

## Just When It Was Settling Down: Bathsheba

**Opener:** How would you describe the difference between being tempted and sinning?

**Scripture:** 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. But David remained in Jerusalem. <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>3</sup>and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, wife of Uriah the Hittite." <sup>4</sup>Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she went back home. <sup>5</sup>The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

<sup>6</sup>So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. <sup>7</sup>When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup>Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." <sup>9</sup>But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. <sup>10</sup>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?" <sup>11</sup>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!"

<sup>12</sup>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. <sup>13</sup>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. <sup>14</sup>In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. <sup>15</sup>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." <sup>16</sup>So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. <sup>17</sup>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.

<sup>18</sup>Joab sent David a full account of the battle. <sup>19</sup>He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, <sup>20</sup>the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'"

<sup>22</sup>The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. <sup>25</sup>David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab." <sup>26</sup>When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. <sup>27</sup>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 11 (condensed)

Flee from sexual immorality. 1 Corinthians 6:18

## Discussion Questions

1. The story of David and Bathsheba is one of the most dramatic accounts in the Bible. What was David's first mistake? Why wasn't the reminder that Bathsheba was Uriah's wife enough to stop him? Would you characterize what he did as rape? 2 Samuel 11:1-5
2. How is Bathsheba portrayed and what role did she play in what happened? Do you think she intentionally set out to attract David? How could either of them have prevented what happened? 2 Samuel 11:1-5
3. Uriah was more honorable than David or Bathsheba. David tried to trick him into thinking the child was his. When that didn't work, he made sure Uriah died. Why was David so desperate to cover up his sin? What should he have done when he found out that Bathsheba was pregnant? 2 Samuel 11:6-17
4. Given that Uriah was a soldier on the battlefield, was David's plan to have him killed murder? Why or why not? Why do we tend to try to cover up our wrongdoings or blame someone else when we get caught? 2 Samuel 11:14-25
5. Compare what David said to Joab in verse 25 about how Joab should view this situation with how God viewed it in verse 27. What's the difference and what should we take away from that difference? 2 Samuel 11:25-27
6. What can we learn from all this in regard to leadership, the abuse of power, moral responsibility, and consequences? How did David's sin ultimately affect his family, his kingdom, and his relationship with God?



## Wrap Up

No sin, save the sin of Adam and Eve, has received more press than David's sin with Bathsheba. He was about 50 and had walked with God for years—then he committed adultery and murder! How could a man after God's own heart fall so low? But he did, by saying "no" to what he should have said "yes" to, and "yes" to what he should have said "no" to.

I Corinthians 10:12 (MSG) says, "Don't be naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else." And that's the warning to us as we think about what happened to David.