

# 2 Samuel 12 Commentary

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Chart from recommended resource [Jensen's Survey of the OT](#) - used by permission  
[2 Samuel Chart](#) from Charles Swindoll

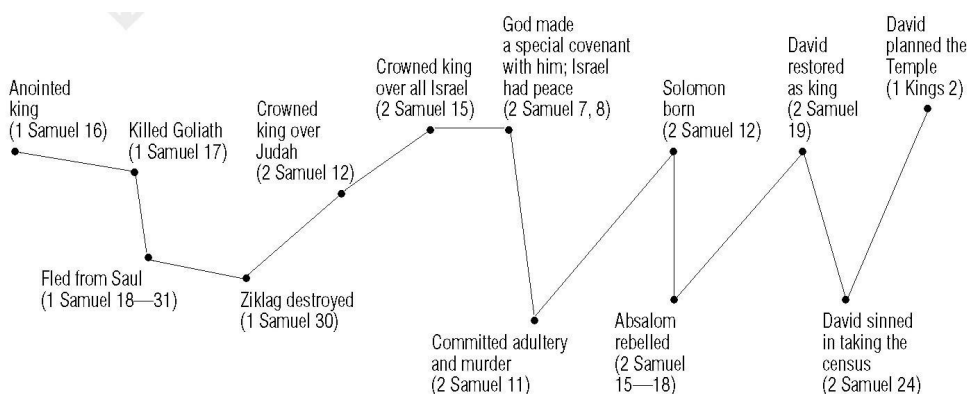
TIMELINE OF THE BOOKS OF SAMUEL, KINGS & CHRONICLES									
1107	1011				971	931	853	722	586
1 Samuel	2 Samuel				1 Kings	1 Kings	2 Kings		
31	1-4	5-10	11-20	21-24	1-11	12-22	1-17	18-25	
1Chr 10		1 Chr 11-19		1 Chr 20-29	2 Chronicles 1-9	2 Chronicles 10-20	2 Chronicles 21-36		

**Legend:** B.C. dates at top of timeline are approximate. Note that 931BC marks the division of the Kingdom into Southern Tribes (Judah and Benjamin) and Ten Northern Tribes. To avoid confusion be aware that **after the division** of the Kingdom in 931BC, the Southern Kingdom is most often designated in Scripture as "**Judah**" and the Northern Kingdom as "**Israel**." Finally, note that 1 Chronicles 1-9 is not identified on the timeline because these chapters are records of genealogy.



Map of David's Kingdom-ESV Global

Map of Cities in 2 Samuel



Source: [Life Application Study Bible \(borrow\)](#)

**2 Samuel 12:1 Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him and said, "There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.**

- **Then the LORD sent Nathan:** 2Sa 7:1-5 24:11-13 1Ki 13:1 18:1 2Ki 1:3
- **to David:** 2Sa 11:10-17,25 14:14 Isa 57:17,18
- **he came:** Ps 51:1
- 2Sa 14:5-11 Jdg 9:7-15 1Ki 20:35-41 Isa 5:1-7 Mt 21:33-45 Lu 15:11-32 16:19-31
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Psalms 51:1+ For the choir director. A Psalm of David, **when Nathan the prophet came to him**, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. Be gracious to me, O God, according to Your lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Your compassion blot out my transgressions.

Psalms 50:21 "These things you have done and I kept silence; You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.

Proverbs 20:17 Bread obtained by falsehood is sweet to a man, But afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.

Lamentations 3:7 He has walled me in so that I cannot go out; He has made my chain heavy.



## YAHWEH'S GIFT TO HIS SERVANT DAVID

**Sidlow Baxter** ([Explore the Book](#)) gives us an interesting perspective on the life of David in Second Samuel - This second book of Samuel, as Matthew Henry is quick to observe, falls into two main parts. Alas, there is no mistaking it. David's great sin, recorded in chapter 11, marks the sad divide, right in the middle of the book and right in the middle of David's forty years' reign, for it falls about the end of the first twenty years. Up to this point all goes triumphantly for David; but after this there are ugly knots and tangles, grievous blows and tragic trials. In the first part, we sing David's triumphs. In the second part, we mourn David's troubles. The central spiritual message of this book, therefore, stands out clearly, namely: **TRIUMPHS TURNED TO TROUBLES THROUGH SIN**. Or we may put it that in the two parts of the book, respectively, we have triumph through faith, and trouble through sin. **Second Samuel emphasises that all sin, whether in king or commoner, whether in high or low, whether in the godly or the godless, certainly brings its bitter fruitage. Sin is the destroyer of prosperity. However full and fair the tree may look, if rot is eating its way within the trunk, the tree will surely break and fall, or else become a leafless skeleton. There is no sinning without suffering.** Especially is all this true about the **lust of the eye, and sexual sin**, which was the point of David's breakdown. **We should flee it as we would a viper.** See, too, how David's sin led on to the even greater sin of murder. **More often than not, one sin leads on to another of a worse kind.** Let us, like Job, "make a covenant with our eyes" not to look on that which is seductive, lest, weaker than we suppose ourselves to be, we should give way to sin, and thereby heap sharp thorns into our bosom. Mark it well that the Second Book of Samuel is cut exactly in half, with twelve chapters in each part. Chapters 11 and 12, which record David's sin and repentance, must be included in the first part, as rightly belonging there. It was through the very prosperity which had come to him by his widespread conquests that David had become exposed to the temptation of unguardedness and indulgence. At the end of that twelfth chapter there is the account of the conquest of Rabbah, the royal city of Ammon. That marks the end of any such recorded triumphs in this book.

**Then** - Prior to chapter 11 David had the good hand of the Lord on his life in manifold ways, but now he experience the "heavy" hand of the Lord on his life, the heaviness reflecting his unconfessed sin. **THEN** is a time sensitive word marks progression in the story of David, but it does tell us how long this was from the events of chapter 11. Sometimes the chapter breaks cause us to lose a sense of the "flow" of the story. In this case, the first verse of 2 Samuel 12 should be read should be read and interpreted in the context of the last verse of 2 Samuel 11...But the thing that David had done was evil in the sight of the LORD.

**Then** the LORD sent Nathan to David. (2Sa 11:27b+, 2Sa 12:1a) It would be at least 9 months later (a number of writers think it was more like 12 months) because Bathsheba gives birth in this chapter. We should praise God for the **"THEN"** for if the story had ended in chapter 11, it would have left a horrible taste in our mouth. By law David and Bathsheba both should have been killed in chapter 11, but where sin abounds, God's amazing grace abounds all the more and chapter 12 is filled with His glorious grace and infinite forgiveness. Praise God!

The wages of sin -  
Payday Someday

David is still concealing his sins, several writers say for almost 12 months. **Wiersbe** notes "He became weak and sick physically; he lost his joy; he lost his witness; he lost his power. God gave David plenty of time to make things right, but he persisted in hiding his sins." (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Young** points out, "God has a way of not only saying the right word to us, but saying it at the right time. I do not like God's timetable many times. I implore, 'Lord, what more do we have to do? Do it now. God, Why do you wait about this thing? Do it now.' God knows the right time to touch a life."

**Ackroyd** points out, "The appearance of Nathan serves a two-fold purpose. Like so many of the other great prophets of Israel, he is here the mediator of the divine word of judgment. The closest paralleled ism again, in the story of Ahab and Naboth (1 Kings 21) in which Elijah appears to pass a similar judgment on the royal house."

**J. Vernon McGee** points out, "God's man may get into sin, but he will not stay in sin. That is the difference which distinguishes

God's man from the man of the world. The sheep may fall into the mud, but he will struggle out of it as soon as he can. A pig will stay in the mud and enjoy it."

**Swindoll** - We need to remember that, like many sins, David's were carried out secretly—at least for a while. One of the things that accompanies the promotion of individuals to higher positions of authority is an increase in privacy. This closed-door policy maintained by those in high office brings great temptation for things to be done in secret. Unaccountability is common among those in command. So it was with David. Unable to handle the privacy of the office over the long haul, David finally fell and rapidly went about covering his tragic tracks. It was done secretly. The second thing I would say about the acts of David is that they were done willfully. This was not a momentary mistake. He didn't stumble into the sin. He willfully and knowingly walked into the sin with Bathsheba, killed her husband (at least indirectly), and deliberately lived a lie during the months that followed. (Borrow [David Man of Passion and Destiny](#))

**ESV Study Bible** - The "parable" (2Sa 12:1-4) is similar to the plea of the wise woman of Tekoa in 2Sa 14:1-33 and that of the prophet in 1Ki 20:35-43. In all these cases, it is pointed out to the king that his own actions do not match his judgments. (Borrow [ESV Study Bible](#))

**David Guzik** offers a warning related to the chapter - David's sin displeased the LORD but David didn't listen to the conviction of the Holy Spirit or to his conscience. Now God sent someone else to speak to David. God mercifully kept speaking to David even when David didn't listen. Yet no one should presume God will speak *forever* to the unrepentant sinner. God said in Genesis 6:3, "*My Spirit shall not strive with man forever.*" When we hear or sense the conviction of the Holy Spirit, we must respond to it immediately, because it might not always be there.

**The LORD sent Nathan to David** - Note that Jehovah was mentioned in 2 Samuel 11 only in the very last verse of that chapter (2Sa 11:27), but here in 2 Samuel 12 God actively intervenes in David's dark digression into sin. Nathan did not volunteer for this mission, but was sent by Yahweh! Notice he was not sent until almost 12 months after David's sins, but he was sent. James says "Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow." (Jas 1:17+) The prophet Nathan was God's good gift of grace to His sin soaked servant David, for there is no variation in our God and He must judge David's sin which is why for months while David "kept silent about (his) sin, (his) body wasted away through (his) groaning all day long, for day and night Thy hand was heavy upon (him), his vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah." (Ps 32:3-4+). What a contrast is this visit by Nathan with the prior visit in 2 Samuel 7 when he prophesied the Davidic Covenant, one of the greatest prophecies in the Old Testament.

**Sent** (shalach) is a Hebrew verb used over 800 times in the OT, but in this context means to dispatch a man on a mission with a specific purpose. Notice that it was not David who summoned the prophet but God Who took the initiative. David was in sin and hardly in a position to desire or to seek a rebuking word from a prophet. The truth is that sinners never seek God, **until** He seeks us. The fact that God loved David enough to send Nathan should encourage all of us. We have all committed willful sins (not referring to sins of ignorance) and been ensnared by the "cords of deception" of those sins. (cp Pr 5:22+, Pr 1:31+, Isa 3:11+, Jn 8:34; Ro 6:16+, 2Pe 2:19+). But we can be sure that God is the same today as He was in David's life (Mal 3:6+, Heb 13:8+) and He will not leave us in our sin but will send a "Nathan" to call us to confession and repentance and to restoration of our spiritual senses that had been dulled by the lies of the sin and Satan (2Ti 2:24, 25, 26+) that so easily entangled us (Heb 12:1+). God will not allow us to remain in our sin!

## WHO IS YOUR NATHAN?

Nathan - His task was far from enviable one in having to confront and rebuke the guilty king alone, face to face. Few things are more difficult and trying than to be called upon to reprove an erring brother, but it is every believer's mandate (see Gal 6:1, 2, Pr 25:11, 12). Add to this case the fact that it was the King who had absolute authority of life and death who needed reproof for his sins of adultery and murder (cp Pr 16:14). We do well to not underestimate the courage and boldness of the prophet Nathan. J Vernon McGee said that "In my judgment he is the bravest man in the Bible. I know of no one who can be compared to him." Nathan clearly was a loyal friend to David, one who was willing to speak the truth in love...

Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.  
(Pr 27:6)

We need to recall that Nathan is the same prophet God sent to promise David a descendant (a prophecy fulfilled in the Messiah) and a kingdom that would endure forever (prophecy of the Messiah's coming kingdom - 2Sa 7:12-16+). David surely remembered this great blessing Nathan had prophesied regarding the Davidic lineage and this would have given the prophet even greater

credibility with David.

**THOUGHT** - If we are constantly criticizing others or expressing a judgmental spirit, we are hardly opening a door of opportunity to speak the truth to them in the future should that need arise. Let's practice the "Nathan approach" and we are much more likely to be received by those we feel led to reproof for their sinful behavior!

**Matthew Henry** says "One would think it should have followed that the Lord sent enemies to invade him, terrors to take hold on, and the messengers of death to arrest him. No, He sent a prophet to him.

David thought he had disproved the old adage that "sin doesn't pay" but he forgot Moses' warning to "be sure that your sin will find you out"! (Nu 32:23+).

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, do you believe Moses? If not you are in for a "shocking surprise"! May Moses' sure word of prophecy serve as a significant stimulant to each of us to continually choose to pursue holiness and to abstain from every form of evil!

Pink says **Nathan** as "the piercing arrow from God's quiver."

As an aside Nathan was not the only prophet to be sent by God to David to proclaim the consequences of sin. In 2 Samuel 24:10-13 David numbered Israel and Judah committing a sin against God and God sent Gad!

**Maclaren** points out, "To many sin-tortured soul since then, the two psalm, Psalm 51 and 32, all blotted with tears in which he has sobbed his penitence, have been as footsteps in a great and terrible wilderness. There are evidently ten years between the Bathsheba incident and Absalom's revolt. It is not probably that many psalms were made in these dreary days but the 41st and 55th are with reasonably probability referred to this period by many commentators."

God's wheels grind slowly, but they grind exceedingly fine.

**NET NOTE** - A few medieval Hebrew MSS, the LXX, and the Syriac Peshitta add "the prophet." The words are included in a few modern English version (e.g., TEV, CEV, NLT).

We know that between the end of chapter 11 and the beginning of chapter 12 there was a period of months, most authorities putting it somewhere between 6 and 12 months (based primarily on the information that the child was not born - 2Sa 12:14). The main point is not the specific time but the fact that time did elapse in which there was no apparent repercussions for David's sin. And so between 2Sa 11:27 and 2Sa 12:1 there is a gap of around twelve months, during which there is no mention of David's sin by himself, by God or by anyone else. During this time of cover-up David's conscience was dulled by his disobedience. God's Words were most likely not sweet to his taste. His joy is gone. His song is gone (no record of any psalms penned). His harp is out of tune. His soul is dry (Psalm 32:3, 4).

**THOUGHT**- Beloved, if any of the preceding "symptoms" describe you, then perhaps you have an unconfessed sin or sins you are futilely seeking to cover over. If so, this proverb is written especially for you...

He who conceals (covers over so as to keep secret) his transgressions will not prosper (Be profitable, succeed - The one who is concealing his sin shall not experience victory from the Lord, experience spiritual prosperity, thrive spiritually, accomplish satisfactorily what God intended.), But he who confesses and forsakes (abandons, departs from, leaves behind) them will find compassion. (Pr 28:13+)

No action, whether foul or fair,  
Is ever done, but it leaves somewhere  
A record written by fingers ghostly,  
As a blessing or a curse, and mostly  
In the greater weakness or greater strength  
Of the acts which follow it.  
-Longfellow

**Illustration:** In a conservative southern church, the pastor's wife found pornography on her husband's computer. After confronting him with the evidence, he admitted downloading the images off the internet, even using the computer in his study which was located in the church itself. Somehow he had separated his ongoing sexual sin from his responsibilities and duties as a man of God.

**Illustration:** In an August 2000 poll conducted by Christianity Today on internet pornography, 33% of active ministers admitted having visited porn sites. Over half of those ministers said that they had visited those sites more than once. A total of 18 percent of clergy said they visit sexually explicit Web sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week. This poll includes many liberal and 'mainstream' ministers, but it

would be very naive to think that porn was not a problem for some bible-believing ministers.

**Illustration:** In another Bible-believing church not far from my home, a Christian businessman sought investment capital from other Christian individuals and businesses. He promised to invest the money in new Christian enterprises and promised a high rate of return on their money. Alas, however, there was no new enterprise, and there was no return on their money. He had embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars from his fellow Christians. He was charged by civil authorities and jailed. The unbelieving world had another excuse to demean biblical Christianity.

**Illustration:** A nice Christian family joined the church by letter from another city. Brad and Susan had four wonderful little boys ranging in age from two years up to ten years. Susan had a beautiful voice and sang specials in the church. Brad was a bible teacher and had taught Sunday school at their former church. But Brad and Susan had a terrible secret. He had a terrible temper that caused him to abuse Susan both physically and emotionally. No one in the church had any idea until she took her boys and left to return to her hometown. Brad followed her back and tried to reconcile with her. But his secret was now public and there was no turning back.

**Spurgeon** "You say that you can handle your secret sins, that there is no one hurt by them. But you may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You cannot regulate his jaws: neither can you regulate sin. Once done, you cannot tell when you will be destroyed. You may put your head in and out a great many times; but one of these days it will be a costly venture. "

**THOUGHT** - Christian friend, go not continue to hide your sin. Don't harbor that sin, buried deep in the tent floor of your heart (cp Achan's attempt Joshua 7:21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26+). The danger is that like [Achan](#), your hidden sin will affect your family, your home, your spiritual inheritance, and your purpose in life. There is no sin worthy of separating us from our Father. It is not necessary to confess your secret sins to everyone, for it is none of their business. Do business with God. Repent and let God restore you to fellowship. Don't sweep sin under the rug, but place it under the blood!

The sins that would entangle us  
Must never be ignored;  
For if we try to cover them  
They'll pierce us like a sword.

**And he came to him and said** - Nathan obeys the Spirit's prompting and comes to David and is faithful to speak as God's prophet, speaking boldly and without fear of reprisal from the most powerful man in the country (and probably in the world at that time), who could have easily called for his execution. Nathan was fearless and clearly Spirit empowered! Instead David even named a son after Nathan (1Ch 3:5; Lk 3:31).

