

## On Not Playing with Fire: How to Stay Pure In a Tarnished World

2 Samuel 11:1-15  
Ephesians 3:14-21

July 29, 2018  
Faith Community

In many ways, David had set himself up for a crash. Our Scripture begins by saying,

***In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war....David remained in Jerusalem.*** (2 Sam. 11:1-2)

His army was at the front with a general in charge. The portable center of worship was with them to keep their spirits high and to ensure God's help in decision-making. Everything was in place except for David. David wasn't there. He was not where he needed to be. It was the first sign of trouble.

Houses back then had flat roofs, and it wasn't unusual for people to spend time there. David's palace was probably on a high point in the city and so he could look down on most everyone else, and there he was one night, when he wasn't where he needed to be, and on that night, there was the lovely Bathsheba, at home, taking a bath. She was alone because her husband was at the war. And David was king. There was no accountability. There was no one to answer to. Another sign of trouble.

David wanted to know more about this beauty and the report came back that she was the daughter and granddaughter of prominent members of David's own staff, some of his 'mighty men,' as they were called. And none of them were around either. And so it began. First he wasn't where he should've been, then it was a quest for information, then David summoned her to the palace, then it was adultery that resulted in pregnancy along with an attempt to cover it over, and finally murder.

There's a passage in the New Testament book of James that reads,

***....after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*** (1:14-15)

That's what happened here.

In the New Testament, Paul wanted the Ephesians to keep growing in their strength and faithfulness, and not to be

concerned over what he was going through in jail, and so he wrote this marvelous letter. In today's passage he's praying that his readers will be strengthened through the Holy Spirit in their inner being, so they won't drop the ball in tough times. This is what David was missing and it helped lead to tragedy.

Friends, if you're not strengthened inside, you'll fall victim to whatever sparkles and shines on the outside. David was handsome and powerful. Bathsheba was beautiful and well connected. David was not where he needed to be. Bathsheba was alone. There was no accountability. But please remember: A deceiver of others deceives him/herself first. Always remember that. Watch the ways you unintentionally or otherwise set yourself up for a crash. David just wanted to find something out. How can that hurt? When you think you're immune from something, you're especially at risk.

Once all was said and done in the scandal involving President Clinton, he was asked how come. Why did he let himself get caught up in such a mess? His three-word answer should serve as a big time warning to all of us. "Because I could."

Friends, it's exactly in those places where we think we're strongest that we're most vulnerable.

*In ancient China, the people wanted security from the barbarians of the north, so they built the Great Wall. It took over a thousand years to build and is 30 feet high, 18 feet thick, and almost 2,000 miles long! It's the longest, oldest, and most time consuming construction project at that point in human history.*

*The goal was to build an impenetrable defense—too high to climb over, too thick to break down, and too long to go around. But during the first hundred years of the wall's existence China was successfully invaded three times.*

*In all three cases, the barbarians never climbed over the wall, broke it down, or went around it; they simply bribed a gatekeeper and then marched right in through an open door.<sup>1</sup>*

---

<sup>1</sup> James Emery White, [You Can Experience a Purposeful Life](#) (Nashville: Word, 2000) and <http://www.technologystudent.com/culture1/grtwall1.htm>

It's exactly in those places where we think we're strongest that we're most vulnerable.

In the midst of that we see a model of Decency. Uriah was his name. We're told he was a Hittite. That means he was a convert; he wasn't born in the faith of Israel but rather chose it, and was now fighting for it. His name means, "Flame of the Lord."

A member of the army, David sends for him as soon as he learns that Bathsheba is pregnant. He wants Uriah to spend time with his wife so everyone will assume that the baby is his. Uriah won't hear of it though, he can't do that when everyone else is at the front, so instead spends the night in the servants' quarters near the palace. The next night David tries again, getting him drunk this time, and even that doesn't work since Uriah stays with the servants again. He was more honorable drunk than David was sober. When none of that worked, David got word to his general to put Uriah in a spot where he'd die in the fighting. Then he married Bathsheba to give the impression that everything was honorable and above board.

There are a couple things that stand out to me here. First of all, the faith we share is a way of life. Jesus Christ is just as concerned with what happens in your life on Monday as he is with Sunday. And that's good news.

The people in my life that I admire most are those who model that. God is in the day to day. God is in the relationships, the decisions, the values, the priorities; it's all included. That's what Uriah was about. And when the time of testing came, he made the honorable choice.

The second thing I see is something I heard from Stephen Covey: we can choose our actions, but we cannot choose the consequences. David may have been king but he could not prevent the death of the child born to Bathsheba. And then the day came when his own son led a military revolt against him. One of the men who advised him had been a member of David's team. His name was Ahithophel. He was the grandfather of Bathsheba. We don't know for sure, but it may have been that one of the things that motivated him to conspire against the king was what happened to his granddaughter during those days in the palace.

If you follow the story of David and Bathsheba through, you'll see the consequences are nothing short of disastrous and tragic, but in the end, hope wins.

When he was confronted with his sin, David admitted it, was crushed as the reality set in, and prayed for forgiveness and a chance to begin again. God picked up this broken man and rebuilt him. The Bible calls him a man after God's own heart. He's remembered as a great and passionate lover of God. And there are 58 references in the New Testament to David.

Friends,  
whatever you may be guilty of,  
whatever you might regret,  
whatever you wish you could do over,  
it doesn't have to be the end of the road for you. Forgiveness is available. There can be a fresh start. God is not done with you yet. And that leads to a godly passion. You have a purpose in your life.

Bottom line of this one: Know where your hope is to be found.

***Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that's at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.*** (Ephesians 3:20-21)

And to him be glory in you.