



Unit .11

Session .05

A Sinner Receives Forgiveness

Scripture



**2 Sam. 11:1-5,8-9,
13-17; Ps. 51:4-10**

1 In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem. **2** One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing—a very beautiful woman. **3** So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hethite?” **4** David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Afterward, she returned home. **5** The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: “I am pregnant.” ... **8** Then he said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king followed him. **9** But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master’s servants; he did not go down to his house. ... **13** Then David invited Uriah to eat and drink with him, and David got him drunk. He went out in the evening to lie down on his cot with

his master’s servants, but he did not go home. **14** The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. **15** In the letter he wrote: Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies. **16** When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. **17** Then the men of the city came out and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle; Uriah the Hethite also died. ... **4** Against you—you alone—I have sinned and done this evil in your sight. So you are right when you pass sentence; you are blameless when you judge. **5** Indeed, I was guilty when I was born; I was sinful when my mother conceived me. **6** Surely you desire integrity in the inner self, and you teach me wisdom deep within. **7** Purify me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. **8** Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. **9** Turn your face away from my sins and blot out all my guilt. **10** God, create a clean heart for me and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Intro Options



Main Point:
A true mark of a
Christian life is one of
continual repentance.

Option 1

Tell your kids that will be either making a skit or doing a drawing. If they prefer to do a skit, they should get into the group with whom they want to make the skit; if they'd sooner draw as an individual, have them get some paper and (colored) pencils.

Their job is now to make a drawing (or comic strip) or skit entitled, "The Worst Day Ever." They should take an average student and make him or her have the worst day ever in 2 minutes or less.

Give them time to prep and then show the skits.

Debrief by asking how many of them showed skits where people either sinned or were sinned against. Which would be worse: being in a car wreck or sinning? How do we often have a too-small view of sin? Sin is a violation of the most valuable being in the universe, God; so we don't see sin as awful as it is. Today's lesson will make us take a hard look at the horror of sin.

Option 2

Inform your students they've been approached to write a book entitled, "The Middle School Student's Guide on How to Get Out of Trouble."

They should first come up with a list of categories of trouble middle schoolers get into: trouble with friends, school troubles, troubles with their sports team, trouble with their parents, etc. Each category should become a chapter of the book.

Next, break them into smaller groups and assign each group a chapter. They should make a brief outline of how to get out of the particular kind of trouble they've been assigned.

Have them share the ideas they came up with for each category. What approach did they generally take? Did anyone suggest confessing to the trouble, apologizing, and repenting? Talk about how we rarely confess to our sin, but rather compound it by adding more sin to try to cover up our sin (e.g., cheating on a test but then lying about it; spreading gossip about a friend but then ignoring that friend instead of apologizing). In today's lesson, we'll see how David took a wrong approach to dealing with his sin, too.

TEACHING PLAN

For all of the ways that David challenges our faith and makes us yearn for God, he also reminds us that no one is immune to the pull of temptation and the allure of sin. Thus far, we have seen David win victory after victory for the Lord and Israel. But now we see one of the most gut-wrenching stories perhaps in all of the Old Testament.

Read 2 Samuel 11:1-5.



David's fall demonstrates the power of temptation and the dangerous, slippery slope sin creates. There are twenty chapters from the time David was anointed as king (1 Sam. 16) until he was finally installed as king (2 Sam. 5). But it only took three verses for him to commit adultery (vv. 2-5). And in this, we see how frighteningly fast things can spin out of control. What began as a peaceful evening on a rooftop ended in adultery, deception, and eventually murder.

At this point, David was several years into his reign as king of Israel. He had accomplished much and established his reputation in the country. He eagerly fought for God and seemed hungry for ways to make God's name known throughout the world. But now, on this evening, his heart and mind were captivated by something else. Sin is often most appealing when we are most comfortable. When we feel safe, well cared for, and successful, we tend to drift away from God into other things. Comfort is an anesthetic to our dependence on God. The comforts and pleasures of this life—which are incredible gifts to enjoy—often lead us away from dependence on God and into places we never intended to go.

▪ What can we do to keep ourselves from getting too comfortable as Christians?

Nothing in this text suggests that David wanted to have a meaningful, monogamous relationship with Bathsheba. Instead, it seems he had intended to use her for his own pleasure and agenda. It's not too far of a stretch to think that when David sent her back to her home, he had no plans to see her again. For him, he had gotten what he wanted, and the whole matter was behind him as soon as she left the palace. Or so he may have thought. But then we read that Bathsheba conceived and sent word back to David that she was pregnant (v. 5). This was not what David had envisioned happening! Bathsheba had been a momentary indiscretion for the king; a fling. His night of giving in to his passions was supposed to be forgotten—by him and certainly by Bathsheba—and no one else was supposed to know of it. But that plan unraveled with news of the pregnancy. Now, he had to take matters into his own hands and figure out a way to cover up his affair.

