

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Aug. 28

MONDAY

The messenger reported to David as Joab had instructed him. He recited to David something of the strategy (which apparently was flawed) and that some of his troops had been killed, including Uriah. Then David ordered the messenger back to Joab with this reply: don't be concerned about this early defeat. Such things happen in war. Just push on and fight well and, in the end, whatever it takes, conquer that city.

READ: II Samuel 11:23-25

To David, all is well. Uriah is dead. Nothing else matters. Unconfessed sin does that: it throws everything out of perspective. It thinks little of adding more sin to the first. Its only thought is image. "Please let me look good in front of others and don't let me get caught." When we go this route, think what we miss out on: forgiveness of sin, a clean conscience before God, and the assurance that even our most terrible and hideous sins have been covered by the blood! *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us...and cleanse us from all unrighteousness!*

TUESDAY

Learning that her husband was killed in battle, Uriah's widow, Bathsheba, mourned for him. And when the mourning period ended, David took her to the palace and married her. And a son was born. But this thing which David had done, displeased the Lord.

READ: II Samuel 11:26,27

One writer's remarks on this passage have stayed in my mind over many years. He wrote that God hated these sins of David all the more because David had been so close to Him. I get his point: for a pickpocket to steal my wallet is one thing; for my son to steal from it is another. How broken the heart of God must be at times, as He sees us plotting our way thru sin.

WEDNESDAY

God sent the prophet Nathan to David with a story about a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had flocks of sheep but the poor man only one lamb. One day, in order to feed a guest, the rich man took the poor man's lamb.

READ: II Samuel 12:1-4

Although God allows us the freedom to go our own way, if we so choose, and fall into sin, He does not allow us to go uncontested. He sends His spirit to convict us of our sin and to lead us to repentance. As the case here with Nathan and David, the Lord pursues us. He is not far from us when we fall into sin. The song writer said, "He's only a prayer away." That's not a prayer for the world's hungry or for peace in Iraq – that's a prayer for forgiveness and repentance. It's the prayer of confession. It's the prayer that God looks for first when we sin. It's the cry of a man or woman broken before the Lord.

THURSDAY

When David heard this story about the rich man taking the poor man's lamb, he was indignant! "For having no pity, that scoundrel should die! From his estate, the poor man

should be reimbursed four times over," David said.

READ: II Samuel 12:5,6

David seems to have thought that Nathan was presenting to him a genuine situation. We cannot help but notice that David immediately recognized sin in another and was quick to demand restitution! How is it that he didn't see his own sin? I suspect that the sin which David carried around with him for at least nine months (for the baby has just been born at this point, it seems) weakened his awareness of any spiritual discernment. Maybe he had justified his sin so many times that he had grown totally insensitive to it. Maybe there was satisfaction in being able to point at another's sin instead of reflecting upon his own. His response is not unfamiliar to us: judging sin in another while failing to see even a greater sin in my own life. Not a good place to be.

FRIDAY

The prophet Nathan, hearing David's response, said, "David, you are that man!" He added that God had appointed David king; had delivered him from Saul; after Saul's death, had given him the palace and the household; and would have done much else for David if it had been needed.

READ: II Samuel 12:7,8

Nathan applies the story to David. Application is crucial. One chorus puts it this way: "Jesus means life everlasting; Jesus means happiness, too; Jesus means love and mercy; but what does He mean to you?" We need to always apply what we read to ourselves and to our personal lives. We ought to help others - our kids, our SS class, people we talk to about the Lord - to see the application to their own lives as well.

SATURDAY

Why, Nathan asked David, why did you turn against God and do this evil thing: murdering Uriah by sending him to the front of the battle and letting the Ammonites kill him, and then taking his widow as your wife?

READ: II Samuel 12:9-12

One of the great themes of the Bible is that God's punishment fits the crime. In the years to come, people will talk, and they will reflect anew upon David's sin with Bathsheba. What David strove so diligently to keep secret will become a topic of conversation and mockery in the market! On the other hand, God's blessing does not fit the sin. When we go to God with our sin, even though we deserve punishment, he pours His mercy out upon us!

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