

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY SIXTEEN

The Case of the Open Window Shade

2 Samuel 11

If you do not run as fast as you can run from temptation, you will fall—even if your life is like David’s. It’s only a matter of time. If you try to fight it by your own strength, you will fall.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE Bible never flatters its heroes. The picture of King David’s life is painted with much beauty: his defeat of Goliath, his rise from shepherd to king, his political successes for Israel. Yet David was not without blemish. One thing remains clear about Israel’s great king both in his victories and in his failures . . .

David was a man of *passion*.

When standing on the mountaintops of life, David’s passion spilled out of his heart in the form of beautiful psalms saturated with love for his God. When he found himself in the deepest valleys, however, David’s passion pushed him further into the darkness until he embraced some of the most egregious acts imaginable.

These next two *Searching the Scriptures* studies look at King David when his heart was furthest from God, when his heart was nearly consumed by the unquenchable fire of his own lust and self-preservation. Then, these studies will examine how he responded when a dear friend confronted him. David’s example offers ever-true lessons in temptation and sin, repentance and redemption.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

To set the tone for your Bible study today, offer David's words recorded in *Psalm 11:4–5, 7* as your prayer to your heavenly Father.

*But the LORD is in his holy Temple;
the LORD still rules from heaven.
He watches everyone closely,
examining every person on earth.
The LORD examines both the righteous and the wicked.
He hates those who love violence. . . .
For the righteous LORD loves justice.
The virtuous will see his face.*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

David didn't dive straight into the waters of sin. Instead, he slowly waded in, allowing his body to acclimate gradually to its feeling before he moved in deeper into its murky depths.

His descent began almost as soon as he donned the crown of Israel. While standing beside God, he allowed sin's waters to splash on his feet. According to *2 Samuel 5:12–13*, what did David do shortly after taking the throne? According to *Deuteronomy 17:14–17*, why was this behavior problematic for Israel's new king?

By the time the narrative reaches 2 Samuel 11, David stood waist-deep in sin . . . and it wouldn't be long before he was drowning.



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Observation: Covering Up a Lustful Act

The account of David's hard fall into sin recorded in *2 Samuel 11* contains an abundance of practical applications. But before application comes interpretation, and before interpretation comes observation.¹ As you read this chapter, focus only on what the words say.

A Sensual Scene—2 Samuel 11:1–5

According to *2 Samuel 11:1*, where was David supposed to be during this time of the year? Where was he instead?

While his men endured the hardships of warfare, David enjoyed the luxuries of royalty. One afternoon, he went for a walk on the roof of his palace. What did he notice in *11:2* while surveying Jerusalem?

According to *11:3–5*, what did David do in response to what he saw? What was the result of these actions?



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David's in bed, not in battle. He neglects his job. He belongs with the troops. Had he been with them, there would never have been a Bathsheba episode. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

A Panic Plan—2 Samuel 11:6–27

Upon hearing those dreaded words, “I’m pregnant,” David knew he was in trouble, and he knew he needed to act fast. So, to cover up his wrongdoing, he called for Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah—one of David’s most faithful soldiers.

According to [2 Samuel 11:8](#), what did David ask Uriah to do, and what consequence did he intend? What did Uriah do instead in [11:9](#)?

Despite David’s best attempts, Uriah remained faithful to the cause of Israel and refused David’s request. Because of Uriah’s persistence, David devised a new scheme to hide his sin.

When David sent Uriah back to the battlefield, he provided a letter for Joab, the army’s commander. But little did Uriah realize . . . he carried his own death sentence. According to [11:14–15](#), what did David tell Joab to do with Uriah?



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According to 2 Samuel 11:16–17, did Joab listen to his king or disobey? What was the fate of Uriah?

In the space below, summarize how the following figures responded to the events recorded in this chapter: David (11:25), Bathsheba (11:26), and God (11:27).

David's sinful actions produced both intended and unintended consequences, and he harmed many people along the way: Bathsheba, Uriah, and the other soldiers who died in the fray. Yet sin had hardened his heart so much that the only thing he cared about was covering his own guilt. And it appeared to him as if he had succeeded.

But God saw his heart.



Interpretation: Sin's Lingering Result

The narrative preserved in 2 Samuel 11 presents David as the main character. He is the subject of almost all the verbs in 11:1–4. Looking at the New American Standard Bible, you see that David:

- Stayed at Jerusalem (11:1)
- Arose from his bed (11:2)
- Walked around on the roof (11:2)



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- Saw a woman bathing (2 Samuel 11:2)
- Inquired about the woman (11:3)
- Sent messengers (11:4)
- Took her (11:4)
- Lay with her (11:4)

What does this series of actions reveal about David's gradual movement toward sin? What timeless truths does David's example teach about sin and temptation?

Despite David's urging, Uriah remained committed to Israel's cause and to Israel's king. He chose to stay at the palace, rather than with his wife. What reason did Uriah give in [11:11](#) for not going home to Bathsheba? What is ironic about this situation considering David's choice in [11:1](#)?

How could David stoop to such a level? That's not hard to understand if you take an honest look at your own soul. His sin is no greater than your sin or mine. We are simply grateful ours have not been recorded. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Correlation: Resisting Temptation

David didn't roll over one night to suddenly find Bathsheba in his bed. In fact, he had plenty of chances to walk away—to tell himself *STOP!* But he didn't. Instead, he ran right into sin's enticing embrace.

In [1 Corinthians 10](#), Paul warns about the alluring appeal that temptation offers the people of God. While Paul did not address David's sin specifically, the apostle's words aptly correlate with David's experience. According to [10:12](#), whom did Paul address in this portion of the letter? What warning did he offer them?

What encouragement does Paul offer in [10:13](#) to those who face any temptation?

David stood stronger than any person in Israel. Yet David's confidence led to carelessness, and because he didn't watch his step, he stumbled. Whenever God reached out His hand to help David back to his feet, David slapped His hand away. The result? His face hit the ground. His example is a warning to the people of God today.



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Application: Godly People, Ungodly Desires

Though David was a man after God's own heart, he was not immune to the desires of the flesh, and even the great psalmist yielded to sin's siren song. David's example teaches several lessons valuable for any follower of Jesus Christ:

- The flesh is *powerful*.
- Daily renewing our devotion to God is *essential*.
- Overindulging ourselves is *dangerous*.
- Sin's ability to destroy our lives and the lives of those we love is *real*.

Can you think of a time when the desire of your flesh was so strong that you felt you couldn't resist? Did you collapse under the pressure, or did you run to God? How will knowing the truth that God "will show you a way out" affect you the next time you face such powerful temptation (*1 Corinthians 10:13*)?

Many struggle with lust like David, but his example applies to every kind of temptation: pride, lying, coveting, and unrighteous anger. Which sins do you tend to struggle with most? What need does this sin pretend to meet? How does God meet that need?



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What practical steps can you take this week to renew your devotion to God so that you stand strong the next time temptation assaults your heart?

If you have the Holy Spirit, you have all the power you need to say no. God has given us that simple little monosyllabic word that flows so easily. And it works every time. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In a single chapter, David fell from mighty king to wretched sinner. If the story ended there, it would truly be tragic. Thankfully, David's story goes on. In the next chapter, he comes face-to-face with his own sin, and he reveals his heart for God through genuine repentance.



A FINAL PRAYER

In the space below, ask God to deliver you from whatever temptation you may feel creeping close, and ask Him to prepare you to stand strong the next time sin knocks at your heart's door.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

