

Life Lesson 72
David and Bathsheba
Text: II Samuel 11 and 12

The Introduction

At last David took over the job for which God had prepared him for so many years. He sat on the throne in Jerusalem and ruled over all of God's people. Now he wasn't an unimportant shepherd boy. He wasn't an outlaw in hiding. He was the King!

David loved God and wanted to obey him. Do you think that means he did everything right? No, David was still a sinner. No one is ever so good that they can't fall and do wrong. King David sinned and he made mistakes. The worst thing he did involved a woman. Her name was Bathsheba.

The Story

All the men were at war, but David stayed in Jerusalem this time. He was taking it easy. The Bible says he got up very late. Maybe because he wasn't where he was supposed to be, and because he wasn't getting up early to spend time with the Lord like he used to do, he was tempted to do something very wrong. He fell in love with a beautiful young woman named Bathsheba.

David already had several wives – which isn't God's plan. He certainly didn't need another one. Besides, Bathsheba was married. Her husband, Uriah, was a brave warrior, away fighting for the Israelites while David stayed at home.

When Bathsheba found she was going to have a baby, David knew he was in trouble. He called Uriah home from the battlefield.

“How is the battle going?” David asked him.

After filling David in on the events that were happening on the battleground, David told him to go home.

But Uriah wouldn't go home and enjoy a vacation with his wife.

“All the other soldiers are out fighting,” Uriah said. “Why should I have a rest and a good time?”

He slept on the ground outside the palace.

David knew he would have to do something else. He sent word to Abner, the captain of the troops.

“When you go into battle against the high tower of, go very close to attack. Make sure Uriah is in front. Then draw back and leave him there.”

Abner must have been surprised by this message. Uriah was one of the best soldiers. He probably wondered why David would want him to be killed. He did what David said, though. Uriah was killed, as were several of the other brave fighting men.

After Uriah was dead, David took Bathsheba and married her. He thought everything was working out just fine. No one knew.

But, no, someone *did* know.

God knew what David had done. God loved David too much to let him get away with such terrible sin. He sent Nathan the prophet to give him a message.

“There is a man who is very rich,” Nathan told David. “He has lots of sheep. His neighbor is poor. He had only one little lamb. It was a pet lamb. He loved it, and his children played with it. That lamb was their very favorite thing. It ate with the family and slept with them. It was so precious to them! The rich man had company and didn’t want to kill one of his own sheep to feed his guests, although he had huge flocks of sheep. Instead, he took the poor neighbor’s little pet lamb and killed it for his guests.”

David, who knew about sheep and probably had a pet lamb of his own before, was furious.

“Bring that man to me,” he shouted. “I’ll teach him a lesson. He’ll give the poor man four times as many sheep! I’ll have him put to death, because he was so mean and had no pity.”

Nathan looked him in the eye and said, “You are the man.”

David didn't take someone's sheep, but he did take someone's wife – Bathsheba. Suddenly David saw how bad his sin was before God. He was just as bad as the wicked man in the story. He repented and asked God to forgive him.

“God has put away your sin,” Nathan said. “He will forgive you, but your sin will have a consequence. The child that you and Bathsheba have will die.”

Nathan left and right away, the little child became sick. David fasted (went days without eating) and prayed and asked God to spare the child. Because of David's great sin, though, God caused the child to die.

David was so sad – but he realized that he had done wrong. He wrote a song about how sorry he was for his sin. That song is in our Bible – Psalm 51.

The Life Lesson

We can see from this story that even Christians do wrong. David loved God and served Him for years, but he did a very bad thing. Those who truly belong to God, though, can't keep on sinning. God will send someone to rebuke them and, like David, they will see that they are wrong and repent. Repent means to “turn around.” When people repent, they turn around from the way they are going and turn to follow God. A true Christian won't keep going in sin. When God sends reproof, they will stop, turn around, and follow God.

Review Questions

Where was David when his men were out fighting?

He was at home, sleeping late.

What bad thing did David do?

He became involved in a sinful way with Bathsheba.

Would David have “fallen in love” with Bathsheba if he had been out fighting with his men?

No

What did David do when Bathsheba found out she was going to have a baby?

He sent for Uriah so they could pretend the baby belonged to Bathsheba’s husband.

Did their plan work?

No. Uriah refused to go home while his friends were suffering and fighting.

What was David’s second plan?

He gave orders for Uriah to be at the front of the battle so that he would be killed.

What did David do after Uriah was killed?

He married Bathsheba.

Who came to rebuke David for his sin?

Nathan the prophet.

What story did Nathan tell David to help him understand his sin?

A story about a poor man’s sheep that was killed by a rich man.

Did David repent?

Yes.

What happened as a result of their sin?

Their child died.

What Psalm did David write about his sorrow for his sin with Bathsheba?

Psalm 51

Can Christians sin?

Yes.

Can they keep on sinning after God rebukes them?

No, a true Christian will repent.