"Though God may suffer His people to fall into sin,  
He will not suffer His people to lie still in it."  
-- Matthew Henry

**There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor** - Nathan begins speaking the words God has given him in the form of a parable that is easy to understand and will grab David's attention. The story draws David in completely and probably resulted in David letting down his defenses. David was in charge of dispensing justice and God was especially protective of the poor (Ex 23:6; Lev 19:15; Pr. 31:9; Is 3:14; et al).. So he easily gives himself over fully to Nathan's story, undoubtedly thinking that this will be a situation that calls for kingly intervention! Yes, he was correct, the the intervention would be in the life of the king himself!

**TSK Note** - There is nothing in this parable which requires illustration. Its bent is evident; and it was wisely constructed, by not having too near a resemblance, to make David unwittingly pass sentence on himself. The parable was in David's hand what his own letter was in the hands of the brave Uriah. Nathan at length closed in with him in the application of it. In beginning with a parable he shewed his prudence, and great need there is of prudence in giving reproof; but now he speaks as an ambassador from God. He reminds David of the great things God had designed and done for him, and then charges him with a high contempt of the Divine authority, and threatens an entail of judgments upon his family for this sin. Those who despise the word and law of God, despise God himself, and will assuredly suffer for such contempt.

Psalms [32](#) helps us set the context for Nathan's visit to David...

- 1 A Psalm of David. A >Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered!
- 2 How blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit!
- 3 When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. Selah.

**Swindoll** - In his splendid book, [Guilt and Grace \(page 96 - "false guilt"\)](#), Paul Tournier, the brilliant Swiss writer, physician, and psychiatrist, talks about two kinds of guilt: true guilt and false guilt. **False guilt**, says Tournier, is brought on by the judgments and suggestions of man. **True guilt** comes from willfully and knowingly disobeying God. Obviously, David is enduring **true guilt**. Someone has described the way people handle guilt by using the picture of the warning light on the dashboard of the car. As you're driving along, the red light flashes on, saying, "Take notice! There's trouble under the hood." At that moment, you have a choice. You can stop, get out of the car, open the hood, and see what's wrong. Or, you can carry a small hammer in the glove compartment, and when the red light turns on, you can knock it out with the hammer and keep on driving. No one will know the difference for a while—until you burn up the car. And then you look back and realize what a stupid decision it was to break out the light on the dashboard. Some Christians carry imaginary hammers in the glove compartment of their conscience. When the light of true guilt begins to flash, they bring out the hammer and knock out the light. They call it false guilt or they say it's just what everybody else is doing and on and on and on. But all the while their internal motor is burning up. Then, somewhere down the road, they look back and realize what a foolish decision it was not to stop, look deeper, and come to terms with what was wrong. David says, "When I lived in the true guilt of my soul, I could not stay silent down inside. As a matter of fact, I groaned all day." Now you know what that means. "There was this awful oppression, this misery of conscience. Day and night I felt the heavy hand of God on me. It was like running a fever. I couldn't lift my head. I couldn't handle the pressures of my work. I couldn't cope. I was sick. My body wasted away." (Borrow [David Man of Passion and Destiny](#) - page 92)

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**R G Lee** in his famous sermon [Payday Someday](#) spoke of the consequences of sin..."Payday Someday!" God said it -- and it was done! Yes, and from this we learn the power and certainty of God in carrying out His own retributive providence, that men might know that His justice slumbereth not. Even though the mill of God grinds slowly, it grinds to powder. Yes, the judgments of God often have leaden heels and travel slowly. But they always have iron hands and crush completely.

And yet the **retributive** side of God is more than balanced by the **restorative** side of our Great and Merciful Lord. As verification of this hope filled truth, we do well to remember that the events of this chapter inspired **David** to pen one of his most famous songs, **Psalms 51**...

(For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him,) (after he had gone in to Bathsheba.) Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness; According to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. (Psalm 51:1+)

**THOUGHT** - Beloved of the Lord, do you feel like you have sinned so greatly against God that He could never use you in His kingdom work? This beautiful psalm in itself provides encouraging proof that God can restore and revive and use a repentant sinner. He will not despise your broken spirit, your broken and contrite heart (Ps 51:17+), but will renew a steadfast spirit in you, will not cast you away from His presence, will restore the joy of your salvation and will sustain you with a steadfast spirit, (Ps 51:10, Ps 51:11, Ps 51:12). Hallelujah. Thank you Jesus! Amen One other indication of God's willingness to use a repentant sinner is the fact that David and Bathsheba's union was blessed with the birth of the next king of Israel (Solomon) and Israel's victory over Rabbah which had been under siege for the period of David's cover-up! David's confession allowed God to bless him so that he was able to win the victory that could not be won while he had unconfessed sin! This begs the question dear reader - Is there some spiritual battle you are involved in which you are not seeing victory? If so you might want to pray Ps 139:23-24<sup>+</sup>, asking God's Spirit to reveal any sin you have been covering up. This might be the road to victory in the spiritual battle in which you are engaged!

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#### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - DAVID'S FALL AND FORGIVENESS 2 Samuel 12:1-14**

"The spark, self-kindled from within,  
Which, blown upon, will blind thee with its glare,  
Or smothered, stifle thee with noisome air."  
—COLERIDGE.

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10-12). Backsliding never begins with an overt act of guilt, but in the secret thought of the heart. "Thou hast left thy first love, therefore thou art fallen" (Rev. 2:4-6). Christians may fall out of fellowship with God, although they may not fall out of their relationship as children, any more than the prodigal in Luke 15 could fall from his sonship. There was a vast difference in results between the fall of Saul and that of David, or between the denial of Peter and that of Judas.

**I. The Nature of it.** David was guilty of adultery and murder (chap. 11). The killing of Uriah was a subtle device to cover the shame of his sin with Bathsheba. Oh, into what depths a child of God may fall in one unguarded moment! Here note the faithfulness of the Bible in exposing the faults and failings of its heroes. David is not the only holy man that has been dragged into the mire of sin through the influence of a look (chap. 11:2). Eve saw before she took the forbidden fruit. Lot's backsliding began when he "looked toward Sodom," and a look was the ruin of his wife. The first step that led to the destruction of the old world was taken when the "Sons of God looked on the daughters of men" (Gen. 6). The words of Christ are very searching in this connection (see Matt. 5:28). As we stand in the glare of this searchlight from Heaven, who will be the first to cast a stone at David?

**II. The Fruit of it.** "By this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; the child also shall surely die" (v. 14). The marrying of Bathsheba before the child was born did not cover the guilt of his sin in the sight of God (chap. 11:27). How sad when the behaviour of a professed servant of God fills the mouths of His enemies with arguments against Him and His cause! The misdeeds of Christians gives the enemy occasion to say things that blaspheme His Holy Name. Has He not said that "the heathen shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes" (Ezek. 36:23; see also Rom. 2:24).

**III. The Conviction of it.** "Thou art the man" (v. 7). This arrow was not shot at random. Those who are living in sin are not to be convicted with a mere hint, they have to be "pierced in the heart" (Acts 2:37). As Christ was pierced for our sins, so must we be pierced with conviction. David's secret sin was naked before God. Like the sin of Cain and Achan, no human device could cover it. The message sent by Nathan was singularly apt, as God's messages always are; and like Latimer and Knox, he feared not the royal wrath. When a man has a message from God his manner will be bold and his speech unequivocal. Was it not thus with Jesus Christ?

**IV. The Confession of it.** "David said, I have sinned against the Lord" (v. 13). He makes no excuse, he mentions no extenuating circumstances, he blames no one for betraying his secret to the prophet. He is too deeply wounded to offer any resistance. He does not say, I have sinned against Uriah, but I have sinned against the Lord. When a man has discovered that he has "sinned against Heaven" (Luke 15:18), he will cease justifying himself (Psa. 51:4). When the wife of John Brown, the martyr; asked the murderer Claverhouse how he would answer for this day's work, he sneeringly replied, "As for man, I will answer to him; as for God, I will take Him into my own hands." A dead conscience makes a man as arrogant as Satan himself. Job said, "Because I am vile, what shall I answer Thee?" (chap. 40:4). "God be merciful to me a sinner" is the incense that rises from the live coals of a burning conviction (Luke 18:13).

**V. The Forgiveness of it.** "Nathan said, The Lord hath put away thy sin" (v. 13). It is still true that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us" (1 John 1:9). How sweetly David sings of this abounding mercy of God in the thirty-second Psalm. The prophet Micah exults in the same joyful note. "Who is a God like unto Thee, that pardoneth iniquity" (Micah 7:18).

1. IT WAS IMMEDIATE. As soon as confession was made, so soon was his pardon declared. Behold in this the readiness of God to bless, as soon as the heart of man is in a right state to receive it.
2. IT WAS COMPLETE. "The Lord hath put away thy sin." Who shall ever find what God hath put away? God never upbraids, where there is honest confession, but by the power of His omnipotent grace, He sweeps the hell-born thing for ever from before His face. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." (John 1:29).
3. IT WAS ACCOMPANIED WITH PROMISE. "Thou shalt not die." The forgiveness of God is associated with the promise of life (Acts 13:38, 39; Eph. 1:6, 7; John 5:24). He forgives, then He assures the forgiven one with His Word. Although we should never hear a voice, as it were from Heaven, saying to us as it said to John Bunyan, "Will you have your sins and go to Hell, or forsake them and go to Heaven." Yet are we not justified until we confess our sins and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

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**Howard Vos** points out, "The recounting of the sins of saints of old and David in this case had as its purpose the provision of numerous lessons for believers of subsequent ages: (Borrow [1, 2 Samuel : Bible study commentary](#))

1. David apparently thought he could live like other kings in his disregard for the law of God, but he could not; just so other believers are not above God's law and can expect to be judged for the infractions of it.
2. David found that it was foolish to try to cover up sin. By trying to do so, he just got deeper into trouble.
3. Sin not only separates a person from God, but it also besmirches his reputation and that of God and produces evil effects on other persons, organizations and institutions. Forgiveness restores the individual's fellowship with God, but the effects of sin still remain. Such a fact should offer a deterrent to the rash acts of believers.

4. David's capitulation to temptation raises the questions of how to avoid such a catastrophe. Two suggestions are especially important (1) Sometimes by an act of the will one deliberately had to flee a variety of compromising situations. (2) One reason why David sinned, the same reason why some modern believers sin, is because of too many idle moments

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**Phil Newton** asked What had changed with David?

1. David had not acknowledged the seriousness of sin

Here was a man whose conscience was sensitive to snipping off the corner of Saul's robe and getting water at the risk of his men's lives at Bethlehem.

2. David was dulled to his own spiritual condition

His sin had seared his conscience. Rough calluses developed over his heart. He was deceiving himself.

3. David seemingly thought that lack of discovery meant that no harm would be done

4. David took for granted the tender fellowship and joy he had known before the Lord

5. David ignored the reality that we do not sin in isolation; others are affected

6. David played loosely with the honor and glory of God (2Sa 12:14)

Sometimes a story can harass our thoughts and emotions and imaginations. [2 Samuel 12 You Are the Man!](#)

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#### QUESTION - [Who was Nathan in the Bible?](#)

**ANSWER** - Nathan was a prophet in the Bible who lived during the reign of [King David](#) in Israel. God spoke to David through Nathan on several occasions. Nathan was a member of David's royal court and one of his closest advisers. Nathan apparently also knew Bathsheba well enough to speak to her about [Adonijah's](#) attempt to usurp David's throne from her son, Solomon (1 Kings 1:11) and to enlist her help in bringing the matter to the king. There are three or four stories in the Bible featuring Nathan that occurred during some of the darkest and most emotional times in David's life.

The first mention of Nathan establishes his relationship with David as a trusted adviser. David decides to build God a house, because the king is living in a beautiful cedar palace and thinks it wrong that the Ark of the Covenant should be housed in a lowly tent (the tabernacle). David tells Nathan about his plans to build a house for God, and Nathan says he should go ahead and do it because the Lord is with him (2 Samuel 7:2–3). Then God visits Nathan in a vision and tells him to return to David and inform him that God doesn't need the king to build him a house; rather, God would establish David's dynasty, through his son, forever. His son Solomon would be the one to build God's house ([2 Samuel 7:4–17](#)). Nathan relays this important message to the king, and David utters a grateful and beautiful prayer to God for His grace ([2 Samuel 7:18–29](#)).

The next time Nathan is mentioned, it is after David had committed adultery with [Bathsheba](#) and brought about her husband's death to hide her pregnancy (2 Samuel 12:1). At that point, David had made Bathsheba his wife and had seemingly gotten away with his sin, but the Lord knew about it and told Nathan to rebuke David. Nathan went to David and wisely told the king a fable about a rich man and a poor man: the rich man was visited by a traveler, so he took the poor man's only possession, a little ewe lamb that he loved as a pet, to feed his guest—rather than taking a lamb from his own extensive flocks. David was enraged at the story and declared that the rich man had no pity and deserved to die. Nathan then points to David and says, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7). Nathan reveals that David's sin was like that of the rich man, because David took away Uriah's wife. Nathan then prophesies to David, in God's own words: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife" (2 Samuel 12:7–10). David confesses to Nathan that he has sinned against the Lord, and Nathan comforts him, saying that the Lord has forgiven his sin and that David's life will not be required of him. Nonetheless, David's child by Bathsheba was to die. David, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, pens Psalm 51 after this encounter with Nathan the prophet.

After the death of David's child, his wife Bathsheba became pregnant again, this time with a son whom they named [Solomon](#). The Lord sent Nathan to David again, this time to say that the Lord loved his son Solomon, and they called Solomon "Jedidiah," a name that means "beloved of the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:24–25). Solomon later built God's house, the temple, and became an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First Chronicles 3:5 reveals the fact that King David and Queen Bathsheba named one of their sons born to them in Jerusalem "Nathan." No doubt, the child's name is a reflection of the royal couple's appreciation for the prophet Nathan's faithfulness, friendship, and tough love through the years. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

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### Sowing and Reaping by Theodore Epp 2 Samuel 12:1-10

David's harshness and lack of pity were due to his being out of touch with God. No wonder he failed to remember the judgment prescribed by the Law. At this point the Holy Spirit gave Nathan boldness to say to David, "Thou art the man" (2 Sam. 12:7).

Through Nathan, the Lord reminded David of His sovereign choice of David, of His protection of him through the years of Saul's bitter enmity, of his elevation to the throne and of the abundance of God's provision for him.

In spite of God's mercies, David had despised God's commandment. God hid nothing from His servant. David was forced to face his sin.

Nathan's message to David not only reminded him of God's tender mercy, love, abundant gifts and honor but also warned David that, because he had sinned, he would reap a harvest of sorrow.

"Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife" (2Sa 12:10).

The Lord made it very plain in the New Testament that believers cannot escape reaping the kind of harvest they sow. We cannot hide our sin; we will not get away with it. The secrets of the night are not hidden from God.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7+).

#### 2 Samuel 12:2 "The rich man had a great many flocks and herds.

- **great many:** 2Sa 12:8 3:2-5 5:13-16 15:16 Job 1:3
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### STORY OF A RICH RANCHER

**The rich man had a great many flocks and herds** - Of course we, the readers, have inside information and know that the rich man with many flocks is King David ([See table below](#))

#### 2 Samuel 12:3 "But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him.

- **one little:** 2Sa 11:3 Pr 5:18,19
- **lie in his bosom:** De 13:6 Mic 7:5
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE POOR MAN ENTERS THE SCENE

**But** - Term of contrast - Nathan draws a strong contrast between the **rich man (great many flocks)** and the **poor man (one little ewe lamb)** to heighten David's interest, his sense of justice and ultimately his sense of conviction of sin once Nathan clarified that David was the rich man in verse 7!

**Thomas Stone** writes glowingly of Nathan's modus operandi of indirectly drawing out David's conscience and sense of right and wrong "There scarcely ever was any thing more calculated, on the one hand, to awaken emotions of sympathy, and, on the other, those of indignation, than the case here supposed; and the several circumstances by which the heart must be interested in the poor man's case, and by which the unfeeling oppression of his rich neighbour was aggravated."

the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him - As informed readers we know that the poor man is Uriah the Hittite who had one wife whom he loved dearly.

**Pulpit Commentary** - The Orientals are excessively fond of pet animals, and, as the dog is with them unclean, its place is taken by fawns, kids, or lambs. The description, therefore, is not overcharged, for in many an English home the dog or cat takes its place as one of the family. The Revised Version preserves the tenderness of the original in translating "it did eat of his own morsel."

**NET NOTE** - The three Hebrew imperfect verbal forms in this sentence have a customary nuance; they describe past actions that were repeated or typical.

**Like a daughter to him** - The point is the lamb was like a daughter even as Bathsheba was [Ahithophel's](#) precious daughter. As David sowed evil by taking someone's daughter, so too he would reap in kind as his own precious daughter Tamar was coveted and her virginity stolen David's son Amnon. David had sown the seed of lust in the form of adultery but would reap the bitter harvest of incestuous rape! Beloved, let us not read over this too quickly. May God the Holy Spirit penetrate our head and heart with the truths of the rotten fruit of forsaking God's way for our wants, lest we too might come to crave evil things as David craved (cp 1Co 10:6, 11+).

**2 Samuel 12:4 "Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."**

- **Now a traveler came to the rich man:** Ge 18:2-7 Jas 1:14
- **took the:** 2Sa 11:3,4
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **RICH MAN (DAVID) TAKES FROM THE POOR MAN (URIAH)**

**Now a traveler came to the rich man**- While one must be careful going beyond the limits of Scripture, in the context of David's sin, this **traveler** would correlate well with the lust that visited David the night he first spied Bathsheba.

