

# Getting Away With Murder?

II Samuel 11-12

## Introduction

We return today, to the book of II Samuel and the life of David. We will address the rather painful, sinful subject of adultery in the life of this great king.

The subject of sexual sin – adultery and fornication – are by no means the most popular subject. Yet the word of God speaks with authority and clarity about an area which challenges and provokes us toward integrity.

The Bible, as you probably know, calls sexual relations involving a married individual with someone other than their spouse, adultery. It does not call it a fling; it does not call it a passing affair; it does not call it a self-fulfilling relationship – it calls it adultery.

The Bible calls sexual sin between two people who are unmarried, fornication. It does not call it experimentation; it does not call it the right of passage; it does not call it the initiation of growing up – it calls it fornication.

I listened to a tape by Dr. Ferguson that was interesting. He talked of the way our culture has redefined things to make them sound interesting.

J. Allan Petersen wrote a book, several years ago, entitled *The Myth of the Greener Grass*. Let me read a quote from his book.

*A call for fidelity is like a solitary voice crying in today's sexual wilderness. What was once labeled adultery and carried a stigma of guilt and embarrassment now is an affair – a nice-sounding, almost inviting word wrapped in mystery, fascination, and excitement. A relationship, not sin. What was once behind the scenes – a secret closely guarded – is now in the headlines, a TV theme, a best seller, as common as the cold.*

## The Forbidden Desire . . . Invading the Senses!

Now, before we consider David as a case study in his own immorality, let us dissect what we will call, sexual sin and unfaithfulness. Let us also discover why it attempts and how it attempts to invade our lives. I want to give four basic principles that relate

to stepping outside the boundary of God's design for a physical relationship; four basic principles concerning sexual sin.

1. Number one, sexual sin is an ever present capability of everyone.

In Galatians 5:16, Paul writes,

***But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.***

In Galatians 5:19, Paul begins a list of desires of the flesh.

***Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality [adultery], impurity, sensuality,***

Paul is writing to Christians in these verses. This means that Christians are by no means exempt from the sin nature and its impact.

2. Number two, sexual sin is the evil creation of the mind.

Jesus Christ said,

***. . . everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matthew 5:28)***

In other words, Jesus is suggesting that there is a line that is crossed between a simple look and the making up of a mind to possess.

One writer defines the line between temptation and lust in this way, "Lust is the sense of excitement that conceives a plan to use a person. When attraction turns into a scheme, we have crossed the line. Lust is an untamed, inordinate sexual passion to possess."

This is exactly what David will do in II Samuel 11.

3. Number three, sexual sin is the erotic culmination of the body.

In other words, eventually the body fulfills what the mind desires and lusts for.

Solomon wrote, centuries ago,

***For as he thinks within himself, so he [does] . . . (Proverbs 23:7)***

If you covet; if you lust, eventually your body will go along with your mind. Professional men and

women, homemakers, students, carpenters, artists, musicians, bankers, plumbers, preachers, senators, promoters, all alike, hear the alluring siren call of sensuality.

Chuck Swindoll writes, in one of his books,

*Lust never gives up. It never runs out of ideas. Bolt your front door and it'll rattle at the bedroom window. It will crawl into the living room through the television screen. It will wink at you out of a magazine in the den.*

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the reasons why sensuality is so attractive, so basic to all of our natures is that Satan, the deceiver, the designer of the alluring, never tells the whole story – he just gives the commercial. He tells us the good side, without giving us the dark side.

Satan does not whisper into the ears of our country that there are thirty-eight sexually transmitted diseases that are claiming thousands of people. He does not tell us that syphilis now is affecting nearly 60,000 people with its insanity bringing causes, or the fact that it can be passed to the next generation through the birth canal. He does not whisper into the ear of a college student that thirty percent of collegiate women are infected with Herpes, a disease that will affect them for the rest of their lives. He does not tell us about another virus called HPV, which is causing cervical cancer among young women. It would be grabbing headlines today, if it were not for the AIDS epidemic. This is not to mention the spiritual and emotional damages; the scars. Satan just gives the commercial.

4. Number four, sexual sin is the enveloping control of the character.

Lust binds; it controls the impulses; it directs the plans of a person's life, unless it is brought under the Spirit's control. Immoral desires will inevitably destroy.

It is time, ladies and gentlemen, as we come to this passage today, to take temptation seriously. It is time to understand our own bent according to scripture.

The prophet Jeremiah said,

***The heart is deceitful . . . and desperately wicked . . . (Jeremiah 17:9 KJV)***

Another translation says,

***. . . the heart . . . is incurable . . . (Jeremiah 17:9 YLT)***

Now I have been sick in the past few weeks. It has been interesting to me that there is something I can take for everything I have had. There are cures. There are things to even relieve the symptoms.

