

LIFE OF DAVID 4

Purity

"Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."¹ Paul knew when he penned this how difficult the fight for sexual purity was and his advice: don't fight in your own strength; flee! The mighty King David, into whose hand God gave the lion, the bear, Goliath, and so many nations, fell to this secret sin. He tried to cover it up, but the Lord is not blind, and He called David to account by sending his friend, Nathan, to call him out. Even David, one of the greatest warriors of all time, couldn't fight this battle (or flee it) alone. He needed help.

Sometimes, we have to choose our battles. There are so many temptations in this world we do not have the resources to fight and withstand them all. Both the writer of Proverbs and the apostle Paul admonish us to stay far away from sexual temptation. Or, if the temptation comes to us, to flee! The Greek word Paul uses in 2 Timothy 2:22 is phuego, which means to escape safely out of danger. The writer of proverbs describes a "youth who had no sense [who] was going down the street near [temptation's] corner, walking along in the direction of her house at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in."² This is a young man putting himself directly in the way of temptation. He's in the wrong place at the wrong time with no accountability.

This is the same place we find David when we look at 2 Samuel 11. The author begins, "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."³ Rather than going out with his men and doing what needed to be done, David decided to lounge around the palace without any friends to keep him accountable. The story very quickly deteriorates from there: "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."⁴ This is the point at which David should have turned around and walked away, but instead, "the woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, 'She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.'"⁵ Now David has a decision to make, he could still flee, he could say, "Thanks for the info," and turn and walk away. But he didn't. Instead, "David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her."⁶

The first problem is that David wasn't where he was supposed to be. "In the spring... kings go off to war," but David was at home. Do you find yourself struggling more when you are in your dorm room alone when you could be at class, or eating a meal with someone, or at Chi Alpha? Maybe you should make sure you are where you are supposed to be. The second problem was that David ignored all the "stoplights." He could have stopped when he saw Bathsheba on the roof – just turned and walked away. He could have stopped when his messenger brought back the information he requested – turned and jogged away.

Pre-Article Questions:

1. What are some phrases, idioms, or popular apps that epitomize our western cultures values about sexual purity?
2. How important is sexual purity and integrity to you at this stage in your spiritual journey? Why?

He could have stopped when Bathsheba showed up, turned and ran away (and shouted over his shoulder for them to take her home!) But he didn't. Do you recognize and heed the stoplights? Maybe an ad pops up on your computer, close the ad and walk away. Maybe you went to a party and there's a room full of beautiful, not-so-modest-women, leave and jog away. Maybe you're at home alone with your girlfriend– get up and run away! Don't ignore the stoplights like David did. Jesus encouraged his disciples to "keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁷ In order to recognize the stoplights and overcome temptation, we need to be men who pray without ceasing and remain on the watch. We cannot afford to be careless in this area of sexual purity; we need to remain alert till we are taken home.

David's attempt to hide his sin only made the situation worse. Rather than confessing, repenting, and making atonement for his sin (under the Abrahamic covenant), he had Bathsheba's husband killed and made her his wife. Not until God revealed the truth to Nathan did David truly face his sin and deal with it with God's help. Hiding sin doesn't make it go away; the only thing that erases our mistakes and gives us a clear conscience is the blood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. James encourages us to "confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed."⁸ Confession and repentance within accountability are an important part of that healing process.

The fight for purity demands a fireproof strategy that can stand up under immense pressure. We find that strategy in the Word. Paul reminded Timothy that sometimes wisdom demands that we flee from temptation.⁹ James encourages men to resist the devil, reminding us that when we stand firm in Christ, the enemy will flee from us.¹⁰ And lastly, we are to put on the whole armor of God. With the shield of faith, we can quench the enemy's fiery darts; with the shoes of the gospel of peace, we can stand firm; with the belt of truth, we can gird ourselves up; with the breastplate of righteousness, we can guard our hearts; and with the helmet of salvation, we can defend our minds. But the only weapon we have to actually fight back is the Word. Memorize it, soak in it, meditate on it and use it to combat the enemy's lies.