**Henri Rossier** agrees that the traveler's name is "**Lust**" writing "Let us watch out for this sort of **traveler**, for we are all prone to be visited by him. Certainly when he appears it is better to close the door against him. This wayfarer is **lust**, a passing desire, and not one that we habitually entertain and feed. This wayfarer had entered the king's house, knowing he would find something to feed on there. Our hearts too ever contain that which it takes to succumb to Satan's temptations (Jer 17:9, 10). David forgot to depend on God and thought he could relax instead of serving and fighting. This was enough to allow the traveler to open the door and let himself in and to mark his visit with disorder and ruin. ([2 Samuel](#))

**Wiersbe** agrees writing "David didn't seem to realize that he was the **rich man**, Uriah was the **poor man**, and Bathsheba was the **ewe lamb** he had stolen. The "**traveler**" whom the rich man fed represents the **temptation and lust** that visited David on the roof and then controlled him. If we open the door, sin comes in as a guest but soon becomes the master. (See Ge 4:6, 7+) (Borrow [Be restored -2 Samuel & 1 Chronicles](#))

**Pink** agrees that the "**traveler** which came to him pictures the restless flesh, the active lusts, the wandering thoughts, the roving eyes of David in connection with Bathsheba." Ah, my reader, it is at this point we most need to be upon our guard. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and **bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ**" (2 Cor. 10:5). "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Part of that task lies in regulating our thoughts and repelling unlawful imaginations. True it is that we cannot prevent wandering thoughts from entering our minds nor evil imaginations from surging up within us, but we are responsible to resist and reject them. But this is what David failed to do: he welcomed this "traveller," he entertained him, he feasted him, and feasted him upon that which was not lawful—with that which belonged to another: pictured in the parable by the lamb belonging to his neighbor. And, my reader, it is when we give place to our sinful lusts, indulge our evil imaginations, feed our wandering thoughts upon that which is unlawful, that we pave the way for a sad fall. "**Travellers**" will come to us—the mind will be active—and our responsibility is to see that they are fed with that which is lawful: ponder Philipians 4:8+ in this connection. ([2 Samuel 12 His Conviction](#))

**And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man's ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him** - The parable is so close to the scenario

that played out with David, Bathsheba and Uriah that it is surprising David did not begin to see the picture that [Nathan](#) was painting. The taking of the poor man's ewe lamb amounts to stealing which is exactly what David had done to Uriah - he **took** the wife of Uriah (2Sa 11:4+)! The analogy breaks down of course in that the one that was "sacrificed" was Uriah.

**David Guzik** - The sin [Nathan](#) describes is *theft*. There is a sense in which David *stole* something from Uriah. The Bible (in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5) says that in marriage a husband has authority over the body of his wife (and vice-versa). Obviously, David did not have this authority over the body of Bathsheba and he *stole* from Uriah. Adultery and sexual immorality are sins in many ways, and in one aspect are *theft* – taking something that does not belong to us. This principle is also true regarding pornography and lust. Leviticus 18 describes the sin of *uncovering the nakedness* of those other than our spouse. The idea is that the nakedness of others doesn't belong to us, and it is theft if we take it.

Who would the "**wayfarer**" be equated with in this story portraying David's horrible sin? I think **Henri Rossier** offers a reasonable suggestion when he names this traveler "**Lust**" writing...

Let us watch out for this sort of **traveler**, for we are all prone to be visited by him. Certainly when he appears it is better to close the door against him. This wayfarer is **lust**, a passing desire, and not one that we habitually entertain and feed. This wayfarer had entered the king's house, knowing he would find something to feed on there. Our hearts too ever contain that which it takes to succumb to Satan's temptations ([Jer 17:9, 10](#)). David forgot to depend on God and thought he could relax instead of serving and fighting. This was enough to allow the traveler to open the door and let himself in and to mark his visit with disorder and ruin. ([2 Samuel](#))

NATHAN'S "PARABLE" OF A RICH MAN & POOR MAN	
CHARACTER DEPICTED	CHARACTER DEPICTS
Rich Man	King David
Poor Man	Uriah the Hittite
Flocks and herds	Many concubines and wives
Little Ewe Lamb	Uriah's wife Bathsheba
Traveler	Lust

In this parable, the rich man represents David. The poor man represents Uriah. The ewe lamb represents Bathsheba. Great many flocks reminds us of David's many "concubines and wives" (2Sa 5:13)! Lust is insatiable! Lust is never satisfied! Lust always desires one more of whatever the lust is directed toward! And each time lust is "accommodated" it only increases its appetite! Do not be deceived! As you read Nathan's parable and see David's blindness to the fact that this parable is a divine finger pointed straight at him, realize that such is the power of sin in our lives. Sin is not to be underestimated or trifled with but instead is a horrible, powerful force to be continually fought against do only with the Spirit of God's enablement! (Gal 5:16-17+)

**2 Samuel 12:5 Then David's anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to [Nathan](#), "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die.**

- **David's:** Ge 38:24 1Sa 25:21,22 Lu 6:41,42 9:55 Ro 2:1
- **As the Lord:** 1Sa 14:39
- **deserves to die**, Heb. is a son of death, 1Sa 20:31 26:16
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Leviticus 20:10 'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 24:17 'If a man takes the life of any human being, he shall surely be put to death.

## DAVID'S OATH AGAINST THE MAN IN THE MIRROR!

**Then** - Marks progress in the narrative. A short story with a pithy point that fires up King David.

**David's anger** ([aph](#); Lxx - [orge](#)) **burned greatly against the man** - James 1:23-24+ (which would be a good description of David) says the Word of God is like a mirror and [Nathan](#) has just given David a mirror to look into to see his own face, the one against who his anger should be justly directed. See 1Sa 25:13, 22, 33+ for another example of David's anger.

**Guzik** - David's sense of righteous indignation was so affected by his own guilt that he commanded a death sentence for the hypothetical case brought by [Nathan](#), even though it wasn't a capital crime. David had to condemn his own sin before he could find forgiveness. We often try to find refuge in excusing or minimizing or deflecting the blame for our sin; we simply do not condemn sin in ourselves. David's use of the oath "**As the LORD lives**" shows how passionate his indignation was. He called God to witness the righteousness of his death sentence upon Nathan's hypothetical rich man.

**Against the man** - Notice that the rich man who had mistreated the poor man, did so because of his own desire, which is exactly why David did what he did to Uriah! What goes around, comes around!

**and he said to [Nathan](#), "As the LORD lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die** - David underscores the depth of his emotional reaction to the evil actions of the rich man by invoking an oath to God. David sentences himself and does so with great passion! This is fascinating that out of his own mouth David, unbeknownst to him, condemned himself to die, for he did deserve death, not just on one, but two counts - adultery (Lev. 20:10) and murder (Lev. 24:17).

**Man who deserves to die** - In the literal Hebrew David refers to this man as "a son of death", and thus a wretch who deserves to die! David is being harsh, overly harsh. Stealing and killing a sheep is a sin (Ex 22:1) but it does not call for capital punishment. David is going way beyond what the Law requires. He is out of fellowship with God and it shows by his emotional, "over the top" response. In pronouncing this judgment on the rich man (who represented David himself) in the story, David unknowingly condemned himself! As someone has written the chickens have come home to roost (so to speak)!

**THOUGHT** - How easy it is for us to excuse sin in our own life but be overly harsh and critical when dealing with sin in the lives of others! We humans have a keen sense of judgment - as long as it is on someone else!

**NET NOTE** on **deserves to die** - Heb "the man doing this [is] a son of death." See 1 Sam 20:31 for another use of this expression, which must mean "he is as good as dead" or "he deserves to die," as 1 Sam 20:32 makes clear.

**As the LORD lives** - 35x in NAS - Jdg 8:19; Ru 3:13; 1Sa 14:39, 45; 19:6; 20:3, 21; 25:26; 26:10, 16; 28:10; 29:6; 2Sa 4:9; 12:5; 14:11; 15:21; 1Kgs 1:29; 2:24; 22:14; 2Ki 2:2, 4, 6; 4:30; 5:16, 20; 2Chr 18:13; Jer 4:2; 5:2; 12:16; 16:14 15; 23:7 8; 38:16; Hos 4:15

**Die** is a keyword in 2 Samuel 12 - 2Sa 12:5 2Sa 12:13 2Sa 12:14 2Sa 12:18 2Sa 12:21 2Sa 12:23

**Theodore Epp** points out, "David's harshness and lack of pity were due to his being out of touch with God."

**Alan Redpath** asks "Have you observed that when you excuse sin in your own life, you become very critical of it in other people (cp Jesus warning in Mt 7:1, [2+](#), Mt 7:3, 4, [5+](#)). The person who hides an uneasy conscience and a sense of guilt may flash out in anger against the sin of another. Is that why some of us are so merciless with the Christian who has tripped up? Is that why we have no gospel for the believer who falls? It may be not because we are very holy but because we are unholy that we condemn the thing in another as we refuse to judge in our own lives. Let us not forget the words of our Master, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone. ([The Making of a Man of God \(Life of David\) - 137 PDF book](#))

**Alan Carr** wisely warns us "Never think for a minute that sin can be successfully hidden away forever. God knows exactly where it is buried, Heb 4:13<sup>+</sup>, and when the time is right, he will place His finger right on the sore spot and He will press. He will confront that hidden sin and expose it for what it is! That will be a shocking day in the life of the guilty party. That is why it is so important for us to keep short accounts with God!

**Chuck Smith** - It's amazing how awful our sins look to us when someone else is committing them.. We seek to justify our own actions. We so graciously excuse in ourselves the things we condemn in others.. This should teach us to be careful how we judge others. "Thou art inexcusable O man."

**Stevenson** - What really annoys you about others? What is it about someone that really gets under your skin? Chances are that it is something of which you yourself are guilty. There is a lesson here. It is that we normally find it easier to see the faults in others than

we can see them in ourselves. I don't see the main faults in my own life. That goes for you, too. Whatever you think are your primary faults are not. ([2 Samuel 11-12 David's Sin](#))

**Anger** (nose, nostril, wrath) ([0639](#)) [aph](#) from anaph = to breathe hard, to be angry) is a masculine noun meaning nose, nostril, snout (pigs - Pr 11:22), face (2Sa 25:23) and anger. Both senses are found in Proverbs 30:22 - "For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the nose (aph) brings forth blood; so the churning of anger (aph) produces strife." In the first use God "breathed into (man's) nostrils the breath of life." (Ge 2:7) Aph sometimes refers to the entire whole face (Ge 3:19), especially in the expression, to bow one's face to the ground (Ge 19:1; 1Sa 24:8). To have length of nose is to be slow to wrath (Pr 14:29, 16:32). To have shortness of nose is to be quick tempered (Pr. 14:17; Jer. 15:14, 15). Aph is used in a phrase (goba aph) which means pride, arrogance, formally, high of nose, an improper haughtiness and self-confidence (Ps 10:4). Often speaks of divine anger or wrath (Ps 2:5, 2:12, 6:1, 30:5, 74:1, 77:9, 78:21) and thankfully is "Slow to anger." (Ps 103:8; 145:8, both Lxx = makrothumos = long-suffering)

**Burned** ([02734](#)) [charah](#) means to burn or be kindled with anger, and in the Hithpael, charah is used 4x (Ps 37:1, 7,8, Pr 24:19) always meaning "to worry" and describing the agitation, irritation or vexation resulting from active worry. Charah is used in reference to the anger of both man and God.

**2 Samuel 12:6 "He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion."**

- **He must make restitution** Ex 22:1 Pr 6:31 Lu 19:8
- **because:** Jas 2:13
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Exodus 22:1+ "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and **four sheep for the sheep. (FOURFOLD)**

### DAVID CONTINUES TO CONDEMN HIMSELF!

**He must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion** - Out of his mouth come the horrible words that he **had no compassion**. David did not look (with **compassion** and careful thought) before he leaped! **No compassion** - In the Greek the "no" is absolute signifying total absent of this attribute.

**John MacArthur** comments that "Exodus 22:1 demanded a 4-fold restitution for the stealing of sheep. There is an allusion here to the subsequent death of 4 of David's sons: Bathsheba's first son (2Sa 12:18), Amnon (2Sa 13:28, 29), Absalom (2Sa 16:14, 15), and Adonijah (1Ki 2:25)." (Borrow [The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**Guzik** makes an interesting comment - Restore fourfold also shows that David's sin and hardness of heart did not diminish his knowledge of the Bible. He immediately knew what the Bible said about those who steal sheep: If a man steals an ox or a sheep, and slaughters it or sells it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox and four sheep for a sheep (Exodus 22:1). David knew the words of the Bible but was distant from the Author....David demanded fourfold restitution for the man in Nathan's parable. God exacted fourfold restitution for Uriah from four of David's sons: Bathsheba's child, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.

**Wiersbe** makes an interesting observation on **fourfold** - David had declared punishment concerning the man in Nathan's story, so God accepted his sentence. The sword never did depart from David's household: (1) the baby died; (2) Absalom killed Amnon, who had ruined Tamar (chap. 13); (3) then Joab killed Absalom (2Sa 18:9-17); and (4) Adonijah was slain by Benaiah (1 Kings 2:24-25). **Fourfold!** Add to these trials the awful ruin of Tamar, the shameful treatment of David's wives by Absalom (2Sa 12:11; 16:20-23), plus the rebellion of Absalom, and you can see that David paid dearly for a few moments of lustful pleasure. He sowed lust and reaped the same; he sowed murder and reaped murders, for "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Gal. 6:7). (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Henry Morris** - David's pronouncement of a "fourfold" restoration against Nathan's hypothetical sinner came back on his own house. First there was the death of his child (2 Samuel 12:18); then came the rape of his virgin daughter Tamar by her half-brother Amnon (2 Samuel 13:1,14). This led to Amnon's vengeful murder by Tamar's brother Absalom (2 Samuel 13:28-29). Fourth was the treason and death of Absalom (2 Samuel 18:9,14). David was greatly blessed by God, but even the most godly of men, particularly if they are in positions of influence, cannot enter into such **flagrant willful sin** as David did without also receiving divine chastening.

**Comment:** Ponder the two descriptions of David's sins adultery and murder both of which are flagrant. **Flagrant** means conspicuously offensive and so obviously inconsistent with what is right or proper as to appear to be a flouting of law or morality. **Willful** = obstinately and often perversely self-willed; done deliberately. Listen to David's own prayer in Psalm 19:13...

Also **keep back** Thy servant from presumptuous sins; Let them not rule over (Lxx uses a "strong" verb to describe the power of presumptuous sin >>> katakurieuo [from kurios ~ idea of lordship combining elements of power and authority = that's what presumptuous sin can do!] = gain power over, exercise complete dominion over, overpower, subdue - Acts 19:16) me; Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be acquitted of great transgression.

**Comment:** **Keep back** in Hebrew is chasak which means to withhold, restrain, check, hold back. The Septuagint translates this Hebrew verb in the aorist imperative (command that conveys a sense of urgency) using pheidomai which means spare or me from loss or discomfort or a great deal of trouble (used this way in 1Co 7:28). To restrain or keep one from doing something.

Experienced Christian, do not boast in your experience or you will trip if you look away from Him Who alone is able to keep you from falling. (Jude 1:23,24, cp 1Co 10:12)

"Ye whose love is fervent, whose faith is constant, whose hopes are bright, say not, "We shall never sin," but rather cry, "Lead us not into temptation." There is enough tinder in the heart of the best of men to light a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, unless God shall quench the sparks as they fall. Who would have dreamed that righteous Lot could be found drunken, and committing uncleanness? Hazeel said, "Is Thy servant a dog, that he should do this thing?" and we are very apt to use the same self-righteous question. May infinite wisdom cure us of the madness of self-confidence."

**Spurgeon comments:** This earnest and humble prayer teaches us that saints may fall into the worst of sins unless restrained by grace, and that therefore they must watch (keep on watching) and pray (keep on praying) lest they enter into temptation (Mt 26:41-note). There is a natural proneness to sin in the best of men (Ed: It's called the flesh; James warns us against it's deceptive snares - Jas 1:14, 15-note), and they must be held back as a horse is held back by the bit or they will run into it. Presumptuous sins are peculiarly dangerous (Ed: See Heb 10:26, 27, 28, 28, 30, 31). All sins are great sins, but yet some sins are greater than others. Every sin has in it the very venom of rebellion, and is full of the essential marrow of traitorous rejection of God; but there be some sins which have in them a greater development of the essential mischief of rebellion, and which wear upon their faces more of the brazen pride which defies the Most High. It is wrong to suppose that because all sins will condemn us, that therefore one sin is not greater than another. The fact is, that while all transgression is a greatly grievous sinful thing, yet there are some transgressions which have a deeper shade of blackness, and a more double scarlet-dyed hue of criminality than others. The presumptuous sins of our text are the chief and worst of all sins; they rank head and foremost in the list of iniquities. It is remarkable that though an "out" was provided under the Jewish law for every kind of sin, there was this one exception: "But the soul that sins presumptuously shall have no atonement; he shall be cut off from the midst of the people." (Nu 15:30KJV) And now under the Christian dispensation, although in the sacrifice of our blessed Lord there is a great precious atonement for presumptuous sins, whereby sinners who have erred in this manner are made clean, yet without doubt, presumptuous sinners, dying without pardon, must expect to receive a double portion of the wrath of God, and a more terrible portion of eternal punishment in the pit that is dug for the wicked. For this reason is David so anxious that he may never come under the reigning power of these giant evils (Ed: That such a godly man was at risk of falling under the sway of such a sin ought to make every one of us tremble!).

"Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." He shudders at the thought of the unpardonable sin. Secret sin is a stepping-stone to presumptuous sin, and that is the vestibule of "the sin which is unto death." He who is not willful in his sin, will be in a fair way to be innocent so far as poor sinful man can be; but he who tempts the devil to tempt him is in a path which will lead him from bad to worse, and from the worse to the worst. (!!!)

