

YOU ARE THE MAN

The Biblical account of David's sin is mostly concerned with the cover up of adultery, which expanded to include conspiracy, murder and may have actually been a case of rape as well. It also tells of the unmasking of sin by a prophet of God, and finally about the king's repentance and restoration. So the bulk of the story concerns what happens after David commits adultery with Bathsheba.

But in this talk we're going to look at how he got into the mess in the first place. It's recorded in only five verses, but in these verses there is a subtle description of how someone with David's history... his greatness of heart, his many years of knowing God's faithfulness, his courageous willingness to step out and trust God... how David, the remarkable poetic singer of Israel, the man after God's heart, allowed himself to descend to the place where he was taking to bed the wife of his good friend. There are important lessons to learn here that will help us better understand the deceitfulness of sin.

These are the verses

2SAM 11: 1 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. *In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.*

2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, 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.

3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*

4 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.

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, **I am** with child. *One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."*

1. *Let us make some observations about subjects in the text that might not be obvious today. First, warfare was carried out in ancient Israel by farmers, not professional soldiers. There were no standing armies in Israel or any other nation. These farmer-soldiers had to take a break from war periodically to go back and farm the land and care for their families. When the seed was in the ground and the harvest was some months off, there was a period in which the armies would re-engage. So it was in the springtime, and we are told it was the time for kings to go off to war. They were properly expected to lead their armies in battle.*

2. *The second thing we might note is in verse 2. It says, "One eveningtide David got up from his bed...." The word "eveningtide" is probably best translated "dusk" in this case. The telling point here is that David had been napping in the late afternoon, indulging himself when his men were on the battlefield. He got up from his bed, and at dusk, when it was still light enough for him to make the observations this verse speaks of... he started to walk around on the roof of the palace.*

3. *The third observation is in verse 4. It says of Bathsheba that she had purified herself from her uncleanness. Uncleanness is a reference to her menstrual cycle. The point is that she had recently had a period, which means that she wasn't pregnant when this event took place. The text is being very clear that she was not pregnant by her husband, when David had intercourse with her.*

Now, what should we learn from this text? What warnings are sounded? David had a profound prayer life, he wrote songs of praise that we sing today, he had suffered for the Lord's sake, he had known God's strengthening. Everything that David had been through declares that he was a man who knew better and had resources in God to draw on. But he chose not to.

David was already being deceived by his spiritual laziness... sin was at the door!

Let's begin with the observation that in the time when kings went off to war, David did not go. The battle language of the Old Testament is reproduced in the New Testament, where we are counted as soldiers in a number of places. We are engaged in a conflict, and there are times when you and I are called on by the Lord of the church, the Commander of the army of the people of God, to go into battle.

David's downfall began with the determination early on to pamper himself, to disengage from rightful responsibilities. The descent into adultery and its outcomes usually doesn't happen overnight. A series of steps, none large, take us nearer and nearer the precipice. Each small step by itself isn't particularly dangerous, but if they accumulate, we end up in a very dark place indeed.

Complacency

David had fought hundreds of battles. He had been in wars since he was a young man, and he knew what the enemies, his own armies, and the conditions were like. Because we assume that life is predictable and that nothing ever changes and nothing important is at stake, we imagine that we like David, can respond in a routine way. Once we begin to think that, we're deceiving ourselves, because the enemy encourages our carelessness and inattention.

Another component of complacency or laziness is seen when David decided that someone else should do what he had been called to do. Listen to what Uriah, David's friend, says in verse 11. David must have been cut to the heart when he heard this: "And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing." It's dangerous to think that you can hand off to someone else what God has given to you to do, because you're tired of it. That sort of indulgent thinking was creating greater and greater dangers for David.