However, according to the writer in scripture, there is nothing for the heart – it is incurable.

Is there something that can fix our flesh? Paul writes,

***For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh . . . (Romans 7:28)***

The flesh must be crucified; must be put to death.

Now the question we need to ask ourselves is, "Am I prepared to face my own sin today?"

This is not just studying David's sin; not just facing our spouse's, our children's, or our parent's sin, but are we challenged to confront our own sin.

For some, by the way, their Bathsheba may be lust for power, for popularity, for wealth, for security, for health, for comfort. Bathsheba wears a number of disguises.

There is an old command in Deuteronomy 17 that warns David, and every king, to stay away from three things. They are not to:

- . . . ***multiplying horses . . . (verse 16)***, which is a representation of physical or military power;
- . . . ***greatly increase silver and gold . . . (verse 17)***, which is financial power;
- . . . ***multiply wives . . . (verse 17)***, which is sexual power.

In the first two of these, David passes with flying colors. It is the last one that grabs him by the throat. He has, for the past twenty years, failed to follow this command. He has set himself up for failure.

David first married Michal. Then, he married Abigail. Then, he married Ahinoam. When he moved to Hebron, he added four more wives. When he went to Jerusalem, he added more wives, as well as concubines. In other words, for twenty years, David has actually been involved in something that will ultimately, climax with his possession of Bathsheba.

None of us, by the way, will fall in a moment. It is a series of decisions, made over a period of time, that cause us to fall.

## The Hidden Digression . . . Revealing the Symptoms!

Let us pick up the story in II Samuel 11:1.

*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.*

Now I have heard a large number of sermons that make a major point of condemning David for staying in Jerusalem. These basically say, "If he'd only gone to war, this would never have happened."

This is not true, however. When you look at II Samuel 21, which occurs chronologically prior to chapter 11, you discover that David's servants; his mighty men, plead with David to stay in Jerusalem until victory was ensured. This all happened because of an event in war in which the enemy were picking David as their primary target. We read in II Samuel 21:17b,

*. . . Then the men of David swore to him, saying, "You shall not go out again with us to battle, so that you do not extinguish the lamp of Israel."*

In other words, David's men say, "You are 'the lamp of Israel'. Stay here until we can conquer; until we ensure success. Then, we'll call and you come."

This is the reason David is staying in Jerusalem.

I think the problem is that David is vulnerable because he has become used to getting what he wants. He is victorious. He is prosperous. He gets what he wants, and he gets it when he wants it.

The prophet Ezekiel preached,

*Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness . . . (Ezekiel 16:49 KJV)*

Continue to II Samuel 11:2.

*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.*

Now some things, as in this case perhaps, we cannot avoid seeing once. However, we can avoid

seeing them twice. The eye gate is neither good nor bad – it depends on how it is used.

John Bunyan wrote a lesser known work entitled *Man Soul*. It is an allegory of a city called The Soul of Man that has five gates. These five gates are the five senses. Bunyan tells of the way the enemy will come daily, besieging the city and attacking each of the senses. The enemy will come to the eye gate and will paint vivid pictures and alluring scenes. Now in man's soul, according to John Bunyan, this city cannot be overthrown from without. The only way the enemy can win is for the individual to open one of the gates and invite him in.

Now I agree with many expositors that the blame in this situation is entirely on David. We never read any explicit statements in the scriptures that this was her fault. However, it would have helped if she had pulled the shades.

David looked, and looked again, and he lusted. Then, he pursued. Look at II Samuel 11:3.

*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?"*

God is making sure the servants tell David she is a married woman. This should have stopped David cold.

However, this did not hinder him because now, his temptation has turned to lust. Lust, by one definition, is, "runaway, uncontrolled passion". It is not enough to look at this point; it is not enough to wish; it is not enough to hope – David has to possess. Look at II Samuel 11:4.

*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.*

That is it; one night and it is over – "Go back home." David has lusted, he has possessed, he has conquered.

The Bible does not tell if this was kingly coercion, if it was bribery, if it was intimidation, if it was rape. It simply implies that David now wants life to resume as normal. He essentially says, "You go back home. We'll close the chapter on this and no one will ever know."

This did not quite happen. Continue to II Samuel 11:5.

*The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, "I am pregnant."*

## **The Brutal Deception . . . Hushing the Scandal!**

David instigates, at this point, what will become three phases of deception. Let me give them to you.

1. Phase number one, bring Uriah home.

In other words, bring Uriah from the long task of besieging Rabbah, the enemy city. Make sure he spends the weekend at home with his wife, so that her pregnancy can be attributed to him.

Look at II Samuel 11:6-8a.