**NET NOTE** on **fourfold** - With the exception of the Lucianic recension, the Old Greek translation has here "sevenfold" rather than "fourfold," a reading that S. R. Driver thought probably to be the original reading (S. R. Driver, Notes on the Hebrew Text and the Topography of the Books of Samuel, 291). However, Exod 22:1 [21:37 HT] specifies fourfold repayment for a stolen sheep, which is consistent with 2 Sam 12:6. Some MSS of the Targum and the Syriac Peshitta exaggerate the idea to "fortyfold." **Hebrew literally** =

"the lamb he must repay fourfold because he did this thing and because he did not have compassion." [Septuagint - Lxx](#) = [antapodidomi](#)) evil for good?" The next 14 uses are in Exodus 21-22 and all 4 uses in Leviticus (see below) deal with **restitution** and most are translated in the Septuagint with the verb **apotino** which means to repay (only NT use Philemon 1:9). In Isa 60:20 God says "your mourning will be over (shalam)" which refers to heaven when He will wipe away every tear (Rev 21:4). In one of my favorite verses (specifically spoken to Israel, but applicable to saints in principle) God says " 'Then **I will make up** (Lxx = [antapodidomi](#)) to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten, The creeping locust, the stripping locust, and the gnawing locust, My great army which I sent among you." (Joel 2:25)

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**Make restitution** (pay, repay, recompense) ([07999](#))([shalam](#) from root **s-l-m** = denotes perfection in the sense that a condition or action is complete and thus a sense of completion and fulfillment, of entering into a state of wholeness and unity, a restored relationship) means to be complete, to be safe, to be sound, to repay, to reward. Restitution means a making good of or giving an equivalent for some injury or something taken.

**Have compassion** ([02550](#)) [chamal](#) means to spare (to forbear to destroy, punish, or harm, refrain from attacking with necessary severity) or to have compassion ("had pity" Ex 2:6). Nathan told David, how the rich man spared ("unwilling") his own lamb (2Sa 12:4). The Babylonians would not "spare" arrows in their attack on Jerusalem (Jer 50:14). In Ezek 36:21, God said He had "concern (chamal)" for His holy Name. When preceded by the Hebrew negative particle (lo') chamal means to do something ruthlessly (Isa 30:14; Lam 2:2) or without any restraint (Jer. 50:14) Chamal " can take on the nuance of holding on to something, desiring it, such as holding evil in one's mouth (Job 20:13) or being unwilling to do something right or that is costly to oneself (2Sa 12:4)." (Baker) In Ezekiel (Ezek 5:11; 7:4, 9; 8:18; 9:5, 10; 16:5; 36:21) we see the repeated phrase that God will "have no pity" (Hebrew = chus) nor will He "spare" (chamal) Judah. From this it seems that chamal while expressing the attitude of compassion or pity, also describes "compassion in action" so to speak (albeit in all the Ezekiel passages it is used in a negative sense - God would NOT spare them!).

**2 Samuel 12:7 [Nathan](#) then said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul.**

- **You are the man!**: 1Sa 13:13 1Ki 18:18 21:19,20 Mt 14:14
- **It is I who anointed**: 2Sa 7:8 1Sa 15:17 16:13
- **I delivered**: 2Sa 22:1,49 1Sa 18:11,21 19:10-15 23:7,14,26-28 Ps 18:1
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Psalm 18:1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David the servant of the LORD, who spoke to the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. And he said, "I love You, O LORD, my strength."

### FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND YOU ARE THE MAN!

[Nathan](#) then said to David - [Nathan](#) was at this moment David's best friend for Pr 27:6 says "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Swindoll says this literally reads "Trustworthy are the bruises caused by the wounding of one who loves you." Isn't that vivid? The one who loves you bruises you, and those lingering wounds are faithful, they're trustworthy. That kind of confrontation is the best thing in the world for the believer who is hiding secret sin. The fact that it is a friend (one who truly loves you) disarms you, and you melt like putty." (Ibid)

Timing is important in life (cp Pr 25:11, 12). Nathan (surely led by the Spirit) sensed the moment to speak forth had arrived. Nathan's tact is reminiscent of Paul's charge to the saints in Galatia...

Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore** ([katartizo](#) - [present imperative](#) = command to keep on - this may not be a one time intervention see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. (Gal 6:1+)

**Blaikie** suggests that The flash of indignation is yet in his eye, the flush of resentment is still on his brow, when the prophet with calm voice and piercing eye utters the solemn words, "Thou art the man!" ([2 Samuel 12](#))

**You are the man!** - Nathan takes the searchlight David had directed at the rich man's heart and points it at David! The King James Version sounds even more condemning "Thou art the man!" David had heard three words before that stunned him "I am pregnant," but now hears three words that will stun him even more and will be used by God's Spirit to awaken his conscience and stir the smoldering embers in his heart! This interjection is abrupt and must have caught David a bit unaware. Nathan had used the truth as an emotional form of "shock therapy", with the goal being to shock his backslidden, deceived condition and bring him back to his senses. (See discussion and quotes on [Backsliding or Drifting](#)) We can only imagine the look on David's face! If it was indeed 12 months later, David would have been shocked for he thought by now his cover up would have been successful. Even suspicious servants had not confronted him (they probably dared not do that!)

**J Vernon McGee** rehearses the scene with Nathan's declaration - "David, you are the guilty one." What is David going to do? He is going to do something unusual, I can assure you of that. Dr. Margoliouth has said this: "When has this been done—before or since? Mary, Queen of Scots, would declare that she was above the law; Charles I would have thrown over Bathsheba; James II would have hired witnesses to swear away her character; Mohammed would have produced a revelation authorizing both crimes; Charles II would have publicly abrogated the seventh commandment; Queen Elizabeth would have suspended Nathan." Years ago, the Duke of Windsor would have given up his throne for her. We have had some presidents who would have repealed the Ten Commandments and appointed Nathan to the Supreme Court. David did not do any of these things. His actions will reveal his greatness.

**Pulpit Homiletic** comments on the effect of recalling God's goodness...But be the privileges many or few, when God brings home the guilt to the conscience, the sin is revealed in the light of past mercies. The swift review of David's advantages by Nathan finds its analogue in the swift floating before the mind of the circumstances of one's position which render the sin so utterly inexcusable. Men see in a few moments the reasons for their utter shame and self-abasement. This is a feature in all true conviction, and tends to the proper prostration of the soul before God. Saul of Tarsus knew this. It is an unspeakable mercy that God does set our sins in the light of his great goodness.

**Thus says the LORD God of Israel**- Notice that [Nathan](#) does not give David a chance to respond, but declares the words of Yahweh.

**It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul**- [Nathan](#) speaks God's words reminding David of His goodness giving David the kingship and protecting him from Saul's relentless efforts to kill him.

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, we ought to frequently recite the blessings of the Lord in our life, lest we grow spiritually "fat" and complacent and prideful and set ourselves up for a sure fall!

**It is I Who delivered you** - In context the deliverance Jehovah wants David to recall is from Saul who pursued him for many years with the intention of killing him. And there was another great deliverance from the power of the giant Goliath. But in 2Samuel 11 God does not deliver David from the "giant" named "Lust". Why not? David had become proud and God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. He would have given David grace to make it if he had been humble. For example, if David had been humble, he would have been doing what all kings did in the Spring. He would have gone to war.

[Alexander Whyte](#) describes [Nathan's](#) words to David - "Preaching is magnificent work if only we could get preachers like Nathan. If our preachers had only something of Nathan's courage, skill, serpent-like wisdom, and evangelical instancy. . . . We ministers must far more study Nathan's method; especially when we are sent to preach awakening sermons. Too much skill cannot be expended in laying down our approaches to the consciences of our people. Nathan's sword was within an inch of David's conscience before David knew that Nathan had a sword. One sudden thrust, and the king was at Nathan's feet. What a rebuke of our slovenly, unskillful, blundering work! When we go back to Nathan and David, we forget and forgive everything that had been evil in David. The only thing wanting to make that day in David's life perfect was that Nathan should have had to come to David. Now, what will make this the most perfect day in all your life will be this, if you will save the Lord and His prophet all that trouble so to speak, and be both the Lord and His prophet to yourself. Read Nathan's parable to yourself till you say, I am the man!"

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[John Stevenson](#) has an interesting chart comparing David and Jesus...

DAVID	JESUS
Figuratively took another man's lamb and killed it.	He was the figure of the Lamb who was put to death.
He sinned against God.	He was obedient to the point of death.

Anointed to be king of Israel	Anointed by the Holy Spirit. Coming King of kings
Murdered a man in order to take his wife.	Gave up his own life to purchase a bride.
He sinned resulting in death to a number of his sons.	He took our sins upon Himself, resulting in life to all who believe.

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**Who's In the Picture?** - My daughter came home from school one day with a brain teaser. See if you can figure it out.

Imagine that you are a school bus driver. A red-haired student gets on the bus and begins combing her hair with a green brush. At the next stop two more students get on and say in passing that they like the color of the driver's new blue cap. As they walk to the rear of the bus, the shorter of the two shouts back, "I wouldn't let that red-head stay on the bus if I were you. Her brush clashes with your hair!" What color is the bus driver's hair? Think about it. Remember, you are the bus driver. (Answer: your hair color.)

If you didn't see yourself in that story until I told you, you're not alone. King David made a similar mistake with another story. He became furious when a prophet of God told about a rich man who stole a poor man's pet for his dinner. Yet it became very clear as Nathan bluntly said to David, "You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7).

We can read the Bible but fail to see ourselves in the picture. We tend to forget that the Bible was "written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Do you see yourself in the pages of Scripture? How long since you've realized how personal these letters from God are to you? —Mart De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Your heart and conscience cannot safely guide,  
For they are darkened by the sin inside;  
But if you want to have a picture true,  
The Word of God will mirror what is you.  
—Hess

**The Bible gives us a picture of who we really are.**

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### Robert Morgan - "Murder! Murder!"

George Whitefield, the fiery evangelist with a voice that could be heard a mile away, came to Plymouth, England, for a crusade, but a motley crew threatened him harm. His room was burgled, and Whitefield moved to an undisclosed address. The young thugs set another trap for him, but Whitefield, smelling a rat, didn't show. The indignant conspirators resolved to murder him that night.

As Whitefield, exhausted, returned to his room and dressed for bed, a knock sounded. A well-dressed gentleman wished to speak with him, he was told. Whitefield seldom refused a nocturnal "Nicodemus" who came wanting to be born again. He admitted the man who was dressed as a lieutenant from a man 'o war. They chatted a moment, but when Whitefield asked his name, the young man gave a false name, that of another officer. "That's impossible," said Whitefield, "I met that officer two weeks ago."

The man suddenly sprang up and slammed his cane across Whitefield's head, commencing the attack. "Murder! Murder!" screamed the terrified evangelist. "Murder! Murder!" Another thug joined the attack, throwing the landlady violently down the stairs. Neighbors, hearing the screams, drove away the attackers, but news of the attempt flashed abroad like lightning, and the next time he rose to preach, Whitefield faced an innumerable mass. He began preaching, unaware that another attacker had slipped into the crowd. Harry Tanner, a young thug, planned the evangelist harm.

But as Tanner watched in horror, George Whitefield suddenly turned toward him, looked him in the eye, squinted, and thundered Nathan's famous words to David, "Thou art the man!" Tanner was shaken to the depths of his soul. The next day he returned to the crusade, and this time he gave his life to Christ. (Borrow [From this verse : 365 inspiring stories about the power of God's word](#))

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### Where Are You Headed?

Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man!" 2 Samuel 12:7

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Samuel 12:1–14

In northern Thailand, the Wild Boars youth soccer team decided to explore a cave together. After an hour they turned to go back and found that the entrance to the cave was flooded. Rising water pushed them deeper into the cave, day after day, until they were finally trapped more than two miles (four kilometers) inside. When they were heroically rescued two weeks later, many wondered how they had become so hopelessly trapped. Answer: one step at a time.

In Israel, Nathan confronted David for killing his loyal soldier, Uriah. How did the man “after [God’s] own heart” (1 Samuel 13:14) become guilty of murder? One step at a time. David didn’t go from zero to murder in one afternoon. He warmed up to it, over time, as one bad decision bled into others. It started with a second glance that turned into a lustful stare. He abused his kingly power by sending for Bathsheba, then tried to cover up her pregnancy by calling her husband home from the front. When Uriah refused to visit his wife while his comrades were at war, David decided he would have to die.

We may not be guilty of murder or trapped in a cave of our own making, but we’re either moving toward Jesus or toward trouble. Big problems don’t develop overnight. They break upon us gradually, one step at a time. By: Mike Wittmer ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What decision can you make right now to move toward Jesus and away from trouble? What must you do to confirm this decision?

Jesus, I’m running to You!

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## The Wounds Of A Friend

Faithful are the wounds of a friend. —Proverbs 27:6

Today’s Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-13

Not everyone appreciates correction, but David did. He felt indebted to those who corrected him and realized how much he owed them. “Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness. Let him rebuke me; it shall be as excellent oil; let my head not refuse it” (Ps. 141:5).

Correction is a kindness, David insists, a word that suggests an act of loyalty. Loyal friends will correct one another, even when it’s painful and disruptive to relationships to do so. It’s one of the ways we show love and help one another to grow stronger. As Proverbs 27:6 states: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”

It takes grace to give godly correction; it takes greater grace to receive it. Unlike David, who accepted Nathan’s correction (2 Sam. 12:13), we’re inclined to refuse it. We resent the interference; we do not want to be found out. But if we accept the reproof, we will find that it does indeed become “excellent oil” on our heads, an anointing that makes our lives a sweet aroma wherever we go.

Growth in grace sometimes comes through the kind but unpleasant correction of a loyal friend. Do not refuse it, for “he who receives correction is prudent” (Prov. 15:5) and “wise” (9:8-9). By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

When others give us compliments,  
They are so easy to believe;  
And though it’s wise to take rebukes,  
We find them harder to receive.  
—Sper

Correction from a loyal friend can help us change for the better.

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**Burying Our Heads** -Contrary to common belief, the ostrich does not bury its head in the sand to ignore danger. An ostrich can run at a speed of 45 miles per hour, kick powerfully, and peck aggressively with its beak. As the largest and fastest bird in the world, it doesn’t need to bury its head.

“Burying your head in the sand” is a saying that describes someone who wants to ignore his shortcomings or those of others. The prophet Nathan did not allow King David to forget his sins of adultery and murder (2Sa 12:1-14). It took a brave man to confront a king about his errors. Yet Nathan was obedient to God and wise in his approach.

The apostle Paul urged the early church to confront sin. He said, “If a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted” (Galatians 6:1). We are to confront our brothers and sisters in Christ about their sin with the view of restoring them to fellowship with God. We must also recognize that we are not immune to the same temptations.

We shouldn't go looking for sin in the lives of other believers, of course. But neither should we bury our head in the sand when it needs to be confronted. —Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Father, help me live today  
With thoughtfulness in what I say,  
Confronting wrong with truth and fact,  
Expressing gentleness and tact.  
-Hess

Slander seeks to destroy  
Rebuke seeks to restore

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**Redirected Paths** - As part of a gospel outreach to the community, a group of Christians brought in a popular professional athlete to give his testimony. When he arrived, one of the organizers noticed he was acting arrogant. He pulled the guest aside and said, "We've been praying for this event for a long time. People out there need to see Jesus in you. You are being cocky, and that's not going to do anyone any good."

Standing up to a famous athlete is one thing, but can you imagine standing up to a king? That's what Nathan the prophet did when he found out about David's sin with Bathsheba. He stood before the monarch, told a story about a rich man who had stolen from a poor man, then said to David, "**You are the man!**" (2 Samuel 12:7). Instead of being irate with Nathan, David confessed his sin and sought restoration.

It's never easy to confront, and for some it's extremely frightening. Yet bad behavior that will hinder God's work must be rebuked.

The athlete recognized his problem, had a fruitful ministry that day, and later thanked the man who confronted him. David was restored to God's favor. Someone you know may be headed down the wrong path. Ask the Lord for the courage and wisdom to redirect him. —Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Dear Lord, I would be bold and do my part  
To turn a friend from self-destructive ways;  
Grant me the grace to counsel heart to heart,  
And help him follow You through all his days. —Hess

Overlooking sin allows it to grow.

**2 Samuel 12:8 'I also gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these!'**

- **master's wives:** 2Sa 12:11 1Ki 2:22
- **gave:** 2Sa 2:4 5:5 1Sa 15:19
- **I would:** 2Sa 7:19 Ps 84:11 86:15 Ro 8:32
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SAUL'S HOUSE & HAREM GIVEN TO DAVID

**I also gave you** David sinned not only against a flood of light but a flood of God's love and grace! Do we do less, when we consciously, willfully choose to sin against Him and His Word of truth? The gracious hand of God should have stimulated a grateful attitude in David, which would have helped protecting him from something God had not given him (like another man's wife!). Do you thank Him EVERY day for all He has give you?

**your master's house and your master's wives into your care**- Saul's harem was given to David (not to mention all of his other wives). 2Sa 5:13 told us "David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron." One point of course would be, were all those women not enough for you David? Of course, the heart of the problem was David's heart problem, for the more he had, the more he wanted. The giant named "Lust" was not satisfied and would never be satisfied, but would always want "one more." David's "grass" (housefull of women) was greener than most men would ever experience and yet all David could see

was that the grass was greener on the other side of the fence.

