

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
DECEMBER23 2023

the fall and rise of David

Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 11; 12.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 71.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

David's life is characterized by devotion to God. But the praise that would naturally be given to David is quieted by one disgraceful season in his life. On the surface, David's desire for Bathsheba is often used as a starting point in discussing what went wrong as David simply "gave in" to temptation. But murdering the husband of his mistress and arranging a royal cover-up signify a condition in David's heart that goes way beyond succumbing to a moment of weakness. Ellen White claims: "It was the spirit of self-confidence and self-exaltation that prepared the way for David's fall" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717). David's fall was the result of a subtle shift from recognizing God as the source of his success to believing that his royal future was well-deserved. David's misdeeds are clear and well known.

Perhaps the pressing issue in this story is not David's misdeeds, but his missed deeds. David missed the opportunity to repent and surrender his humanness to God and submit to God's power and grace. Lust, adultery, deceit, and pride all find their way into the story of David because those elements were allowed to grow in his heart going unchecked by repentance. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, warned, "Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28, NIV). Sin seems to be sinful only when it is discovered in action, but young people need to examine and discuss the source of David's down fall—self. David lost his way before the whole mess became visible to others. Students need to discover that David's conviction and sincere repentance, which occurred after the fact, is actually the way to *avoid* such a fall.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Understand the way sin, repentance, and grace work in our lives. *(Know)*
- Experience the joy of repentance and trust in God's grace. *(Feel)*
- Commit to regular repentance and submission to God. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Marriage and the Family, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, No. 23: "Marriage was divinely established in Eden and affirmed by Jesus to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman in loving companionship. For the Christian a marriage commitment is to God as well as to the spouse, and should be entered into only between a man and a woman who share a common faith. Mutual love, honor, respect, and responsibility are the fabric of this relationship, which is to reflect the love, sanctity, closeness, and permanence of the relationship between Christ and His church. . . . (Gen. 2:18-25; Exod. 20:12; Deut. 6:5-9; Prov. 22:6; Mal. 4:5, 6; Matt. 5:31, 32; 19:3-9, 12; Mark 10:11, 12; John 2:1-11; 1 Cor. 7:7, 10, 11; 2 Cor. 6:14; Eph. 5:21-33; 6:1-4.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

At what point do you think it would be the most difficult to turn around and confess? When do you think it would be easiest? Why?

In groups of two or three, share a hypothetical scenario in which someone actually waited till the most difficult time to confess and repent of something.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Desmond was 6 and fascinated by tools and trinkets, to the point of obsession. While visiting at a distant family member's house for a reunion, Desmond became fixated on a pocketknife that lay dangerously visible on the countertop. Desmond inched his way closer while family and friends ate and laughed inside the house and out on the patio. The young boy looked around the house to see if anyone was watching because he knew that his parents would not let him have or even play with a pocketknife. Desmond's grandpa watched his grandson move close, quickly snatch the knife from the counter, and put it in his pocket.

Desmond's blood was boiling with fear and excitement. He went swiftly into the living room far from where there was anyone to get a closer look at his "good" fortune. Suddenly he heard someone's footsteps coming to his end of the house, and he froze when he heard his grandpa's voice calling his name. He quickly hid the knife in an empty vase when his grandpa entered the room, startling Desmond.

The young boy's hand was still in the vase when his grandpa asked, "What are you doing with that vase, my little man?"

"Nothing," Desmond said sheepishly. Desmond could not get his hand out of the vase as it was clutched in a fist, and if he let go and dropped the knife, it would make a loud noise that would expose his deed.

Desmond tried to lie by saying his hand was stuck but retracted quickly when Grandpa pulled out a hammer to set his imprisoned appendage free. The room grew quiet, and a noisy clank hit the bottom of the vase as Desmond finally let the knife go.

How might this story reflect a similar experience you have had?

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

Desmond's story may remind you of moments in which you have tried to avoid guilt through more dishonest behavior. Our story and Desmond's story mirror a timeless drama in the Old Testament that portrays the horror of sin but magnifies the amazing grace of God.

Carefully read this story, making note of insights that may be new to you.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

While this story is one of the more familiar narratives in the Old Testament, read 2 Samuel 11:1-17 first; then examine the dramatic conclusion and answer or do the following:

- *Circle* all the key people mentioned in this story.
- What are some reasons that you think David relentlessly pursued the course he chose?
- What details of 2 Samuel 11:1-17 are new to you?
- Why do you think Nathan confronted David with a parable?
- How might David's reaction to the story have been different with another approach?
- How would you describe David's repentance?
- Do you think David sincerely repented because he was convicted of his sin or because he was caught? How do you tell the difference?
- What do you think is the key verse or sentence in this story? Why?
- Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What message(s) does it convey to us today?