*Then David sent to Joab, saying, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked concerning the welfare of Joab and the people and the state of the war. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house, and wash your feet." . . .*

In other words, "Take the weekend off. Relax."

Continue to II Samuel 11:8b-9.

*. . . And Uriah went out of the king's house, and a present from the king was sent out after him. 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.*

David cannot believe this. Look at II Samuel 11:10.

*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?"*

Uriah, by the way, delivers a stunning rebuke. Some believe that he knew. We are not sure. Look at II Samuel 11:11.

*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."*

This is one unbelievably committed soldier.

So David has to modify phase one. He says, "Let's get Uriah drunk."

Look at II Samuel 11:13.

*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 [still] did not go down to his house.*

When you read this passage, you can feel David's panic. The man will not go home to his wife. He will know that she has gotten pregnant by someone else. He has been in the field for months and there are months yet to go, so he will know it was someone else.

This also implies something else to me, that is even more dastardly. David has evidently, asked Bathsheba to go along with the scheme to help cover this up. He has said something like, "Let's fool your husband and get away with this." and she had evidently, agreed to go along with the betrayal.

2. Phase number two, make sure Uriah never comes home.

David then implements this second phase of deception. Look at II Samuel 11:14-17.

*Now in the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 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." So it was as Joab kept watch on the city, that he put Uriah at the place where he knew there were valiant [enemy] men. The men of the city went out and fought against Joab, and some of the people among David's servants fell; and Uriah the Hittite also died.*

When I read this passage, like you, I get mad and angry. I was listening to David Jeremiah talk about another passage and in the same way, certain passages cause us to want to climb into the scene and grab certain people by the nap of the neck.

Uriah is one of David's most loyal soldiers. In fact, Uriah has been with David since the caves of Adullam. He was one of the first thirty-six men to come and join up with David. He has been with him in the fields; he has suffered with him; he has fought with him. And he walked into Jerusalem with his glorious king. Yet now, Uriah, this trusting friend, would be double-crossed and betrayed by David himself.

Did you notice, in this passage, that other innocent soldiers also died in order for this scheme to be carried out?

Let me give a principle from this: Infidelity has a way of hurting those who trust you the most.

There is a husband who does not know. There is a wife whose life is ripped to pieces upon discovering her husband's secret life. There are children whose trust in their father or mother is smashed to pieces. A magazine is uncovered; a phone number is discovered and lives are literally, ripped apart.

Let us call this by what it is – it is the destruction of integrity. In the life of David, it is the betrayal of people who loved him the most.

I read a story this past week, of a couple who had been married for twenty-five years. They had three grown children who loved them dearly. They were blessed with financial resources, so they could finally begin dreaming about a lakeside retirement home. They went to look at a lake front home being sold by a widower. They liked it a lot and returned to their home to plan and to think. Soon after, out of the blue, this wife and mother announced to her husband that she wanted a divorce. He went numb. Then angry, he said, "How could you be conceiving this plan? Here we've been married for twenty-five years and we're looking at a retirement home. How could you be nursing this scheme?"

She told him that she had not been; that this was a recent decision. He asked, "Who?"

She said it was the owner of the lake front home. She had inadvertently run into him, several weeks after looking at the home. They had had lunch. That had led to another lunch, and another lunch. She said that now she was in love with this man and she was not turning back. Not even her children, who hated the idea, could dissuade her.

The day came for her to leave and the husband was walking through the kitchen on the way out to the garage. He stopped and looked at her and said, "I guess this is the last time," and his voice dissolved into sobs.

She felt awkward. She hurriedly gathered her things and drove to meet the man. Two weeks after moving in with him, this new lover of hers was seized with a heart attack. He lingered for a few hours, and then died. In two weeks, so much was destroyed.

Do you see yourself anywhere in this story? If so, *STOP* here and now! Remember that God is observing and those who trust you will be hurt the most.

3. Phase number three, bring Bathsheba into David's home.

Look at II Samuel 11:27a.

***When the time of mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house and she became his wife; . . .***

The grave is still fresh. Perhaps the alligator tears have been shed. David has stood and, perhaps, delivered a eulogy for his faithful soldier, Uriah. It seems that David is getting away with *murder*.

God, however, has been overlooked. Look II Samuel 11:27b.

***. . . But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the Lord.***

Ladies and gentlemen, in David's passion, and in ours, we tend to forget the presence of God. We get involved in sin and we look this way and we look that way and we look the other way, but we forget to look His way.

## **The Prophet's Declaration . . . Uncovering the Secret!**

Now frankly, I am not sure how secret David's sin was. It has been a year between II Samuel chapter 11 and chapter 12. The palace gossips have probably quit their talking. A few cynics are probably muttering around the kingdom, "I knew David would get away with it. He's God's pet. See, I told you nothing would happen to him."