▪ What are some long-term consequences that sin can bring into our lives? How might you have seen some of these in your life or in someone else's?

David's hope of getting away with his sin with Bathsheba came crashing down with the news of her pregnancy. Her husband, Uriah, was off at war so it would be apparent that Bathsheba was not pregnant by her husband. How long would it take for Bathsheba to reveal who the father was? David was stuck, but there had to be a way out. And it seemed like David found just the way when he recalled Uriah from the field. Could it be that easy? Could he bring Uriah home under some pretense of hearing a report on the battle and then encourage the soldier to spend an evening with his wife?

COMMENTARY

Main Point:

A true mark of a Christian life is one of continual repentance.

1 Samuel 11

1. Clearly, the first verse—regarding David remaining in Jerusalem during a season when kings typically marched out to war—was intended by the author to give us a window into David’s situation at this particular point in time. What is not clear, however, is the meaning behind the author’s inclusion of this scene-setting verse. Some scholars argue that this is an indictment against David for remaining in Jerusalem and not going to war like the other kings. He should have been with his army and not at home in the comforts of the palace. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Others say that it’s simply a timestamp: a way of telling us what season of the year it was when this account occurred. David had not been at all of Israel’s battles before this one (10:7). Whatever the meaning, one thing is evident: David was comfortable. His army was out fighting his battles while he was at home taking naps and evening walks on the roof.

Activity

Split your crew into at least two groups (more is okay). All groups will put on skits; half the groups should put together a skit entitled, “The Most Offended Person in the World” (people are constantly offending him/her and doing wrong to him/her); the other half should assemble a skit entitled, “The Most Gracious Person in the World” (he/she is constantly being surprisingly kind and gracious to others). Give them some time to prep and show the skits.

Afterward, tell them to move into challenge mode: they are to put together another skit where the most offended person and the most gracious person are the same person.

Talk about what you saw in each skit, In which skit was the protagonist the most beautiful? The truth, the most offended person in the world is God; but He is also the most gracious person in the world, which makes Him all the more beautiful. How do these skits help us run to God when we sin? How do they help us see how horrible sin is? How do they help us see how we should be when we are sinned against?

99 Essential Doctrines *(p. 64, DDG)*

Repentance

Repentance is a response to God’s gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine sorrow for one’s sin (Luke 5:1-11), a turning away from one’s sin toward Christ (Acts 26:15-20), and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation (Ps. 119:57-60). It is the human counterpart to God’s work of regeneration; in other words, it’s the human side of our conversion.


TEACHING PLAN

Read 2 Samuel 11:8-9,13-17.




This part of the passage depicts one of the bleakest scenes in David's life as the author zooms in on David's sin. Nowhere else do we see the darkness of the king's heart like in this scene. David added layer after layer of deception, trying his best to cover up his actions. All because, unwittingly, Uriah would not be complicit in the cover-up. From David's place of comfort, he had sinfully entered Uriah's home, but Uriah refused to enter the comfort of his own home while his fellow soldiers were at war. So David tried another tactic: he would get Uriah drunk, and in his state of lowered inhibitions, he would go home to be with his wife. But even in that state, Uriah proved more faithful than David had been on that recent evening. No matter what David did, he couldn't seem to undo what he had set in motion. Things were obviously out of his control, which is why his last step was the most extreme. He wrote to Joab and told him to arrange for the murder of Uriah. To make matters worse, he sent the letter back with Uriah. Uriah, the faithful soldier and servant of the king, was forced to carry his death sentence by that very king.

- **How have you seen sin draw you or someone else to deeper sin?**
- **When have you tried to cover up your own wrongdoing? How did events spiral out of control?**

David had committed adultery and when he was at risk of being exposed because of that sin, he committed murder to cover it up. His sin had taken him to places he may have thought himself incapable of going, and in the end, it appeared that he had gotten away with it all. But then one day, the prophet Nathan came to him and told him a story (2 Sam. 12:1-7). There were two men, one was quite wealthy and the other quite poor, owning only a single lamb which he cared for greatly. One day a visitor came to see the rich man, but he could not bring himself to slaughter one of his own animals to feed his guest. Instead, he took the poor man's lamb. When David heard the story, he became enraged and declared that the rich man deserved to die. And in dramatic fashion, Nathan triggered the trap that he had set. "You are the man!" he bellowed. David had been confronted by his sin, and finally the king's heart was in the place it needed to be. David was contrite. We read of his resulting repentance in Psalm 51. 

Read Psalm 51:4-10.



Look at how gospel-centered repentance makes the mercy of God its sole hope. David begins precisely where he should, by centering on God's grace. Nothing in this prayer suggests that David approaches God looking to make a deal. He's not bargaining with God, trying to commute his sentence. He's not reminding God of all the great things he did in the past (remember Goliath?). He's not trying to explain away his sin. He's not even promising to do better in the future. No, David appeals to God on the only ground that won't crumble, the ground of God's grace. 

