other soldiers. They all died needlessly because David was trying to cover his sins!

2 Samuel 11:18–21… **Then Joab sent and reported to David all the events of the war. 19 He charged the messenger, saying, "When you have finished telling all the events of the war to the king, 20 and if it happens that the king's wrath rises and he says to you, 'Why did you go so near to the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? 21 'Who struck down Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?'—then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.' "**

This must have sickened Joab. If only David had counted the cost of this sin *before* he committed it. Are you hatching out a plan to sin against the Lord? Stop right now. Count the cost of carrying through with the tempting scenario the enemy has placed before you. Think about the effect your failure will have upon your family, your church, your health, your finances, and your good reputation. Don't mess up. Count the cost!

2 Samuel 11:22–24… **So the messenger departed and came and reported to David all that Joab had sent him *to tell.* 23 The messenger said to David, "The men prevailed against us and came out against us in the field, but we pressed them as far as the entrance of the gate. 24 "Moreover, the archers shot at your servants**

[6] Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 366–67.

from the wall; so some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is also dead."

Uriah's death was lamentable, but it must not cause the general to lose sight of the larger objective. Joab should "press the attack against the city and destroy it."[7] I want you to see how the Holy Spirit chose to end this sordid ordeal . . .

2 Samuel 11:25–27… **Then David said to the messenger, "Thus you shall say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as another; make your battle against the city stronger and overthrow it'; and *so* encourage him." 26 Now when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband. 27 When the *time of* mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; then she bore him a son. But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.**

Bergen observed that David may have been acting as if he were a kinsman-redeemer. As such, David would have assumed the lifelong responsibility of caring for the needs of Uriah's widow and was obligated to father a child in order to raise up an offspring to preserve the family line of the deceased (Gen 38:8; Deut 25:5–6; Ruth 4:5). Such a pretext would have made David's actions toward Bathsheba following Uriah's death seem truly noble and would have accounted nicely for the birth of the son.

No matter how honorable and magnanimous David's actions may have appeared to some, however, what David had done "was evil in the sight of the Lord."

[7] Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), 367.