

David's Downward Spiral

The Story—part 12

November 27, 2016

DAY 1: A downward spiral toward brokenness.

1. There are times in life where everything is "cruising." When David became king of Israel, this was true. The hand of God was on his life.

2. The nation rebounded from King Saul's reign, expanded territory, and was strengthened militarily. David was a national military hero, respected and loved.

3. About twenty years into his reign, David was "on top of the world." But at the time when kings went out to battle, David stayed home. This begins a series of small, but terrible decisions.

2 Samuel 11:2 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, "Isn't this 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. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home.

4. Underline each bad decision in the preceding verses.

5. Each fateful decision was a small step in the wrong direction. Which step have you been most tempted to do? Why do you think that decision was so tempting?

6. What do you think was David's mindset along the way?

a. What happened to his call to duty, to be with his army?

b. Do you think he remembered that adultery was one of the Ten Commandments?

c. Do you think he thought about the possible consequences?

d. How do you think he rationalized his adultery?

2 Sam. 11:5 The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

7. Reality bites. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: Spiral continued: conspiracy to commit murder, then a cover-up.

1. David's response to Bathsheba announcing her pregnancy is to panic, and try to do damage "control."

2. "Plan A" is to get Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, home from the battlefield as soon as possible, have him sleep with his wife, then "no one" would think that the baby is really David's.

3. Uriah returns, but out of duty and loyalty to his fellow troops, refuses to go and sleep with his wife. Even David's attempt to get Uriah drunk the next night fails.

4. "Plan B": Uriah is sent back to his unit carrying instructions from King David to put Uriah at the head of an attack that is doomed to fail. General Joab sends a message back to David.

2 Samuel 11:23 The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate.

²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

²⁵ 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."

4. Put yourself in David's seat.

a. On one hand, Bathsheba's husband is no longer in the picture, you can marry her, and everyone will believe that the baby is yours.

b. But Uriah was one of your thirty "mighty men." And others died in a senseless attack.

5. When you put your head on your pillow at night and try to go to sleep, what thoughts and images are swirling in your mind?

6. Sometimes, the hurricane that hits us in life is of our own making.

7. What strikes you about David's attempt to "control" the situation?

8. Have you ever been in David's shoes? Has your attempt to "control" the situation made things worse? As you look back, what would you have done differently?

DAY 3: David finally "hits bottom."

1. 2 Samuel 11 ends with these words...

2 Samuel 11:26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.

²⁷After 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. When you read that last sentence, what thoughts come to mind? If you were David and heard that last sentence in real time, what would go through your mind?

3. Meanwhile, David "seems" to get off scott-free. For about one year, nothing happens. But then...

2 Samuel 12:1 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...."

4. Nathan the prophet confronts King David, but in an indirect way, through a make believe story. At the end of the story, David condemns the villain in the story, and thereby, condemns himself. The hammer finally falls, after about one year of delayed justice and punishment.

2 Samuel 12:7 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.

⁸I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of 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? 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.

5. David is exposed. His sin, done in darkness, becomes public knowledge.

2 Samuel 12:10 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 upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.

¹²You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

6. Finally, David is broken by his sin.

2 Samuel 12:13 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.

¹⁴But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

7. It took a lot of time, an act of God and a bold prophet to bring about brokenness. What struck you from today's devotional?

DAY 4: Brokenness: hitting bottom; moving up...

1. David pens one of the greatest examples of a response to conviction of his sin. Today, we'll look at the first half of his confession.

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions.

² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

³ For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me.

⁴ Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment.

⁵ Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

⁶ Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

⁷ Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

⁸ Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice.

⁹ Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

2. What does brokenness look like? Let's break it down. What is David's attitude toward:

a. His sin?

b. His guilt?

c. His problem?

d. His God?

e. His future?

3. What strikes you most from the first half of David's mea culpa?

DAY 5: The devastating aftermath

1. You may wonder if David “got away” with his sin, if his punishment was too light for the crime. There are several factors in play, that work in sync with each other:

- a. **God is merciful.** None of us get the punishment we deserve. Jesus took our punishment on the cross.
- b. **God is forgiving.** He does not deal with us according to our sin.
- c. **Sin has consequences.** There are plenty of times where the consequences of our sin impacts others, and ourselves. In David’s case, the consequences of his sin was monstrous, devastating, and humiliating. Let’s pick up with the prophet Nathan’s rebuke and exposure of David’s sin.

*2 Samuel 12:10 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** upon you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.*

¹² You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

2. Let’s highlight four of the consequences of David’s sin. Every act of sin is met with a commensurate act of consequence:

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| • David ordered the sword against Uriah. | The sword will be used within his own household. His own son would murder another son. |
| • David committed sexual sin with Bathsheba. | Sexual sin will be done against his own wives |
| • Uriah was one of David's close mighty men. | Incest and rape will be done within David’s family. |
| • David tried to sin under the cover of darkness. | His sin will be exposed in the light. |

3. In addition, one of his sons would usurp the throne and set out to kill David. David and his kingly entourage had to flee the city for their lives. Only after his son was murdered was he able to reclaim the kingship.

4. The consequences of his rebellious sin lasted the rest of his life. The family “drama” that ensued haunted David and his entire family.

5. What strikes you from today’s devotional?

6. What is the Lord saying to you?