Use the following as more teachable passages that relate to today's story:

Acts 13:22; Isaiah 1:18; Psalm 103:12; Hebrews 8:12.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

Consider a few insights to common questions on this story:

1. Why was David back home when his men were fighting a battle?

   This story takes place in the springtime, and his soldiers were out fighting the Ammonites while David was lounging around Jerusalem playing king. This fact is a window into the mind of David. Israel wanted a king—a leader. Remember the hopeful claim a king would bring: "Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:20, NIV). David was no longer the mighty king leading his people to victory but the self-absorbed king who had people do his bidding.
2. Why didn't Bathsheba resist? Wasn't she as guilty as David?

   Clearly, Bathsheba was obligated to do whatever the king asked. Perhaps she was flattered by David's attraction. Either way, the law of God states in Leviticus 20:10 (NIV) that both David and Bathsheba were guilty: "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death." If the husband, Uriah, had discovered the true situation, he would have been allowed under Levitical law to put them both to death.
3. What happened to David's keen sense of right and wrong?

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

Teaching by Storytelling

Perhaps the oldest teaching strategy is storytelling. The reason stories are so effective is that they immediately arrest and engage the students. Most of our lives can be described in a series of stories. For example, if you were to tell three stories from your life that were pivotal moments in shaping who you are today, what stories would you tell? When you use stories to teach, remember that the story is often the lesson, and if told or read well, it needs very little explanation. You might read a story and ask, "What do you think this story teaches?" or "Why do you think I chose this story?"

This story portrays David losing all his moral reference points. In a way, it was as though he thought he was above the law. This is not hard to understand when you look at the prevailing customs of Eastern rulers. The crimes that merited punishment and judgment were not applicable to the king, so leaders did not feel an obligation to restraint or caution. David became comfortable with the idea that he could suspend or live above the laws of God and of the people.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* Patriarchs and Prophets. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that spoke most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

4. Why did David tell Uriah to "go down to your house and wash your feet"?

   Since Bathsheba had become pregnant as a result of her affair with David, the young king thought he could cover his sin if Uriah went and had sex with Bathsheba. The phrase "wash your feet" was a euphemism for engaging in sex. David simply wanted to find another way to obscure his sin without admitting it. But Uriah was a dedicated soldier and leader and would not go home during a time of war and be entertained with distractions. So Uriah, instead of sleeping with his wife, stayed the night on the palace grounds.

5. Why did Nathan use a parable?

   Prophets have always used dramatic methods to get the point across. Whether it was fire from heaven on Mount Carmel or walking through town with a yoke around the prophet's neck, the purpose of such an approach was to arrest attention and to emphasize the point. Also, David had diluted his own thinking so much that he could rationalize anything. Had Nathan confronted David directly, he most likely would have become defensive and not admitted to his wrong. However, when David made a final judgment of the man in the story, he could no longer hide.

David's repentance is key to this story. If you want to read the song he wrote as a testimony to this event, you can read it in Psalm 51.

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Invite the students to create and write a brief parable that would have a similar impact as Nathan's story had on King David. Students should work in groups of two to four. Invite the students to read the parables and have the other students ascertain what the central message of the story is.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

Ellen White comments about how quiet the Scriptures are in praising people for the virtues and skills that they demonstrate throughout the course of their life. In *Patriarchs and Prophets* she asserts: "All the good qualities that men possess are the gift of God; their good deeds are performed by the grace of God through Christ" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 717). Whether David had vanquished a lion, a bear, or a giant, a passionate song of praise to God was never far from his mind or his lips. But as time wore on and success framed David's life, the young king failed to recognize God's plan at work in his life.

His affair with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband mark David's glorious rise to greatness with a dark stain of shame. But what makes this story so powerful is how we see the deep and earnest repentance David makes as well as the cleansing power of God's forgiveness. Do you sense that God is urging you to repent and turn from a course of behavior or a pattern of thinking that is destructive? You can try to ignore it or cover it up, but David would plead with you to be honest with yourself and with God and experience the liberty of God's promised forgiveness.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 71.

CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 23 2023

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: 2 Samuel 11; 12.
Commentary: *Patriarchs and Prophets* (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 71.

the fall and rise of David



Photo by Alden Ho

keytext

"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.' "

(2 Samuel 12:13, NIV)

flashlight

"Whoever under the reproof of God will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him. Whoever will in faith accept God's promises, will find pardon. The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 726).

what do you think?

It is a well-known truth that dishonesty has a way of building and compounding the more one tries to maintain the lie. At what point on the continuum do you think it is most difficult for someone to confess and repent of a lie?

1 2 3 4

1—When you first realize that lying is an option.
2—After you have made the first step into dishonesty.
3—After you have had to cover the first lie with another.
4—When all the evidence is making it clear that you have been dishonest but it is too big to own.

