

Confession

Opener: What's an example of someone suffering a consequence from something they did even after they repented?

Scripture: The Lord sent Nathan to David. He said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, ³but 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.

⁴"Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep to prepare a meal for the traveler. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for him." ⁵David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this must die! ⁶He must pay for that lamb four times over!"

⁷Then 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 Saul. ⁸I gave your master's house and wives to you. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. ⁹Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes?' ¹³Then 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. ¹⁴But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die." 2 Samuel 12:1-14 (condensed)

David's psalm after Nathan confronted him about his sin with Bathsheba:

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. ²Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ³For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. ⁴Against 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. ⁵Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. ⁶Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb; you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

⁷Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. ⁸Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice. ⁹Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. ¹⁰Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

²Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. ¹³Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. ¹⁴Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God, you who are God my Savior, and my tongue will sing of your righteousness. ¹⁵Open my lips, Lord, and my mouth will declare your praise. ¹⁶You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. ¹⁷My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise. Psalm 51:1-17

Discussion Questions

- Months had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba and had her husband killed on the battlefield. David married Bathsheba because she was pregnant. So all his problems were solved, right? Not exactly. The Lord sent the prophet Nathan to David, and he started out with a parable. What can we learn from Nathan about confronting others about their sin? 2 Samuel 12:1-13
- What does David's response to Nathan's accusation say about him? What are some other ways we respond when someone or something reveals our sin? 2 Samuel 12:13
- David repented and his life and kingship were spared, but there were consequences. His son died, and later three other sons died early deaths, so he paid "four times over" as he declared the man in the parable should do. Explain the tension between mercy and justice. Why do we often experience the consequences of sin even after we've received forgiveness? Examples? 2 Samuel 12:6, 14
- Psalm 51 was written by David as he asks God to forgive him for his sin with Bathsheba. On what basis does David cry out for mercy from God, and what right does he have to do so?
- Given that David had sinned against Bathsheba, Uriah, and the nation, why do you think he says to God, "against you and you only have I sinned?" Does God forgive those who don't repent? Should we? Psalm 51:4
- What does David mean when he asks God to "create in me a clean heart" and "renew a steadfast spirit within me"? How can we know when we have a clean heart and a steadfast spirit within us? Psalm 51:10
- David notes that God does not desire sacrifices and burnt offerings, but rather desires a broken spirit and a broken contrite heart. What's the difference between what God is not interested in and what He's looking for? Describe how that shows up today. Ps. 51:16-17



Wrap Up

How many of us spend six days a week sowing wild oats, then go to church and pray for a crop failure? Well here's the truth about consequences as explained in Galatians 6:7-8, "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."