- **What parts of David's confession stand out to you? What parts can you easily identify with?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
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2 Samuel 11

13-17. Not only did David continue to compound his sin, he expanded the sphere of those affected by it. Not only did he bring Joab into the situation and force him to follow an unjust order, he also used the other soldiers in the army against Uriah, their peer and their faithful friend. This was David's darkest hour. One can't help but read this and wish that David would have recognized that there was indeed a way out—a way that he had missed. David could have, and should have, fallen on his knees and cried out to the Lord in repentance at the very beginning. But he did not. Instead of relying on God to forgive his sin, he relied on himself to hide his sin. With disastrous results.

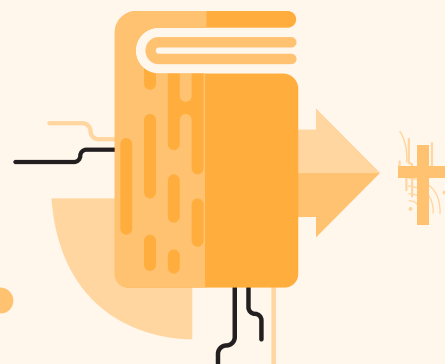
In this story, we witness the depths of depravity. It seems there is no limit to how far the heart can go when it comes to sin. Sin captures our imagination and deceives us into thinking that life isn't worth living unless we gratify a particular desire. Once that happens, we become convinced that we must follow what our hearts want—no matter what. What might begin with an "innocent" sin can explode before we have time to realize what we have done. It doesn't take long before we are doing what we never thought we would do—but what our sinful hearts yearn to do.

Psalms 51

4. David saw sin the way he did because he believed that God is most offended by it. He said he sinned against God alone (v. 4). How could David say this?! Think about what he had done. His sins had been against his wife, his sons and daughters, Bathsheba, Uriah, Joab, his army, and even the entire nation of Israel. David's actions hurt everyone. His sin had massive ripple effects. David knew that, but he also knew that no matter how far outward sin goes, it reaches upward further. God is most offended. God is most betrayed. God is most impugned. And God is the most broken over our sin. Sin is cosmic treason. If you steal from your company, you've first stolen from God. If you commit adultery, you've first betrayed God. Sin offends God the most. When you break His law, you break His heart. David knew this. Before he ever called for Bathsheba, he had first betrayed God in his heart.

(p. 66, DDG) Christ Connection

Even David, the greatest of Israel's kings and the man after God's own heart, was a sinner who needed to repent and be redeemed. In the story of David, we recognize that we all need forgiveness through the sacrifice of a perfect King who would take upon Himself the punishment our sins deserve.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



Why do we often underestimate the power sin can have in our lives if left unchecked?

What are the immediate and long-term dangers of not dealing with the sin in our lives?

Heart



Where does sin usually come from (see James 1:14-15)?

Why is it important to understand where sin originates?

Hands



Why was genuine repentance in the life of David so important? Why should it be important in our lives today?

What are some sins you need to confess to God and repent of this week?

Main Point: A true mark of a Christian life is one of continual repentance.



Head

It is important to remember that in the case of any sin, temporary pleasure leads to lasting pain. Sin takes us farther than we ever intend to go. What starts with a few compromises here and there ends up in weeks, months, or even years of pain and chaos. Our sinful hearts cause us to make choices that have a devastating impact much further into the future than we anticipated. Additionally, we find that the more we indulge a particular sin, the harder it becomes to resist it. The more we yield to the flesh, the more we are affected by the destructive power of sin (Gal. 6: 7-9). Frequency does not put us in a position of advantage over sin; it puts us in a position of powerlessness before it. Sin shapes our desires and our habits, and before long, we find that we are unable to resist certain urges that used to have no power over us. Sometimes we even stop trying. This is sin's power over us if left unchecked. Sin enslaves us and takes us to dark places we never imagined going. We never quite understand how dark darkness can be until we are engulfed by it.



Heart

To understand the power of sin, we have to be clear of its origin. We often think of sin being outside of us—that we “fall” into sin or are attacked by sin. It is true that a number of influences around us can draw us toward sin. But the reality is that we don't need any of these to sin. We are quite adept at sinning on our own. The reason is because sin is born within us, not outside of us. The battle of sin is not fought primarily outside of us, but within us. We cannot make the mistake of thinking we sin because of external circumstances. Perhaps a particular possession or opportunity presents itself, and we see that as the cause of our sin. If we maintain this thinking, we are setting ourselves up to lose every time. Ultimately, we sin because we want to sin, not because anything or anyone else wants us to. We are not the victims in sin; we are the culprits.



Hands

David's fall into sin teaches us, among other things, the central role repentance plays in the lives of believers. Every believer should continually practice this type of repentance—the type that not only calls believers to deeply feel how they have offended God and others, but also the kind that creates a willingness to publicly confess and actively turn away from the sin. It is repentance of this kind that is representative in all Christians, which makes it a key indicator of a genuine relationship with God.