Why? _____
_____
_____
_____
_____

did you know?

In 2 Samuel 12:5 (NIV) the Bible says, "David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die!' " When David heard Nathan tell the story of how the rich man was unwilling to take a sheep from the many he had and took the one precious lamb from a poor man, he was incensed. As a matter of fact, the phrase "David burned with anger" refers to breathing rapidly in passion, especially through the nose. Perhaps you have noticed that when some people get really angry, their nostrils flare out? Perhaps, David's nostrils were flaring with a demand for justice!

INTO THE STORY

"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. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but 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. It was like a daughter to him.

" 'Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him.'

"David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.'

"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. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why 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. 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."

" 'This is what the LORD says: "Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel." ' "

"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.' "

(2 Samuel 12:1-13, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

While this story is one of the more familiar narratives in the Old Testament, read 2 Samuel 11:1-17 first, then examine the dramatic conclusion and answer the following questions.

Circle all the key people mentioned in this story.

What are some reasons you think David relentlessly pursued the course he chose?

_____
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Are any details of this story new to you?

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Why do you think Nathan confronted David with a parable?

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How might David's reaction to the story have been different if Nathan had used a different approach?

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How would you describe David's repentance? Do you think David sincerely repented because he was convicted of his sin or because he was caught? How do you tell the difference?

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What do you think is the key verse or sentence in this story? Why?

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Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What message(s) does it convey to us today?

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punch lines

"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me" **(Psalm 51:10-12, NIV).**

"Then I let it all out; I said, 'I'll come clean about my failures to GOD.' Suddenly the pressure was gone—my guilt dissolved, my sin disappeared" **(Psalm 32:5, *The Message*).**

"For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes, and he is the one to whom we are accountable" **(Hebrews 4:12, 13, NLT).**

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" **(Isaiah 55:7, KJV).**

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" **(Matthew 5:27, 28, NIV).**

further insight

"The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. . . . David saw the enormity of his transgression. . . . It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart."—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 24, 25.

Sabbath

Read Hebrews 4:14.

Read and respond to the exercise in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Some may acknowledge the wrong they do and immediately confess and ask forgiveness. Others give in to the notion that they can escape the shame of their wrongdoing by another lie. How does being aware that God knows everything impact whether you expand on a lie or confess it?

Sunday

Read 1 John 1:9.

As you read the *Into the Story* passage for this week answer the questions in the *Out of the Story* section. What is the message you think God is trying to tell you? What part of David's experience do you relate to the most? From David's fall with Bathsheba to the point where he confessed and found forgiveness with God, what part of the story speaks to you today?

Monday

Read 2 Samuel 12:13.

The *Key Text* this week conveys the full and complete repentance of David. With all the people that David hurt in this whole experience, why do you think he begins with confessing his sin against the Lord?

When we reflect on the hurtful things we do to others we often fail to recognize what it does to God. Consider for a moment how your thoughts or behavior affect God.

Tuesday

Read Colossians 3:13.

Take a moment to read and reflect on the amazing promise written by Ellen White in this week's *Flashlight* quote. What part of this promise would you like to claim today?

Write a prayer to God embracing this promise to you. Think about someone you know who responds to God's voice promptly when they sense they have done something wrong. For some the words "I was wrong" or "I was being selfish" or "I'm sorry" ring with humility and sincerity. How has such a person shaped your life? How do you see their example helping you in the future?

Wednesday

Read the *Punch Lines* for this week's lesson and highlight the key phrases that speak to you in each verse. Reflect for a moment why you think those phrases are particularly relevant to you today and write out your own paraphrase of the one verse you want to share with someone else this week. Pray that God will cause you to encounter someone who will need a promise found in these passages and be looking for an opportunity to share how the story of David's fall and repentance has deepened your walk with God.

Thursday

Read Psalm 32:5.

In what area of your life do you struggle with temptation—and not just the temptation itself but the hiding of the fact when you give in to it? Maybe this week you could share your struggle with a godly friend who can pray for you and hold you accountable for making the right choice in your next hour of temptation. There's a freedom that comes from sharing your struggle with a safe friend. They may strengthen you in ways that might be surprising. As you do this, write down what you think was most helpful: (1) the liberating feeling of honest confession; (2) the support you felt because your friend was praying for you; or (3) the knowledge that your friend was going to hold you accountable for a good choice.

Friday

Read Psalm 51:10-12.

Reflect on David's struggle story and ruminate on how his struggle mirrors aspects of your own life. How have you reacted toward God after making a regrettable choice? Do you tend to first try to find a way of escape? When in your life have you simply hoped the problem would just go away? Think of the rich joy and grace that awaits anyone who will face God with honest and humble repentance, trusting in God's forgiving nature.

this week's reading*

Patriarchs and Prophets (or *Beginning of the End*), chapter 71.

**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.