Some of you reading this right now may feel defeated in the battle for purity, and you might feel like it is impossible to be pure in our world today. Nearly everyone, especially young men, have deep struggles and shame in the area of sexual immorality. With few exceptions, every college-aged man today is currently fighting a secret battle against pornography and masturbation, or at least has in the recent past. Beyond that, many young men have made mistakes and crossed boundaries with girlfriends, casual hookups, and dating apps. While each of us are uniquely made in the image of God, there are universal struggles that plague us collectively across generations – none more pervasive than sexual temptation.

It is likely that the same universal struggle is present for everyone in the room right now. Many of us are fighting the same battle and everyone is too fearful or ashamed to talk about it. The same guilty thoughts echo in all our minds: "I'm the only one who's struggling with this; I can fight this on my own; If other people knew about this, what would they think; I never meant for things to go that far; I promise that was the last time; I'll never be free of this." It's lies like these that keep us isolated and in the dark, which is exactly where Satan wants us. Only in community and vulnerability can the light truly shine and bring the kind of freedom and purity that you never imagined you could experience.

7. Matthew 26:41

8. James 5:16

9. 2 Timothy 2:22

10. James 4:7-8, 10

2 Samuel 11:1-17, 26-27, NIV

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 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, 3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4 Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." 6 So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. 10 David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" 11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" 12 Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. 14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." 16 So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17 When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died. 26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 27 After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

2 Samuel 12:1-18, NIV

The Lord sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2 The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3 but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. 4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him." 5 David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! 6 He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." 7 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and

Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9 Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.' 11 "This is what the Lord says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12 You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel."

13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14 But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die." 15 After Nathan had gone home, the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. 16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. 17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them. 18 On the seventh day the child died.

Psalm 51:1-13, NIV

1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. 2 Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. 3 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. 4 Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. 5 Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. 6 Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place. 7 Cleanse 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 Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. 10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you.

Scripture Questions:

1. According to 2 Samuel 11, where was David supposed to be during this time? In what ways does this make him a target for temptation from Satan?
2. What "stoplights" did David miss as he pursued his own pleasure?
3. How did David try to hide his sin at first? When this first effort failed what did he do? How does one sin sometimes perpetuate another?
4. What is David's reaction to Nathan's confrontation in 2 Samuel 12:13? How does David's reaction to his sin differ from that of King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:13-20?
5. In 2 Samuel 12:15-24, what does David do and say in response to the sickness and death of his child?"
6. In Psalm 51, David is repenting to God for what he did, what verse is the most powerful to you and why?

Application Questions:

1. How are you currently feeling in the battle for your sexual purity? Defeated, struggling, successful, victorious?

Application Questions: (continued)

2. Read Isaiah 9:7, Isaiah 22:22, and Revelation 22:16. In what ways does it encourage you to know that Jesus Christ came from the line of David, Jesus quoted David when he lived, and David was remembered in Acts as a man after God's heart? What does this reveal about God's heart towards us even though we stumble and fall?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 7:10, in what ways did David demonstrate godly sorrow and true repentance after he stumbled? What can we learn about repentance from David's reaction to his sin after Nathan confronts him in Psalm 51?
4. Have you established a "watch" in your life in regards to sexual purity? (i.e. practical steps that help preserve it like: an accountability partner, programs on your computer or phone that alert your partner to harmful activity, going to bed early, fasting from media, eating healthy, exercising, working, community etc.) Have you established a focused prayer life to be victorious in this area? How can our small group help each other in this area of watching and praying?

Prayer Partner Assignment:

Memory Verse: Psalm 51:10-13, "10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. 11 Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. 12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. 13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you."

Read 2 Samuel 12, 1 Kings 1, Psalm 24, and Psalm 73

Please meet with your prayer partner from this week to discuss the following questions on the chapters assigned for this week:

1. In your re-read of 2 Samuel 12, was there anything that spoke to you this time that you didn't catch in your reading at small group?
2. In what ways does 1 Kings 1 demonstrate the fulfillment of God's promise that Solomon would be the next king after David?
3. What do these Psalms say about a pure and undivided heart towards God and how did these Psalms speak to you?