**THOUGHT** - Is not continual obedience (enabled by God's Spirit) to 1Th 5:18+ a "preventative" from falling into temptation's snare. Temptation says I have something better for you than what God has graciously, freely given you to enjoy. Continual Spirit enabled gratitude is a powerful defense against lust's craving to have something else or something more. Continual gratitude leads to a heart that is contented and satisfied with what God has freely given. Gratitude thus can function as an expulsive power (see expulsive power of a new or another affection) so that when the temptation to covet or lust comes seeking to ensnare, we can take that tempting thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2Co 10:5+) and replace it with a Php 4:8+ thought (for which we can give thanks), thanking our Generous Giver for what is true and honorable and right, etc. Psalm 119:36+ says "Incline my heart to Your testimonies And not to dishonest gain." So when the Spirit enables us to give thanks to God from our heart for His testimonies (like those in Php 4:8+) we are kept from dishonest gain (such as adultery or adulterous thoughts).

**Guzik** - Through [Nathan](#), God explained to David that his sin was really a base expression of *ingratitude*. When God gave all this to David and had so much more to give him, David sought out sin instead.

**And I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these** - God continues the list of His goodness and generosity to David. This of course would make David's wanting more (Bathsheba) even more convicting.

It is worth noting that God reminds David of Who He is before He confronts him with the piercing description of his sin **-you have despised the Word...Me** (2Sa 12:9, 10). The abundant kindnesses of which David had been the benefactor served to make this accusation even more stinging. David forgot (or chose to forget) that Jehovah was the source of **"every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift"**, that Jehovah was **"the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."** (Jas 1:17<sup>+</sup>) A good "preventative" in our lives is to choose to make praise for God's goodness a daily part of our prayers, lest we too forget that His lovingkindnesses are new every morning!

## ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

VS

## ATTITUDE OF GREED

The juxtaposition of the reminders of God's great goodness to David (anointing, protecting, providing, even greater blessings if he would ask) with David's craving for even more (especially that which was forbidden), was surely not lost on David's conscience and heart. This story emphasizes the importance of arising each morning and thanking God for His goodness that overflows in our life. An attitude of gratitude can serve as a great impediment to developing an attitude of greed. When was the last time you thanked God for His manifold goodness in your life? (**See God's attribute - [Goodness](#)**)

**I would have added** - God tells David He would have given him anything (not forbidden by His Law) his heart wanted, and yet David selfishly sought the forbidden fruit, which has whispers of Adam who had a perfect environment and yet took the one thing God had forbidden. Such is the power of the fallen nature of our flesh. Such power reminds us of our great and continuing need for God's sufficient grace to fight the war against such a powerful foe.

This last divine declaration serves to accentuate David's sin of covetousness. He had everything a man could want or need. And it that was not enough, God would have added to what he had. And yet it was not enough. Coveting says "More. Give me more. I want more." Now why is covetousness so wrong? Bill Hybels comments that when we covet someone else's job, spouse, income, house, or car, we are saying, "You've not been fair with me God, I deserve a nicer job, or a more lucrative income, or a bigger house, or a prettier wife. You've short-changed me. You owe me something better, God!" You may not say those things directly. But a covetous heart is filled with such thoughts. David coveted what was not his - the wife of Uriah. He was not content with what God had given him. Covetousness is never content. David (and all of us) should have remembered that God had given him not only everything that he needed, but that He had given him far more than he deserved.

**THOUGHT** - We are all a bit like David. Instead of coveting, we need to blunt that temptation with praise and thanksgiving for what we have already been given. David forgot to praise God for His bountiful blessings and ended up with the cursed consequences of coveting! Do not be deceived dear brother or sister in Christ. Coveting is the root of many other maladies of the soul. Confess. Repent. Return. Be restored. Keep short accounts. (See Jesus' warning and solution in Rev 2:4-5+)

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**ILLUSTRATION** - Mark Twain encountered a businessman from Boston who said to him, "Before I die, I will go to the Holy Land, climb Mt. Sinai, and from its summit shout the Ten Commandments at the top of my voice!" Unimpressed, Twain responded, "I've got

a better idea. Stay in Boston and keep 'em."

#### Related Resource:

- [How many wives did King David have? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 12:9 'Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon.'**

- **despised:** 2Sa 12:10 11:4,14-17 Ge 9:5,6 Ex 20:13,14 Nu 15:30,31 1Sa 15:19,23 Isa 5:24 Am 2:4 Heb 10:28,29
- **evil:** 2Ch 33:6 Ps 51:4 90:8 139:1,2 Jer 18:10
- **you have:** 2Sa 11:15-27
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DAVID DESPISED THE WORD OF YAHWEH

**Why have you despised** ([bazah](#); Lxx - [phaulizo](#) - consider worthless - see [phaulos](#)) **the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight?** - Observe that despising God's Word is associated with not doing (obeying) God's Word. In short, whenever we sin we are in essence despising the Word of the LORD. We are choosing our way, rather than His way. David choose His way and broke at least 3 of the "Ten Commandments" (coveting, stealing, adultery), if not more. He had written a copy of the Law in the presence of the Levitical priests and thus he surely knew the Laws regarding coveting, stealing and adultery (as well as the penalties) and yet he basically looked at God's righteous commandments with contempt and sought to please his flesh rather than God. Isn't that what we all do when we willfully sin, thinking, saying or doing something we know is directly counter to the Word of God?

**Despised** means to disdain, to hold in contempt, to treat as utterly worthless! How could this happen to a man after God's own heart? The answer is that sin is powerful and functions like drugs we give patients for [conscious sedation](#) to make them forget the actual surgical procedure. In short, sin deceives and hardens one's heart, Hebrews 3:13+ says "But **encourage** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that (purpose of encouragement - David no longer had a Jonathan to encourage him like he did in 1Sa 23:16+ when Saul was seeking his life in Ziph 1Sa 23:15+) none of you will be hardened ([skleruno](#)) by the deceitfulness ([apate](#)) of sin."

**THOUGHT** - Think about who this accusation is against! The sweet psalmist of Israel. The one who had recorded so many beautiful songs of praise and adoration! This is the very one who now is accused of despising the Word of Jehovah. Beloved, if David can fall to this level, so too can we. We must never, ever trust our flesh. We must never feel "comfortable" in our spiritual state. We must never think that we have "arrived" in our Christian walk! All of those feelings are simply subtle forms of pride, the sin God hates and ever opposes (Jas 4:6+)

How had he **despised the Word**? The Word had said do not multiply wives, which David did (and which probably inflamed his lust even more). The Word of the LORD clearly said do not covet your neighbor's wife, which David did (Ex 20:17+). The Word clearly said do not steal which David did (Ex 20:15+). The Word said to not bear false witness against his neighbor, which he did (Ex 20:16+). The Word stated do not commit adultery, which he did (Ex 20:14+). The Word said do not murder, which he did (Ex 20:13+). In short David despised God's commandments and in so doing he despised God Himself!

[Guzik](#) - Many who live in either open or hidden sin seem to believe it has no effect or little effect on their relationship with God (ED: [SEE NOTE ABOVE ON DECEPTIVENESS OF SIN](#)). But despising God's commandment means despising God Himself, and we can't have fellowship with God and despise Him at the same time. *If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* (1 John 1:6+)

**You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon** - Here God levies the most specific charges of David's **doing evil**, with double emphasis on the fact that it was **YOU**, David, who killed Uriah with the sword. Yes **YOU** "used" an Ammonite sword, but it was **YOU** who killed him! This declaration would serve to deflect or deflate any defense by David that it was not he but the enemy who had killed Uriah. If Nathan had stopped at "**you have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword**", David might have responded with the rationalization that "I wasn't even present when Uriah was killed. How could I possibly be guilty of his death by sword?"

[Guzik](#) - the confession of our sin needs to be specific. J. Edwin Orr tells of a time of revival in Brazil when a lady stood in a

crowded church and said, "Please pray for me. I need to love people more." The leader gently told her, "That is not confession, sister. Anyone could have said it." Later in the service the woman stood again and said, "Please pray for me. What I should have said is that my tongue has caused a lot of trouble in this church." Her pastor whispered to the leader, "Now she's talking.". It costs nothing to say, "I'm not everything I should be" or "I ought to be a better Christian." It does cost something to say, "I have been a trouble-maker in this church" or "I have had bitterness towards certain leaders, to whom I apologize right now."

**THOUGHT-** The question is do you despise (or have little regard for) the Word of God in your life? You may be thinking "Of course not. I would never despise His holy Word!" If you are unsure, ask yourself how much time do you spend reading and studying it in a given week. The truth is that if you say almost no time at all, you are in effect despising the Word of the Lord! And then add to this the fact that you commit sin every day and in so doing are essentially despised the Word of the LORD and the LORD of the Word! God by Your Spirit save us from ourselves every day. Amen.

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**Despised** (0959) **bazah** is from a root meaning to accord little worth to something) means to disdain or to hold in contempt. **Bazah** is used in a number of places to mean "despise" in the sense of treating someone or something as totally insignificant or worthless. **Bazah** means to raise the head loftily and disdainfully, to look down one's nose at something (so to speak)! The idea is that one undervalues something or someone which implies contempt for that thing or person (in this case God's Name in Mal 1:6 and here His table/altar, the place He is to be worshipped, revered, and adored! Woe!)

**THOUGHT** - Lest we be too hard on these ancient Israelites, let us "moderns" consider what we do EVERY TIME we willfully sin against God! Are you as convicted as I am! In fact Larry Richards writes that "Disobedience and other sins are portrayed in the OT as nothing less than evidences that we **despise** God. **When we disobey, we show that we place little value on the Lord**"

**Bazah** means to treat things of value with contempt, as if they were worthless, the classic example being the very first use in Scripture in which Esau "despised his birthright" and sold it for lentil stew! (Ge 25:34, cp Heb 12:15-16).

The opposite of **bazah** is **kabed** "to honor" (1Sa 2:30), yare' "to **fear**" (Pr 14:2), and shamar "to **keep**" commandments (Pr 19:16).

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)** Greek verbs used to translate baza/bazah are **phaulizo** (to hold cheap, to depreciate, disparage, to despise, to consider worthless = translates **baza** in Ge 25:34, Nu 15:31 2Sa 12:9 Isa 37:22 Mal 1:6) and **exoutheneo** (as treating someone or something as of no account despise, disdain, make light of Ro 14:3. As making something or someone as of no account disregard, reject, despise- 1Th 5:20 = exoutheneo translates baza in 2Sa 6:16, , 12:10, , 1Chr 15:29, , Ps 15:4, 22:24, 69:33, 73:20, 102:17, 119:141, Eccl 9:16, Da 11:21, Mal 1:7, 1:12; 2:9)

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### Henry Blackaby - Despising God's Word

Why have you despised the word of the LORD by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. 2 Samuel 12:9 (NASB)

We Christians have lots of euphemisms for our sin: we call it backsliding, a bad habit, an error in judgment, or a moment of weakness. Sometimes we just don't want to face up to what we have done. But God always calls sin what it is—sin.

When David sinned against Uriah by committing adultery with Uriah's wife, God saw David's sin much differently than David did. Rather than repenting immediately, David tried to cover it up by having Uriah killed. Perhaps he thought God would let him get away with this one, since he'd been faithful in so many other ways. But God would not overlook David's sin. Even though David had been obedient time after time, his sin was an insult to God. David knew better. He knew what God thought about adultery—and about murder—yet he chose to satisfy his own selfish purposes.

We sometimes excuse ourselves for disobeying God's Word. We may assume God will just forgive us and treat us as if it never happened. We may think our disobedience is not a big deal. We may rationalize by telling ourselves, "Nobody's perfect!" The fact is —when we sin, we are despising God's Word. Perhaps if we really understood how God looks at our sin, we would take his Word far more seriously. Perhaps if we realized that we insult God and his Word when we sin, we would be more hesitant to do what we know is wrong. (Borrow [The experience : a devotional and journal : day by day with God](#))

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### Off Track

Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? —2 Samuel 12:9

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-13

When I sat in my car at the start of the automatic car wash, I didn't know that my left front tire was not properly lined up with the track. The car wash started but my car wasn't moving, so I accelerated. That caused my tire to jump the track.

Now I was stuck—I couldn't move forward or backward. The car wash continued through its cycle without my car. Meanwhile, cars began lining up and waiting for me. I was glad when two workers at the station helped me get my car back on the track.

Sometimes in our Christian lives we get off track too. King David did in a big way. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and later ordered that her husband be put "in the forefront of the hottest battle" and left there to be killed (2 Sam. 11:3-4,15-17). David's actions were way out of line with how God wanted him to behave as His chosen king.

David needed help to get back on track. The Bible says that "the Lord sent Nathan to David" (12:1). He confronted him about stealing another man's wife, and David wisely repented (v.13). Nathan took a risk to help David get right with God, even though his sin still had dire consequences.

Does someone you know need your help to get back on track? By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Fellowship with other Christians  
Strengthens us when we are weak,  
Reprimands when we are sinning,  
Helps us when God's will we seek.  
—Sper

True love dares to confront.

**2 Samuel 12:10 'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'**

- **the sword:** 2Sa 13:28,29 18:14,15,33 1Ki 2:23-25 Am 7:9 Mt 26:52
- **because:** Nu 11:20 1Sa 2:30 Mal 1:6,7 Mt 6:24 Ro 2:4 1Th 4:8
- **taken:** Ge 20:3 Pr 6:32,33
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Damocles' Sword

## THE CONSEQUENCES OF BAD CHOICES (SIN)!

**Now therefore** - This is a horrible term of conclusion for David to process. It is based on the horrible crime he had committed against the LORD, the consequences are now prophetically declared!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved it behooves us all to keep in mind that while we are free to choose the sin, cannot choose the consequences!

**F B Meyer** says "Sin may be forgiven (2Sa 12:13), as David's was, and yet a long train of sad consequences ensue. The law of cause and effect will follow on, with its linked chain of disaster: though God's mercy to his erring and repentant children will be shown, in converting the results of their sin into the fires of their purification; in setting alleviation of the tenderest sort against their afflictions; and in finally staying the further outworking of evil. O soul of man, this is solemn reading for us; it is the inner story of God's dealing with his own. As He dealt with David, He will deal with us. He will forgive, but He may have to use the rod; He may restore to his favour, and yet permit us to drink the bitter waters which our sin has tapped. Be meek, patient, and submissive; thou wilt come forth out of the ordeal a white soul, and men shall learn through thy experiences the goodness and severity of God. Forgiven men may have to reap as they have sown. ([The Stripes of the Children of Men](#))

**Blaikie** comments that...Here we find a great principle in the moral government of God, —**correspondence between an offence and its retribution**. Of this many instances occur in the Old Testament. **Jacob** deceived his father; he was deceived by his own sons. **Lot** made a worldly choice; in the world's ruin he was overwhelmed. So **David** having slain Uriah with the sword, the sword was never to depart from him. He had robbed Uriah of his wife; his neighbours would in like manner rob and dishonour him. He had disturbed the purity of the family relation; his own house was to become a den of pollution. He had mingled deceit and treachery with his actions; deceit and treachery would be practised towards him. What a sad and ominous prospect! Men naturally look for peace in old age; the evening of life is expected to be calm. But for him there was to be no calm; and his trial was to fall on the tenderest part of his nature. He had a strong affection for his children; in that very feeling he was to be wounded, and that, too, all his life long. **Oh let not any suppose that because God's children are saved by His mercy from eternal punishment, it is a light thing for them to despise the commandments of the Lord!** "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that thy fear is not in Me, saith the Lord of hosts." (Jer 2:19KJV) ([An Exposition of 2 Samuel](#))

**The sword shall never depart from your house** - The International Children's Bible says "So there will always be people in your family who will be killed by a sword." Observe that David's sowing of sin by the sword (struck down Uriah the Hittite with the **sword**...killed him with the **sword** - 2Sa 12:9) would reap a similar harvest. David's sin against Uriah became a permanent stain on his otherwise godly life 1 Ki 15:5 recording "because David did what was right in the sight of the LORD, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, **except in the case of Uriah the Hittite**."

**Never** - This word "**never**" must have been painful to David. Beloved, we need to heed this warning.

**THOUGHT**- While every bad choice has the potential for negative consequences, some bad choices may bring about consequences that **never** go away (until glory)! That truth should cause each of us to "think twice" before we make the foolish choice to willfully, wantonly leap into the next sin!

And just as Nathan had prophesied (and David also may have "foretold" when he called for fourfold restitution [2Sa 12:6] - David's son by Bathsheba was the first of the four to die [2Sa 12:14, 15]) we see [Absalom](#) avenge [Amnon's](#) rape of his sister [Tamar](#) (Observe Amnon taking a woman that was forbidden, just as his father had done!) by striking Amnon and putting him to death (see 2Sa 13:28, 29). We see [Joab](#) and his armor bearers strike Absalom and kill him (2Sa 18:14,15), which prompted a painful mourning from King David (he would have surely given anything to go back and reverse that night he looked at Bathsheba but it was too little, too late as they say) "The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (2Sa 18:33) And finally we see King Solomon order the death of David's other son [Adonijah](#) (2Ki 2:23, 24, 25). While David did not live to see Adonijah's death, he must surely have been aware that his passing of the reign to his son Solomon was tantamount to passing a death sentence on his eldest son Adonijah.

How ironic that **Solomon**, one of his sons who survives the sword, penned words that ironically were an apt description of the harvest from David's sins "The one who commits adultery with a woman is **lacking sense**; He who would destroy himself does it. Wounds and disgrace he will find, and his reproach will not be blotted out. (Pr 6:32, 33+) Had David only known that one glance allowed to turn into a lingering, lustful (lust filled) gaze on a spring evening would set in motion a lifelong avalanche of death, suffering and pain! How vital is it that we read and heed David's tragic story of the lifelong cost for just a moment of pleasure!