A third component of complacency is the restlessness and boredom we see in David. These are always important signs that something is terribly wrong. What was he doing taking a nap in the afternoon, lying around in his house, not only not engaged in battle but not doing anything else worth doing? Life had become bland. The text says he got up and was walking around on the roof of the palace. The suggestion is that this was a kind of restlessness, that everything tasted the same, every opportunity looked the same. Yet here was somebody who could write the greatest praise of God that has ever been written, who had fought giants in his youth, who had united a nation in adulthood, who had dealt with his enemies fairly, who had administered justice.

How can you be bored when there are people to love for God's sake? How can you be bored knowing that you are the object of God's love and constant attention? How can you be bored when you know that you've been called to live a life of accomplishment and usefulness with the gifts you've been given? If you are, then something is gravely wrong. Everything about the circumstance he was in should have alerted him to the problems that were coming up.

Self-Importance

He listened too much to the people who patted him on the back. He was the king. Kings can do anything they want... who was going to tell the king no? He saw a woman he wanted... he sent a servant to find out who she was. Was the servant going to raise an objection? When the answer came back, "She is the daughter of your good friend Eliam, the wife of your good friend Uriah," who was going to tell him, "You have no business at all pursuing this"? David's self-importance led to isolation. There was no one who would stand up to him, challenge him, hold him accountable, say the hard thing.

Where were all the men who could have stopped him? They were in battle. There was nobody in David's life who could stop him except himself. Where do such people who are seriously committed to each other come from? They come from fighting wars together. A group that just meets to sit around and hold hands and exchange pleasantries is not an accountability group. The people who go deep enough in your life to have those kinds of relationships with you are people with whom you have ministered, with whom you have taken risks, with whom you have been honest. If you don't have a group of people like that in your life, it's because you've chosen not to. There is so much ministry in this church, so many opportunities... we need to be on the business end of the Lord's work.

From lust to adultery

The last warning is the progression of lust to adultery. There's a series of steps that are mentioned here. Although David's restlessness was indicative of a problem, his pacing around the roof was probably innocent. And Bathsheba's bath taking was not inappropriate either. He noticed her, but not for the wrong reasons. But every step that followed was wrong. After he noticed her, he stared at her. The Hebrew is very clear. It says that she was very beautiful. He had to observe her long enough to draw that conclusion, to enjoy what he was seeing. Instead of just seeing her bathe, he enjoyed it, wallowed in it, and then sent a servant to investigate who she was.

When word came back that she was the daughter of one friend and the wife of another, everything should have stopped. But by then the fantasy had taken on a power. He overrode the warnings, brought her to his bedroom, and was intimate with her. And then he thought it was over. This was going to be a one night stand. It's very clear; she went home immediately. He didn't intend that the relationship should continue on.

Then the chilling result: She sent him word saying, "I am pregnant."

All the steps in this process were occasions to stop. He could have stopped it at the first glance. He could have stopped the fascination when it was growing. He could have stopped before he investigated. Certainly after he investigated and heard who she was, he could have stopped. But he didn't. This process mirrors the progression of immorality in everybody's life... the beginning glance, the long look, the imagined experience, the growing fascination, and then the action. And toward the end it seems inevitable: "It's too late, I've sent for her. She's coming. There's nothing I can do to stop now. We're caught in circumstances too big for ourselves." But you can stop any time. You can come to your senses, you can call for help, you can dig your heels in, you can turn around and go the other direction. Never be ashamed of asking for help... we are all here to help each other... we fight side by side.

Here's a warning to men: Deal with the visuals in your life. What are you staring at that you shouldn't be? What sort of information are you taking in? For women, it's more often an emotional entanglement... having conversations with some man in your life, a neighbour or a co-worker, that begin to take the place of the conversations you ought to be having with your husband; becoming emotionally fascinated with somebody you have no business being fascinated with. Re-ignite your love for the one God has given you.

I urge you to examine yourself. What's going on right now? What stage are you at in the process of fooling yourself? What are the little steps that have taken place, the tiny compromises, the apparently insignificant self-indulgences?

HEB 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.