However, during this year, a prophet of God by the name of Nathan, has been watching. He has been listening. He has been working on a story, by God's own inspiration. He comes to David, in the beginning of II Samuel 12, and tells a story to David. Let me paraphrase this story for you.

Nathan says, "David, there was a very wealthy man who had herds and flocks. He was prosperous. And there was a poor man who had one little ewe lamb. This little lamb was like a pet. His children played with it. It ate the scraps from their table. They loved it. Then, one day, company came to the rich man's home. He needed a lamb to roast and did not want to take it out of his opulence. So he looked and saw the poor man with his little lamb. He went and, as it were, ripped the lamb from the man's arms, with the children perhaps, crying. He takes the lamb to his home, kills and roasts it, and serves it to his guests to eat."

Nathan finishes the story and David comes out of his seat and says, "That man must die!"

This was interesting because the law did not require death, only restoration. David, however, says, "That man must die!"

What did the man steal? A lamb. What did David steal? A wife.

It is interesting, is it not, that when we observe sin in someone else that resides hidden within us, we are so quick to spot it and so condemning in our words? We can see a speck a mile away and deliver harsh judgment. David said, "The thief must die."

Nathan perhaps, paused long enough to let David's words echo around the palace walls, and then, said to David, in II Samuel 12:7,

... ***"You are the man!"*** ...

I can imagine David slumping against his seat with the conscious realization, now hitting him full force, of his terrible deeds.

When God's children get involved in sin, God does not allow His children to lay in their sin. As the late J. Vernon McGee quipped, "God doesn't whip the devil's children, but He sure takes His own children to the woodshed."

David is about to be taken to the woodshed.

I want to give two judgments, delivered by Nathan.

1. Judgment number one, there will be trouble in your family.

Look at II Samuel 12:10-11.

***"Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife." Thus says the Lord, "Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household . . ."***

We will, unfortunately, uncover this, as we continue through this book. Murder, betrayal, rape, mutiny will cloud the final twenty years of David's life.

2. Judgment number two, the baby born will die.

With this said, Nathan left.

Let me stop, at this point, long enough to say that Nathan's words give us two truths that are very important for today.

1. Truth number one, God does not take the actions of His children lightly. If you are a child of God, there is accountability.
2. Truth number two, even when we are forgiven for our sin, there are consequences. We must live with the effects of the sins we have committed, some of which last a lifetime.

Now the greatness of David lies in the fact that he repents. He pursues fellowship with God again.

If a sheep falls down into a mud puddle, he will immediately struggle to get out. But if a pig falls into a mud puddle, he will think, "At last, I'm home," and will bury his nose and squeal with delight.

Therein lies the difference between a child of God and a follower of the world. We, who are God's children, cannot live in mud very long.

## **Application – Some Words to the Wise**

Now turn to Psalm 51. This passage is David's confession, written after Nathan left him. While you are turning, I want to apply our study today, by giving two final challenges to you.

1. Challenge number one, if you are morally faithful, be vigilant and alert.

Moral purity, ladies and gentlemen, is not a surprise coincidence in our lives. Holiness does not sneak up on us. We have to pursue it. We have to want it and desire it and pray for it. Jude 1:24a tells us this, when Jude says, "Cling to Jesus Christ,"

***...who is able to keep you from stumbling...***

If you are morally faithful, cling to Jesus Christ. He is capable of keeping you from stumbling and to present you,

***. . . in the presence of His glory blameless . . .  
(Jude 1:24b)***

You do not have to fall. When lust suggests a rendezvous, send Jesus Christ as your representative. Let Him answer the door.

2. Challenge number two, if you have morally fallen, be honest and confess.

You might think, "No, I really like kind of flirting with this lifestyle. And besides, God really hasn't thundered from heaven. I haven't had a prophet show up and give me any judgments. I kind of like this."

If you are a child of God, take a look at a king who thought he could get away with murder and

adultery and deceit. Look at the pain he has caused and the pain he will experience. Bend your knee before a holy God and confess, as David did in Psalm 51.

Look at Psalm 51:1-4.

***Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; according to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge.***

Skip to Psalm 51:10. David says,

***Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.***

Look at Psalm 51:12.

***Restore to me the joy of Your salvation and sustain me with a willing spirit.***

God will answer David's prayer, ladies and gentlemen. He will answer yours, as well.

However, confession for David, came after the frank, conscious realization that he was covering a *sin* – not a mistake, not an experiment – a *sin* against God.

I John 1:9 gives the believer the hope that,

***If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.***

So confess your *sin* – not your excuses – your *sin*.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am convinced that the crying need today, is for people of faith to live faithfully; to live with integrity.