**Zeisler** comments that "Some people think of the consequences from God as random punishments from an angry deity. "I did something that made God mad, and that's why I got hit by lightning," or, "That's why I contracted this disease." It's rare that God directs specific negative events at a person as consequences for sin. In Romans 1, when we read of the descent of a culture into wickedness, it says God "gave them over" and let rebels have what they wanted. We create consequences for ourselves. We set in motion terrible things that have their own life, that bring their own hurt. That's exactly what Nathan was predicting here. Three of

David's sons would end up dying untimely deaths. Two of those were acting just like their father. They learned of his lust, lies, and violence, and they acted similarly. ([2 Samuel 12:1-15 You Have Despised The Word Of The Lord](#))

**Wiersbe** - God was ready to forgive David's sins, but He could not prevent those sins from "bringing forth death" (James 1:15). God's grace forgives, but God's government must allow sinners to reap what they sow (Ps 99:8). (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Because** - Term of explanation, explaining why the sword will continually hang over David's family, like the proverbial [sword of Damocles](#), why that sword would never depart from David.

**You have despised** ([bazah](#); Lxx - [exoutheneo](#) = treat as of no account, disdain) **Me** - Note the parallel! In 2Sa 12:9 Yahweh says David had despised His **Word** and now He amplifies what despising His **Word** means -- it means despising the LORD Himself! This must have been like a figurative sword piercing the heart of David, whose heart had grown callous and cold toward the things of God and needed "major surgery" by the Great Physician! In the previous verse God declared David had despised His Word and here it is His Person, showing the close linkage between the Word of God and God of the Word (cp the Incarnate Word, John 1:1, 2). When we sin (especially when like David we know better), we sin against His Word and His Person! This truth should cause us all to pause and reflect on the insanity and insolence of that sin we are presently being tempted to presumptuously commit! We need to recall that the payment for this sin is death and it cost God His Son's death to redeem us of our debt.

**THOUGHT** - Next time you are being tempted to commit a willful sin, think about the cost to God, the Cross of Christ and the potential "reverberations" (consequences) of that sin in the lives of those we love. You might even take time to write these thoughts down in the midst of the battle with lust which is tempting you to gratify your flesh. This simple pause, might serve to deflate the power of that strong enticement of temptation to sin!

So why did David commit adultery with Bathsheba and murder her husband, one of his own "mighty men" (2Sa 23:1, 8, 39)? Simply put - He despised the Word of God. He despised the commandment that said "Do not covet." He despised the commandment that said "Do not steal (your neighbor's wife)." He despised the commandment that said "Do not commit adultery." He despised the commandment that said "Do not commit murder."

When we disobey, we show that we place little value on the Lord!  
-- Larry Richards

**Solomon** describes one who **despises** God as **devious**...

He who walks in his uprightness fears the LORD (Clearly David was not walking in the fear of the LORD during these dark days before he confessed), but he who is devious (perverse) (**Lxx** = skoliazō = to be crooked, to be perverse) in his ways **despises** (**Hebrew** = [bazah](#); **Lxx** = [atimazo](#) = to dishonor) Him. (Proverbs 14:2)

**Comment:** Solomon's proverb is an apt description of his father David devious ways (sinned in secret and then covered it) before he confessed and repented of his sins.

**and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife-** Yahweh repeats the charge of adultery and does not use Bathsheba's name but Uriah's name.

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### Lingering Damage

The sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite. —2 Samuel 12:10

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-14

A young teen who was constantly getting into trouble always apologized when his parents confronted him. No matter how much he hurt his parents with his previous wrong-doing, he would soon turn around and do something else wrong—knowing he would be forgiven.

Finally, his dad took him out to the garage for a talk. Dad picked up a hammer and pounded a nail into the garage wall. Then he gave his son the hammer and told him to pull out the nail.

The boy shrugged, grabbed the hammer, and yanked out the nail.

"That's like forgiveness, Son. When you do something wrong, it's like pounding in a nail. Forgiveness is when you pull the nail out."

"Okay, I get it," said the boy.

"Now take the hammer and pull out the nail hole," his dad replied.

"That's impossible!" the boy said. "I can't pull it out."

As this story illustrates and King David's life proves, sin carries consequences. Even though David was forgiven, his adultery and murder left scars and led to family problems (2 Sam. 12:10). This sobering truth can serve as a warning for our lives. The best way to avoid the lingering damage of sin is to live a life of obedience to God. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

A Prayer: Thank You for being slow to anger and filled with compassion. May I not presume upon Your mercy by assuming there will be no consequences for my sin. Help me to confess and then to sin no more. Amen.

Our sins can be forgiven and washed away, but their consequences are ours to pay.

**2 Samuel 12:11 "Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion, and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight.**

- **I will raise:** 2Sa 13:1-14,28,29 15:6,10
- **I will take:** 2Sa 16:21,22 De 28:30 Eze 14:9 20:25,26 Ho 4:13,14
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

2 Samuel 16:21; 22 [Ahithophel](#) (Bathsheba's father) said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house; then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself odious to your father. The hands of all who are with you will also be strengthened." ....22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

### PLEASURES OF SIN FOR A SEASON... PAIN OF CONSEQUENCES FOR A LIFETIME!

**Thus says the LORD, 'Behold** ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) - This interjection always serves to heighten the reader's attention. It says "*Pay close attention to what you are getting ready to read!*" Why? In this case, if God is bringing evil against the man after His own heart, we had all better realize that God NEVER plays favorites! Because He is holy, He has to repay the wages of sin. The NT Scriptures clearly teach that this "repayment" for sin must be with one's life (one's life blood) and it will be either the unrepentant sinner's life or the death of the sinless Lamb of God Who died in place of (substitutionary atonement) all who place their faith in Him so that they do not have die for their own sins. And so fittingly John the Baptizer begins his proclamation with that same word, behold - "**Behold**, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world." (Jn 1:29+) In summary, when the LORD says "**behold**" it is the Spirit's way of getting our attention. Yahweh wants to make sure that David does not miss what he is going to say, declaring several prophecies! How sad that the same man to whom the greatest prophecy in the OT was declared in 2Sa 7:12-16+ will now be the recipient of some of the most tragic prophecies uttered to an individual!

**I will raise up evil against you from your own household** (lit - "house") - Note the repetition of **I will** in these prophecies. **Hebrew** = "raise up against you disaster." While God is not the Author of evil, He will allow evil to have its sway in David's life as subsequent chapters prove. God Himself will be behind the scenes in providentially orchestrating evil against David's own family. Don't misread what God is saying. He is not saying that He is the author of evil, but that in His providence, He will permit evil to be accomplished.

The old saying like father, like son would be played out in David's family for three of David's sons will repeat the sins of their father. **Amnon** will rape Tamar (2Sa 13:8-14 - while David did not rape Bathsheba, nevertheless he took her and exerted his kingly power and prerogative). **Absalom** will take the royal harem (2Sa 16:22). **Adonijah** will seek to take his deceased father's concubine (1Ki 2:13, 14, 15, 16, 17).

**TSK Note** - Such phrases in Scripture do not mean that God either does or can do evil himself; but only that he permits such evil to be done as he foresaw would be done, and which, had he pleased, he might have prevented.

**I will even take your wives before your eyes and give them to your companion** (or "friend"), **and he will lie with your wives in broad daylight** (Heb "in the eyes of this sun.") - International Children's Bible says "*While you watch, I will take your wives from you. And I will give them to someone who is very close to you. He will have sexual relations with your wives, and everyone will know*

it." Is God the Author evil? Clearly He is not. He is the essence of light and in Him there is absolutely no darkness. But sometimes He does allow evil to take its course when His children sin. In this prophecy God says He will take David's wives and give them to someone close to him, a prophecy that was literally fulfilled. God says in essence "You have sowed to the flesh and shall reap the corruption of that sowing." (Gal 6:8+). David would reap what he has sown with even reaping "with interest" (so to speak) as Hosea 8:7 says "For they sow the **wind** And they reap the **whirlwind** (Hos 8:7YLT = hurricane)." David's sin was a "wind," but his family would reap a destructive hurricane! Hosea says there is usually a delay before the sin bears the rotten fruit, and that when it comes it may be far worse than the original sin! Woe!

Job also reminds us of the law of the harvest - "According to what I have seen, those who plow iniquity and those who sow trouble ([Septuagint - Lxx](#) = **odune** means physical suffering or misery, consuming grief, sorrow, mental pain, distress) harvest (reap) it (**What?** Iniquity! Trouble!)." (Job 4:8) What an incredible picture this passage paints. Plowing suggests the idea of deliberately preparing (or cultivating) the soil for the evil seed! The idea is that even before the farmer sows his seeds, he expends considerable effort in preparing the soil (I was raised on a farm). In a similar manner, the one who seeks to plow iniquity, is purposefully preparing the "soil" (of his heart) for his wicked seeds (cp Ro 13:14+)! The idea of sowing is that the type of seed sown determines the kind of harvest reaped (later and greater ~ a "bumper crop" of suffering and misery!)

### Here is a summary of David's reaping....

1. Loss of a child (2Sa 12:15, 18)
2. Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar (2Sa 13:1)
3. Amnon hates Tamar (2Sa 13:15)
4. Tamar disgraced and grieving (2Sa 13:18-20)
5. David's passivity and failure to discipline (2Sa 13:21)
6. David's seeming oblivion to the rift between Amnon and Absalom and inability to say "No!" (2Sa 13:24-27)
7. Absalom murders Amnon (2Sa 13:30)
8. Absalom's 3 year exile
9. Absalom's 2 years of estrangement from David in Jerusalem (2Sa 14:24, 28)
10. David's perfunctory restoration of Absalom, Absalom's failure to repent (2Sa 14:33)
11. Absalom begins planning coupe against David (2Sa 15:1-10)

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**Behold** ([02009](#)) [hinneh](#) an interjection meaning behold, look, now; if. "It is used often and expresses strong feelings, surprise, hope, expectation, certainty, thus giving vividness depending on its surrounding context." (Baker) **Hinneh** generally directs our mind to the text, imploring the reader to give it special attention. In short, the Spirit is trying to arrest our attention! And so **hinneh** is used as an exclamation of vivid immediacy (e.g., read Ge 6:13)! **Hinneh** is a marker used to enliven a narrative, to express a change a scene, to emphasize an idea, to call attention to a detail or an important fact or action that follows (Isa 65:17, Ge 17:20, 41:17). **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!"

**Hinneh** is translated in the Septuagint with the interjection **idou** (strictly speaking a command in the second person [aorist imperative, middle voice](#)) a demonstrative particle (used 1377 times in the Septuagint and NT) which is found especially in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke "and giving a peculiar vivacity to the style by bidding the reader or hearer to attend to what is said: "**Behold! See! Lo!**" (Thayer) The command is calling for urgent attention. Do this now! Don't delay! It could be loosely paraphrased "Pay attention!" or "Listen up!" to arouse attention and introduce a new and extraordinary fact of considerable importance.

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### AN AFFAIR OR ADULTERY? David's "AFFAIR" was ADULTERY!

When I was growing up, "adultery" was a word one whispered. Today the word is "affair," and it's a subtle change. Affair has an air of mystery about it, and romance, and excitement. Radio, television, movies, books—all of the media—assume or encourage the affair. It's easy to fall into the trap: everyone is doing it, so it must be OK. Unless, of course, you believe in keeping the laws of God.

For whatever reason, keeping the seventh commandment is becoming more difficult for more and more Christians. In fact, Allan Petersen begins his new book, *The Myth of Greener Grass*, with a question: "Is Anyone Faithful Anymore?" And it's a good question.

He writes that in his 38 years of traveling ministry he has counseled pastors, pastors' wives, missionaries, Sunday school teachers, Christian counselors, and church members who reflect the increasing incidence of extramarital affairs among professing Christian people. There is a "tendency to find reasons to support this behavior, even though those reasons might be contrary to the moral and biblical convictions we have long held."

Today we want to talk about relationships, not sin. Peterson points out the relationship of David and Bathsheba, and the results of their affair. The lessons we can learn from the story of David, a man of God who fell into sin, apply to all of us, men and women alike. Here are some of the, pointed out by Petersen:

1. No one, however chosen, blessed, and used of God, is immune to an extramarital affair.
2. Anyone, regardless of how many victories he has won, can fall disastrously. (1Co 10:12)
3. The act of infidelity is the result of uncontrolled desires, thoughts, and fantasies. (Jas 1:14,15, 2Co 10:3, 4, 5, Php 4:8, 9)
4. Your body is your servant or it becomes your master. (2Pe 2:19, Pr 5:22)
5. A Christian who falls will excuse, rationalize, and conceal, the same as anyone else. (cp 2Sa 12:5, 6, 7, 8ff)
6. Sin can be enjoyable but it can never be successfully covered. (Heb 11:25, Nu 32:23, Pr 28:13)
7. One night of passion can spark years of family pain. (2Sa 11:1, 2, 3, 4, 2Sa 12:10 ~ "never depart"!)
8. Failure is neither fatal nor final. (2Sa 12:13)

Source unknown

Walter Kaiser - [Was David Right to Take Concubines?](#) - Page 196 of Hard Sayings

**2 Samuel 12:12 'Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.'**

- **secretly:** 2Sa 11:4,8,13,15 Ec 12:14 Lu 12:1,2 1Co 4:5
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SECRET SINS HAVE PUBLIC CONSEQUENCES

**Indeed you did it secretly ([seter](#)), but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun** (Literally - "and before the sun") - Note God's **I will** assures that this horrible shame will be done before all the people. **Under the sun** primarily seems to mean out in the open but it could have an additional thought to include all people (all the globe is **under the sun**) of all time for it would be recorded forever for all people **under the sun** to read. Secret sin on earth is open scandal in Heaven! Is it not ironic that David who committed his sin secretly repeated uses this same word **secretly** ([seter](#)) in some of his beautiful psalms (Ps. 18:11 = hiding place; Ps. 27:5 = secret place; Ps. 31:20 = secret place; Ps. 32:7 = hiding place; Ps. 61:4 = shelter; Ps. 81:7 = hiding place)

**John MacArthur** has an article entitled "[Nothing Safe about Secret Sin](#)" in which he asks the piercing question "Do you want to know who you really are? Take a hard look at your private life--especially your innermost thoughts. Gaze into the mirror of God's Word, and allow it to disclose and correct the real thoughts and motives of your heart." ([Nothing Safe about Secret Sin](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - Practitioners of sin who profess to be children of God should contemplate carefully the response of God to David. David sinned in relative privacy and secrecy. But God's judgment upon him was public, before "**all Israel**" and even "**the sun**." The universality of that judgment may be observed in that every generation has read of it for 3,000 years! The explanation for the severity of this judgment is given in the first part of 2Sa 12:14.

**Secretly** (hiding place)([05643](#)) ([cether/seter](#) from **cathar** = hide with thought of protection Ex 3:6, 1Sa 20:5, 1Ki17:3) speaks of a covering, veil, i.e., that which covers something to make it secret from another, as a figurative extension of a veil as a cloth covering -- God is seen in approaching storm, making darkness His hiding place Ps 18:11.

**Seter** - 34v - Deut. 13:6; Deut. 27:15; Deut. 27:24; Deut. 28:57; Jdg. 3:19; 1 Sam. 19:2; 1 Sam. 25:20; 2 Sam. 12:12; Job 13:10; Job 22:14; Job 24:15; Job 31:27; Job 40:21; Ps. 18:11; Ps. 27:5; Ps. 31:20; Ps. 32:7; Ps. 61:4; Ps. 81:7; Ps. 91:1; Ps. 101:5; Ps. 119:114; Ps. 139:15; Prov. 9:17; Prov. 21:14; Prov. 25:23; Cant. 2:14; Isa. 16:4; Isa. 28:17; Isa. 45:19; Isa. 48:16; Jer. 37:17; Jer. 38:16; Jer. 40:15

**NIDOTT** adds that **seter** "conveys a meaning of secret activity, like Abigail covertly aiding David (1Sa 25:20). More commonly, this activity is evil or malicious, as in the case of David's adultery with Bathsheba (2Sa 12:12), idolatry and murder committed in secret (Dt 27:15, 24), or slanderous accusations made in secret (Ps 101:5). However, Job recognized human sin can never be kept secret from God, who knows all things (Job 24:15). On one occasion, the psalmist uses סֵתֶר to describe the mystery of divine activity in human procreation (Ps 139:15). (VanGemeren, W. New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis 3:302. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House)

The root verb **satar** is used to hide the sin of adultery...

(If) A man has intercourse with her (another man's straying, unfaithful wife - Nu 5:12) and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband and she is **undetected** (satar), although she has defiled herself, and there is no witness against her and she has not been caught in the act (Nu 5:13 - read context Nu 5:14-30 for how her "secret sin" of adultery is exposed or brought to the light!).

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**Swindoll** applies Nathan's bold confrontation of David - to be effective in confrontation we need to equip ourselves with four things. If not, we can do more damage than good. We need to confront in absolute truth, right timing, wise wording, and fearless courage.

First, absolute truth. Don't go on hearsay. Get the facts. It may take time. You may have to investigate. Out of love and concern you will do all that. You won't investigate and spread the word all around; you'll just check it out until you have the facts carefully recorded and correctly arranged. Without absolute truth, you're shooting in the dark. Do not confront if you don't have the truth.

Second, right timing. Many people are confronted at the wrong time and as a result are driven deeper into their wrong because thoughtless Christians went off in a hurry to do something in the spurt of emotion. Wait until you are confident that it's God's timing. You will know. If you are sensitive to the Lord and are walking with Him, He will let you know, "Now is the time." It's then you do it. And, like Nathan, do it privately. In my ministry I've had to deal with some things that, acting in the flesh, I would have loved to have dealt with earlier. But it wasn't the time. When it was God's time, I had green lights flashing all the way and knew it was clear to speak to the person or persons involved. Painful, but clear.

Third, wise wording. I'm impressed that Nathan didn't just go up to David and say, "You are in sin . . . I'm ashamed of you!" No, he went about it in a wise manner. He had planned his approach very carefully. There's a proverb that says, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver. As an earring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reproof upon an obedient ear" (25:11-12, KJV). The right words are crucial. If you don't have your wording worked out, don't go. Wait. Think it through. Be a "wise reproof."

Fourth, fearless courage. Nathan, remember, was sent by God, and that's where courage comes from. You will have nothing to lose if you walk in the strength of the Lord. Don't fear the loss of a friendship. God honors the truth. After all, it is the truth—and only the truth—that sets people free. If the Lord is really in it, you'll be one of the best friends this person ever had by telling him the truth. Remember the phrase: "Faithful are the wounds caused by the bruising of one who loves you"? Be certain you're confronting out of love. One who doesn't love doesn't confront—at least he doesn't confront God's way. (Borrow [David Man of Passion and Destiny](#))

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## Filling Up Empty

Do not trust in oppression, nor vainly hope in robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them. —  
Psalm 62:10

Today's Scripture: Psalm 62:1-12

"This house ain't worth robbing," said a thief who seemed to feel he was wasting his time. According to a news report, the burglar broke into a home and held the owner at knifepoint while looking for money. He ransacked the place but turned up only \$3 in change, \$5 in a wallet, and a few pieces of cheap jewelry.

The thief apparently concluded that the homeowner was worse off than he was, so he gave back to him the \$8 he was going to steal. "I think he was disgusted," said the 32-year-old victim. "He couldn't believe that was all the money I had."

We might smile at the bad fortune of this thief. But we can often have a similar kind of experience. It happens whenever we try to take something that God has not given us. Following the path of envy, jealousy, adultery, theft (Psalm 62:10), or just plain stubborn willfulness, always results in more trouble than profit.

David, the psalmist, learned this the hard way. When he stole Uriah's wife, he ended up with far more trouble and far less happiness than he had bargained for (2 Samuel 11-12).

Father, help us to believe that it never pays to take what You have not given. Help us not to waste our lives chasing things that leave You out and leave us empty. By: Mart DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The little choices we must make  
Will chart the course of life we take;  
We either choose the path of light  
Or wander off in darkest night.  
—D. De Haan

Sin is never worth the trouble.

**2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away your sin; you shall not die.**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:13 κα ε πεν Δαυιδ τ Ναθαν μ ρηκα τ κυρ κα ε πεν Ναθαν πρ ς Δαυιδ κα κ ριος παρεβ βασεν τ μ ρημ σου ο μ ποθ ν ς

LXE 2 Samuel 12:13 And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, And the Lord has put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

NET 2 Samuel 12:13 Then David exclaimed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD!" Nathan replied to David, "Yes, and the LORD has forgiven your sin. You are not going to die.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:13 David responded to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Then Nathan replied to David, "The LORD has taken away your sin; you will not die.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

NIV 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.

NLT 2 Samuel 12:13 Then David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "Yes, but the LORD has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin.

NRS 2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan said to David, "Now the LORD has put away your sin; you shall not die.

NJB 2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against Yahweh.' Nathan then said to David, 'Yahweh, for his part, forgives your sin; you are not to die.

NAB 2 Samuel 12:13 Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan answered David: "The LORD on his part has forgiven your sin: you shall not die.

YLT 2 Samuel 12:13 And David saith unto Nathan, 'I have sinned against Jehovah.' And Nathan saith unto David, 'Also -- Jehovah hath caused thy sin to pass away; thou dost not die;

GWN 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 will not die.

BBE 2 Samuel 12:13 And David said to Nathan, Great is my sin against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord has put away your sin; death will not come on you.

RSV 2 Samuel 12:13 David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

NKJ 2 Samuel 12:13 So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.

ASV 2 Samuel 12:13 And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said unto David, Jehovah also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.

DBY 2 Samuel 12:13 And David said to Nathan, I have sinned against Jehovah. And Nathan said to David, Jehovah has also put away thy sin: thou shalt not die.

- **David:** 1Sa 15:20,24 1Ki 13:4 21:20 22:8 2Ki 1:9 2Ch 16:10 24:20-22 2Ch 25:16 Mt 14:3-5,10
- **I have sinned:** 2Sa 24:10 1Sa 15:24-25,30 Job 7:20 33:27 Ps 32:3-5 51:4 Pr 25:12 Pr 28:13 Lu 15:21 Ac 2:37 1Jn 1:8-10
- **The LORD:** Job 7:21 Ps 32:1,2 130:3,4 Isa 6:5-7 38:17 43:24 44:22 La 3:32 Mic 7:18,19 Zec 3:4 Heb 9:26 1Jn 1:7,9 2:1 Rev 1:5
- **You:** Lev 20:10 Nu 35:31-33 Ps 51:16 Ac 13:38,39 Ro 8:33,34
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Samuel 15:24-25; 30+ Then Saul said to Samuel, **'I have sinned'**; I have indeed transgressed the command of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and listened to their voice. 25 "Now therefore, please pardon my sin and return with me, that I may worship the LORD."....30 Then he said, **"I have sinned"**; but please honor me now before the elders of my people and before Israel, and go back with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."

**Matthew Henry helps us understand the difference between the confession of David and the confession of Saul:** There were several signs of hypocrisy in Saul's repentance. (1) He besought Samuel only, and seemed most anxious to stand right in his opinion, and to gain his favor. (2) He excuses his fault, even when confessing it; that is never the way of a true penitent. (3) All his care was to save his credit, and preserve his interest in the people. Men are fickle and alter their minds, feeble and cannot effect their purposes; something happens they could not foresee, by which their measures are broken; but with God it is not so. The Strength of Israel will not lie.

**Pulpit Commentary:** Saul had used the same words, and had meant very little by them; nor had he added "against Jehovah," because his purpose was to appease Samuel, and prevail upon him not to disgrace him before the people. David's confession came from the heart. There is no excuse-making, no attempt at lessening his fault, no desire to evade punishment. Ps 51:1 2 3 4 5ff is the lasting testimony, not only to the reality, but to the tenderness of his repentance, and we may even feel here that confession was to him a relief. The deep internal wound was at length disclosed, and healing had become possible. Up to this time he had shut God away from his heart, and so there had been no remedy for a soul diseased. It was because his sorrow was genuine that comfort was not delayed.

**Wiersbe** notes that "Saul used the words "I have sinned" three times, but didn't mean them (1Sa 15:24, 30; 26:21). David said "I have sinned" at least five times (2Sa 12:13; 24:10, 17 [1Chr. 21:8, 17]; Ps 41:4; 51:4). David was the Prodigal Son of the Old Testament, who repented and "came home" to find forgiveness (Luke 15:18, 21). For others who used these words see Ex 9:27; Nu 22:34; Josh 7:20; 2Sa 19:20; Mt 27:4.

Genesis 39:9 "There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and **sin against God?**"

Psalm 51:4+ **Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight,** So that (PURPOSE CLAUSE) You are justified when You speak And blameless when You judge.

### I HAVE SINNED... YOU SHALL NOT DIE

**Then** - This marks a progression in the narrative and David's response to Yahweh's words of condemnation. When? Having been pierced to the core by Nathan's parable and subsequent stinging rebuke describing his sins and the consequences of his sins. Finally, David's proud, rebellious heart was broken and contrite before His LORD (Ps 51:17+).

**David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD"** - This confession makes a critical point - Confession does not need to be long and drawn out to be real and sincere. Notice David does not describe the plethora of sins he committed in chapter 11, but summarizes them all in one phrase **"I have sinned against the LORD."** David's confession is the proper response to **"You are the man!"** David received Nathan's confrontation. He acknowledged it. Then he confessed he was THAT MAN! He made no excuses and no rationalizations. There were attempts to shift the blame and no self-justification. Compare Saul's so-called "confession" to Samuel in the [passages above](#), where both times he had excuses for why he had sinned. Notice the other difference is that Saul

said "I have sinned" but neglected to add **against the LORD**. While David had defiled Uriah's wife and then destroyed Uriah's life, he understood that ultimately his sin was against God. All sin is against God and His holiness. Joseph believed the same truth, but instead of confessing his sin, he declared it to prevent his sin...

(When being enticed and lured by Potiphar's wife Joseph said) There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. **How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?** (Ge 39:9)

**Sinned against the LORD** - Some more cross references - Ps 32:5 Lev 5:5,16:21 Lev 26:40; Jer 3:13 Dt 30:1,2; Pr 28:13; 1Jn1:9 Nu 5:7 Ezra 10:11 Job 33:27 Pr 28:13 Jer 3:13 2Sa 12:13;2Sa 24:10, Ps 38:18; Lk 15:21.

**Ray Pritchard** is spot on when he describes "the time for the king to do the hardest thing anyone can ever do, to look in the mirror and say, **"I have sinned."** Those may be the three hardest words in the English language. No one wants to say, **1 have sinned.**" We would rather do anything than say that. But there is no getting right until we admit how badly we have done wrong. ([How Much Sin Will God Forgive](#))

**David** in Psalm 51 reiterates that his sin is against God **"Against You, You only, I have sinned** and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and blameless when You judge. (Ps 51:4).

**Spurgeon comments on Ps 51:4:** The virus of sin lies in its opposition to God: the Psalmist's sense of sin towards others rather tended to increase the force of his feeling of sin against God. All his wrong-doing centered, culminated, and came to a climax, at the foot of the divine throne. To injure our fellow men is sin, mainly because in so doing we violate the law of God. The penitent's heart was so filled with a sense of the wrong done to the Lord Himself, that all other confession was swallowed up in a broken-hearted acknowledgment of offence against Him.

**And done this evil in thy sight.** To commit treason in the very court of the king and before his eye is impudence indeed: David felt that his sin was committed in all its filthiness while Jehovah Himself looked on. None but a child of God cares for the eye of God, but where there is grace in the soul it reflects a fearful guilt upon every evil act, when we remember that the God Whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed.

**That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.** He could not present any argument against divine justice, if it proceeded at once to condemn him and punish him for his crime. His own confession, and the judge's own witness of the whole transaction, placed the transgression beyond all question or debate; the iniquity was indisputably committed, and was unquestionably a foul wrong, and therefore the course of justice was clear and beyond all controversy.

**Keil and Delitzsch** adds that David's "words are very few, just as in the case of the publican in the Gospel of Luke (Lk 18:13). But that is a good sign of a thoroughly broken spirit....There is no excuse, no cloaking, no palliation of the sin. There is no searching for a loophole,...no pretext put forward, no human weakness pleaded. He acknowledges his guilt openly, candidly, and without prevarication.

**Swindoll** comments - And David said to Nathan, "I have sinned." Three words he should have said the morning after he slept with Bathsheba. I am convinced the consequences would have been much, much less if he had declared his sin, openly confessed it before God and the people and laid his life bare. But he didn't. And now, a year later, Nathan says, "You're the man, David!" And David admits, "I have sinned." But wait. Wait a minute. Look at the prediction Nathan makes in spite of David's confession. Under the guidance and inspiration of God, the prophet declares, "The sword shall never depart from your house." Never? NEVER. "I thought he was forgiven," you say. Hey, he was. Nathan says so: "The Lord has taken away your sin; you shall not die." That's forgiveness. But the consequences are still there. "The sword will not depart from the house." Am I saying that everyone who sins will have the same consequences? No. God, in His sovereign manner, fits the consequence for the person. It's His choice. It's His move. It's His plan. Why He chooses some to go this way and some that, I do not know. That's not our concern here. All I know is, in David's case, He led him down a path of misery so that he would never forget (nor would we in retrospect) the consequences of that series of acts. *"The sword shall never depart from your house. . . . Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household."* 2 Samuel 12:10-11 Twice, mention is made of David's **own house**.....David has been forgiven, but his problems are not over. Trouble will come upon David's household. Remember my words in the opening paragraph of this chapter? There are two kinds of problems a family can endure: trouble from without and trouble from within. For David, the trouble comes from within, and I don't think words can express the awful pain this man lived with as he saw the misery that unfolded as a result of his own sin (Borrow [David: A Man of Passion & Destiny - page 212](#))

**Guzik** - David didn't use elaborate or soft vocabulary. He **sinned**. It wasn't a *mistake*, an *error*, a *mess-up*, an *indiscretion*, or a *problem*. **Against the LORD**: This expressed the *enormity* of David's sin. His sin against Bathsheba, against Uriah, against Ahithophel, against his wives and children, and against the nation were great. But his sin **against the LORD** was greatest of all. There are no small sins against a great God, and great sins are even greater.

**And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has taken away ([abar](#) - lit - "removed") your sin; you shall not die** - David confessed and God proved 1 John 1:9 to be true, for it says "If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins** and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Play this great Charles Wesley hymn which David might have sung had it been written then....

### **Depth of mercy!**

Can there be mercy still reserved for me?  
Can my God His wrath forbear  
Me, the chief of sinners spare?

I have long withstood His grace:  
long provoked Him to His face;  
would not hearken to His calls;  
grieved Him by a thousand falls.

I my Master have denied,  
I afresh have crucified,  
oft profaned His hallowed name,  
put Him to an open shame.

There for me the Savior stands,  
shows His wounds and spreads His hands:  
God is love! I know, I feel;  
Jesus weeps, but loves me still!

Now incline me to repent!  
Let me now my fall lament!  
Now my foul revolt deplore!  
Weep, believe, and sin no more.

**G Campbell Morgan** has an interesting comment on **also** - Note the "**also**" in verse 13. A man puts away his own sin when in sincerity he confesses it. That makes it possible for God also to put it away. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

Nathan seems to speak these words without any delay which underscores the authenticity and completeness of David's repentance. The Law of Moses prescribed death for David's sins (Lev 20:10) but in His grace and mercy, God chose to give life. Notice that God does not say "**I will** take away your sin." It is a past tense, completed action the moment the words were uttered by Nathan. Remember that truth the next time you commit some "horrible" sin and come to Him in conviction, confession and repentance. You have been forgiven. Consequences may remain but the fact is that you are completely forgiven by God. Don't fall into the trap of saying "I can't forgive myself." Think about that statement. Who is the sin against? God. Who alone can forgive sin? God (cp Lk 7:49). Has He forgiven our sin when we genuinely confess and repent? John writes that God forgives "us our sins" and cleanses "us from all unrighteousness" ( 1John 1:9) so clearly we are completely forgiven. We must learn to receive and rest in the times of refreshing that come after repenting and returning to the Lord (cp Acts 3:19).

It is in light of God's great grace and mercy to David, that the sweet psalmist was inspired to pen the words of Psalm 32...

A Psalm of David. A Maskil. How blessed is he whose transgression is **forgiven**, Whose sin is **covered**! How blessed is the man to whom the LORD **does not impute iniquity**, And in whose spirit there is no deceit! (Ps 32:1,2)

The **prophet Micah** spoke of the depth and degree of God's forgiveness...

Micah 7:18+ Who is a God like You, who pardons iniquity and **passes over** (Hebrew = [abar](#) = same verb used of David's sin being taken away) the rebellious act of the remnant of His possession? He does not retain His anger forever, because He delights in unchanging love. 19 He will again have compassion on us. He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

**Comment:** Notice that God "delights" to show forgiveness! What an incredible truth.

**G Campbell Morgan** has an interesting comment on why **Nathan** adds the word **also** - "A man puts away his own sin when in sincerity he confesses it. That makes it possible for God also to put it away. The Divine putting away of sin is always made possible potentially by the Divine atonement; but it can only become possible in the experience of the sinner, when the sinner confesses, and so judges and puts it away from himself."

**William Blaikie** comments that "We cannot pass from this aspect of David's case without marking the terrible power of self-deception. Nothing blinds men so much to the real character of a sin as the fact that it is their own. Let it be presented to them in the light of another man's sin, and they are shocked. It is easy for one's self-love to weave a veil of fair embroidery, and cast it over those deeds about which one is somewhat uncomfortable. It is easy to devise for ourselves this excuse and that, and lay stress on one excuse and another that may lessen the appearance of criminality. But nothing is more to be deprecated, nothing more to be deplored, than success in that very process. Happy for you if a Nathan is sent to you in time to tear to rags your elaborate embroidery, and lay bare the essential vileness of your deed! Happy for you if your conscience is made to assert its authority, and cry to you with its awful voice, "Thou art the man!" For if you live and die in your fool's paradise, excusing every sin, and saying peace, peace, when there is no peace, there is nothing for you but the rude awakening of the day of judgment, when the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies! ([An Exposition of 2 Samuel](#))

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**Taken away** (05674)(**abar**) means to pass over. It refers primarily to spatial movement, to "moving over, through, or away from." Abar is used first in Ge. 8:1 where it describes God causing a wind to "pass over on top of" the flood waters (waters that served as a picture of His judgment on the sin of the ancient world) and carry them away.

The Septuagint translates the Hebrew verb abar with the rare Greek verb **parabibazo** which means to remove or to put aside. David himself uses this verb in a request of God...

2 Samuel 24:10 Now David's heart troubled him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. But now, O LORD, please take away (parabibazo) the iniquity of Your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

Comment: This event was clearly after the events of 2Samuel 11 and 12 and again we see David commit a great sin against God. And while he apparently was forgiven his sin, he again suffered severe consequences that affected the nation of Israel. Read this compelling drama in 2Samuel 24:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. These events led to the building of the Altar to God in 2Sa 24:25, 2Sa 24:19-24)

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## Who Is That?

David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin." 2 Samuel 12:13

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Samuel 12:1–14

When a man installed a security camera outside his house, he checked the video feature to ensure that the system was working. He was alarmed to see a broad-shouldered figure in dark clothing wandering around his yard. He watched intently to see what the man would do. The interloper seemed familiar, however. Finally he realized he wasn't watching a stranger roam his property, but a recording of himself in his own backyard!

What might we see if we could step out of our skin and observe ourselves in certain situations? When David's heart was hardened and he needed an outside perspective—a godly perspective—on his involvement with Bathsheba, God sent Nathan to the rescue (2 Samuel 12).

Nathan told David a story about a rich man who robbed a poor man of his only lamb. Though the rich man owned herds of animals, he slaughtered the poor man's lone sheep and made it into a meal. When Nathan revealed that the story illustrated David's actions, David saw how he had harmed Uriah. Nathan explained the consequences, but more important he assured David, "The Lord has taken away your sin" (v. 13).

If God reveals sin in our lives, His ultimate purpose isn't to condemn us, but to restore us and to help us reconcile with those we've hurt. Repentance clears the way for renewed closeness with God through the power of His forgiveness and grace. By: Jennifer Benson Schuldt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What sin(s) do you need to bring to God today in repentance? How does His grace encourage you to come before Him in honesty?

God, help me to see my life the way You see it and experience Your grace.

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## Collision Course

Be sure your sin will find you out. —Numbers 32:23

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-15

My wife and I were driving on an expressway when we saw a driver turn left into a median turnaround that was intended for emergency vehicles only. He was planning to make a U-turn and head back the other way.

Looking to his right, the driver waited for an opening in oncoming traffic, so he failed to notice that a police car was backing up toward him on his left. Finally seeing an opening in traffic, the U-turn driver pulled out and rammed into the back of the police car.

It's not unusual for us to think we can get away with doing something wrong. After King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, he too was focused on "getting away with it." But he was on a collision course with Nathan. His adultery, deceit, and murder "displeased the Lord" (2 Sam. 11:27), so when Nathan exposed David's grievous sin, the king was deeply remorseful. He confessed, repented, and received God's forgiveness. But the consequences of his sin never departed from his household (12:10).

If you've been trying to get away with something, remember that "your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23). Turn yourself in to God. Don't hide. Instead, seek His gracious forgiveness. By: Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God knows all you've thought or done— From Him you cannot hide; Confess to Him and He'll forgive Through Christ the crucified. — Hess

We have to face our sins before we can put them behind us.

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### 2 Samuel 12:1-14 David's Lament

You may already know the story. King David, Israel's most illustrious ruler, the man after God's own heart, became the seducer, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer—utterly pitiless and unmoved by his monstrous misdeeds. Israel's ruler was now ruled by sin.

A year had passed since David committed adultery with Bathsheba and orchestrated the murder of her husband. David deteriorated physically and emotionally. His gnawing conscience kept him restless and melancholy. At night he tossed and turned.

When David was brought face to face with his corruption, his defenses crumbled. He cried, "I have sinned against the Lord" ([2 Samuel 12:13](#)). And Nathan the prophet replied, "The Lord also has put away your sin." Despite the devastating consequences of David's sin, he was assured of God's forgiveness.

After realizing the extent of his sin and its consequences, David penned Psalm 51, a song of repentance and pleading for God's forgiveness. "I acknowledge my transgressions . . . Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (vv.3,7).

Are you suffering the consequences of sin? Admit your wrongs and ask God to cleanse your heart. He will show mercy and restore your joy if you turn to Him. —David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Our sinfulness can sap our joy  
And make us feel far from the Lord;  
Confession and repentance, though,  
Provide the way to be restored.  
—Sper

### Repentance means hating sin enough to turn from

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### Moving Past Sinful Failure

I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. — Isaiah 43:25

Today's Scripture: 2 Samuel 12:1-23

How should we handle moments of faith-failure, when we've damaged the kingdom of God in the eyes of our friends and family or dishonored God in our actions?

We can learn from King David after his humiliation in the Bathsheba scandal. Though the terrible consequences of that sin could not

be avoided, he found his way back to a relationship with God that made it possible for him to continue to serve Him. We too can find our way back.

David's pattern in 2 Samuel 12 serves us well: We need to declare our error candidly (v.13) and seek God's forgiveness. Then we can ask God that others be spared the consequences of our actions (v.16). Finally, we need to recognize that sometimes the consequences simply cannot be avoided and must be endured. While we always mourn those consequences, we can't allow them to so consume us that we cease to be servants of God (vv.20-23).

Satan not only delights in the moment of our failure but also in the spiritual inactivity that sometimes snares us in our remorse. When we've blown our witness, we are and should be humbled. But we should not multiply the damage by retreating into silence and obscurity as ambassadors of Christ. We can move past failure. By: Randy Kilgore ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Action Suggestion If after you've confessed your sin to God, you still suffer with guilty feelings, memorize Proverbs 24:16 and 1 John 1:9 and ask God to help you believe His Word.

God forgives our sins completely to restore us to His presence and service.

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### **G Campbell Morgan - I have sinned against the Lord—2Sa 12.13.**

Evidently a year passed before Nathan was sent by God to David, for Bathsheba's child was born. We can imagine what that year had been to David, and that the message from God through His servant must have come as a relief to the troubled man. **It was at this juncture that the best in David was apparent. He at once confessed. "I have sinned,"** and his whole bearing under the chastisement which fell upon him reveals him as a man who in the deepest facts of his life was true to God. Dr. Margoliouth, in his book, "[Lines of Defence of the Biblical Revelation](#)," argues with convincing clearness that **in all this David was pre-eminently revealed as a man after God's own heart.** Other men who had been guilty of such failure might have defended their actions, might have slain the prophet. Not so with this man. He knew God, and he knew the wrong of his action, and he confessed his sin. If we read Ps 32 and Ps 51, which are connected by common consent with these experiences, we shall know how deep was this sense of sin. The readiness of God to pardon, is radiantly set forth in the story, in that directly David said, "**I have sinned**," the prophet replied. "Jehovah also hath put away thy sin." Note the "**also**." A man puts away his own sin when in sincerity he confesses it. That makes it possible for God also to put it away. The Divine putting away of sin is always made possible potentially by the Divine atonement; but it can only become possible in the experience of the sinner, when the sinner confesses, and so judges and puts it away from himself. (Borrow [Life applications from every chapter of the Bible](#))

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**Swindoll** has this application from David's response of repentance to Nathan - It is about genuine repentance itself. How can we know that repentance is genuine? I see four things in Psalm 51 that help me identify true repentance.

**First** of all, when there is true repentance, there will be open, unguarded admission. David says, "I have sinned . . . I have not hidden my sin. Against Thee and Thee only I have sinned and I've done evil." And he spells it out. When a person holds back the truth or tells you only part of it, he or she is not repentant.

**Second:** when there is true repentance, there is a desire to make a complete break from sin. Repentance is turning around, on the basis of truth, and going in the opposite direction, making a complete break with what has been. David's son Solomon said, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." (Proverbs 28:13) Forsaking sin follows confession of sin. Both represent genuine repentance— a desire to make a complete break.

**Third:** when there is true repentance, the spirit is broken and humble. David says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." (Psalm 51:17+) Grief over what you have done, delight over the relief of repentance and release, doesn't leave you standing there stoic. You may cry; you may then laugh out loud; you may groan or fall on your face or shout for joy over the relief. But you won't be defensive or angry or proud or bitter. A contrite heart makes no demands and has no expectations. Broken and humble people are simply grateful to be alive. When there is absolute repentance, resulting in a broken and humble heart, emotions overflow.

**Fourth:** true repentance is a claiming of God's forgiveness and reinstatement. Turning around, going in the other direction, is our claim that He has forgiven and has reinstated us. That's the very first thing Nathan does with his friend, David. "You will not die, but there will be consequences." All sins are forgivable, when confessed and forsaken, but some sins carry tremendous ramifications . . . the awful, sometimes lingering consequences. David died hating the day he fell into bed with Bathsheba because of the constant conflicts and consequences that resulted. But down inside he knew that the God of Israel had forgiven him and had dealt with him in grace. After all, he was allowed to go on living, wasn't he? (Borrow [David Man of Passion and Destiny - page 206](#))

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**Flyleaf Wisdom** - All right, Mary, I confess. While I was a guest at your home in Manila, I used your Bible one day for my devotions. When I opened it, I saw these words written on the flyleaf:

Acknowledgment.

Acceptance.

Adjustment.

Those words express the steps that believers in Christ need to take when they receive bad news. I see these actions illustrated in the life of David.

**Acknowledgment.** When David was confronted by Nathan about his sin, he admitted his guilt (2 Samuel 12:13). When we are faced with a problem, whether it's the result of our sin or not, it's futile to run from the truth.

**Acceptance.** When his infant son died as punishment for his sin with Bathsheba, David accepted it as God's will (2Sa 12:19 20 21 22 23) and learned from it. We too need to see difficulties as opportunities to trust God and to grow spiritually (James 1:2 3 4).

**Adjustment.** David turned to the Lord for forgiveness and help, and he later wrote about what he had learned (Psalm 32:1 2). For us, we may need to ask the Lord for the ability to make a lifestyle change or to take some specific action.

Have you been hit hard by bad news? These steps from Mary's Bible can help you to handle it in a way that will please the Lord and result in good. —David C. Egnor ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Day by day and with each passing moment,  
Strength I find to meet my trials here;  
Trusting in my Father's wise bestowment,  
I've no cause for worry or for fear.  
—Berg

God takes us into His darkroom  
to develop our character

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**Space Junk** - Orbiting our planet at speeds more than 4.5 miles per second is a growing collection of space junk. Nuts, bolts, and other discarded debris from space flights are presenting a real hazard to future spacecraft. Their sheer speed makes the tiniest object strike with the impact of a bullet. During one of the shuttle missions, a speck of paint created a pit a quarter-inch wide in a window of the craft.

One study revealed that there are 110,000 objects larger than 1 centimeter in orbit. Their combined weight is 4 million pounds! To avoid a space junk disaster, the US Space Command monitors orbiting debris for NASA.

Sinful choices create their own kind of junk—unintended consequences. When Achan stole and hid forbidden booty, it cost him his life (Joshua 7). After King David committed adultery and murder, family discord followed (2Sa 15-18).

Do you have any “junk” in your life? Sin's consequences have a way of accumulating. When we confess our sins to God, He promises to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). For those we have hurt, we can seek ways of righting wrongs through restitution (Luke 19:1-8). The God of grace will give us wisdom in dealing with bad decisions from our past and help us to make good ones in the future. —Dennis Fisher ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What shame can overwhelm the soul  
Because we've chosen paths of sin!  
But if we humbly call on God,  
He'll grant anew His peace within.  
—D. De Haan

The law of sowing and reaping  
has never been repealed

BGT 2 Samuel 12:14 πλ ν τ ι παροξ νων παρ ξυνας το ς χθρο ς κυρ ου ν τ ματι το τ κα γε υ ς σου τεχθε ς σοι θαν τ ποθανε ται

LXE 2 Samuel 12:14 Only because thou hast given great occasion of provocation to the enemies of the Lord by this thing, thy son also that is born to thee shall surely die.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

NET 2 Samuel 12:14 Nonetheless, because you have treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son who has been born to you will certainly die."

CSB 2 Samuel 12:14 However, because you treated the LORD with such contempt in this matter, the son born to you will die."

ESV 2 Samuel 12:14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child who is born to you shall die."

NIV 2 Samuel 12:14 But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die."

NLT 2 Samuel 12:14 Nevertheless, because you have shown utter contempt for the LORD by doing this, your child will die."

NRS 2 Samuel 12:14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die."

NJB 2 Samuel 12:14 But, since you have outraged Yahweh by doing this, the child born to you will die.'

NAB 2 Samuel 12:14 But since you have utterly spurned the LORD by this deed, the child born to you must surely die."

YLT 2 Samuel 12:14 only, because thou hast caused the enemies of Jehovah greatly to despise by this thing, also the son who is born to thee doth surely die.'

GWN 2 Samuel 12:14 But since you have shown total contempt for the LORD by this affair, the son that is born to you must die."

BBE 2 Samuel 12:14 But still, because you have had no respect for the Lord, death will certainly overtake the child who has newly come to birth.

RSV 2 Samuel 12:14 Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD, the child that is born to you shall die."

NKJ 2 Samuel 12:14 "However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."

ASV 2 Samuel 12:14 Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of Jehovah to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die.

- **by this deed:** Ne 5:9 Ps 74:10 Isa 52:5 Eze 36:20-23 Mt 18:7 Ro 2:24
- **the child:** Ps 89:31-33 94:12 Pr 3:11,12 Am 3:2 1Co 11:32 Heb 12:6 Rev 3:19
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ONE ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCE HIGH COST OF SIN**

**However** - Yes David's sin was forgiven, but there was one additional sad consequence that must transpire.

**Warren Wiersbe** recalls that "Dr. William Culbertson, late president of Moody Bible Institute, sometimes ended his public prayers with, "And Lord, help us bear the consequence of forgiven sin and to end well." There are consequences to forgiven sin; for though God in His grace cleanses us, God in His government says, "You will reap what you have sown." After King David confessed his sin, the Prophet Nathan assured him that the Lord had put away his sin, but the rest of his days, David suffered the tragic consequences of what he had done. But when God establishes His kingdom on earth, He will restore His people, renew the land, and give His

people a new beginning that will cause them to forget their past disobedience and focus on praising the Lord and glorifying His name. Jehovah is “the God of hope.” Therefore, He can fill us with “all joy and peace in believing” so that we can “abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Ro 15:13NKJV). Is that your experience today? (Borrow [Be concerned](#))

**because by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme-** Nathan first gives the explanation for what he is about to declare to David. David was the visible head and earthly representative of Jehovah's government on earth and for that reason he must be punished.

The enemies blasphemed in David's day and continue to do so in our day because they read this story in the Bible. **J Vernon McGee** wrote that...

When I was a pastor in downtown Los Angeles, there were many times when some unbeliever or skeptic came to me and said, “How could God choose a man like David?” They would actually leer at me while waiting for my reply. The enemy is still blaspheming. God is going to take David to the woodshed. ([2 Samuel 12:10-21 Mp3](#))

This passage reminds one of the prominent Christian ministry scandals in recent years which have brought great shame to the church of God. Each time a prominent servant of God has fallen into sin, the news media seems to have relished telling the lurid details.

**the child also that is born to you shall surely die- Surely die** (not just “shall die”) indicates that this is determined by God and sure no matter how David responds or how much he prays asking for the child's life. Who sinned? David. Who was forgiven of his sin? David. Who died? David's child. Why? Is God being fair? Always! And neither Nathan or David accuse God of being unfair. They see the child's death as congruent with David's sin - David slept with Bathsheba who did not belong to him and brought forth new life which cannot belong to David.

[Guzik](#) - There is a difference in judgment **for** sin and judgment **by** sin. God forgave David's sin, but He would not shield him from every consequence of the sin. David had to face the consequences of his sin, beginning with the death of the child born by Bathsheba. This shows that God didn't only want to heal David of the guilt of his sin; He also wanted to heal David of the presence of this sin. We never read of David committing adultery again because God used these chastisements to drive such impurities far from David.

**Spurgeon** - “Long before his sin with Bathsheba, there were various indications as to David's special liability to temptation. That sin only threw out upon the surface the evil that was always within him; and now God, having him see that the deadly cancer is there, begins to use the knife to cut it out of him.”

**TECHNICAL NOTE** - The [Masoretic Text](#) has here “because you have caused the enemies of the LORD to treat the LORD with such contempt.” This is one of the so-called *tiqqune sopherim*, or “emendations of the scribes.” According to this ancient tradition, the scribes changed the text in order to soften somewhat the negative light in which David was presented. If that is the case, the [Masoretic Text](#) reflects the altered text. The present translation departs from the [Masoretic Text](#) here. Elsewhere the Piel stem of this verb means “treat with contempt,” but never “cause someone to treat with contempt.”

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**Walter Kaiser** on [page 150 in Hard Sayings in the Bible](#)- **Should Children Die for Their Parents' Sins?**

The principle governing Israelite courts was that human governments must not impute to children or grandchildren the guilt that their fathers or forebears accumulated. In Scripture each person stands before God as accountable for his or her own sin.

While this principle is acknowledged in Deuteronomy 24:16, there seem to be cases where it was not put in practice. For example, the child born to David and Bathsheba died because of their sin (2 Sam 12:14–18). And Saul's seven grandchildren were put to death because of Saul's sin (2 Sam 21:5–9). How are we to reconcile these contradictory sets of facts?

Some will also bring up the fact that the sins of the fathers have an ill effect on the children to the third and fourth generations (Ex 20:5; Deut 5:9). Surely this is a direct contradiction of the principle in Deuteronomy 24:16.

But Deuteronomy 24:16 is dealing with normal criminal law. It explicitly forbids blaming the children for the sin and guilt earned by the parent. If the son deserves the death penalty, the father must not be put to death in his place, or vice versa. This point is repeated in a number of texts, such as 2 Kings 14:6, 2 Chronicles 25:4, Jeremiah 31:30 and Ezekiel 18:20.

The legal principle of dealing with each individual according to individual guilt is one side of the equation. The other side is that God has reserved for himself the right to render all final decisions. Not all situations can, or are, resolved in human courts. Some must await the verdict that God will give.

There is a third element that must be accounted for as well. This notion is difficult for Westerners to appreciate, since we place such

a high premium on the individual. But Scripture warns us that there is such a thing as corporate responsibility. None of us functions in complete isolation from the society and neighborhood to which we are attached. Lines of affinity reach beyond our home and church groups to whole communities and eventually to our nation and the world in which we live.

There are three factors involved in communal responsibility in the Old Testament. First is unity. Often the whole group is treated as a single unit. In 1 Samuel 5:10–11, for example, the ark of God came to Ekron of the Philistines. Because the bubonic plague had broken out in the previous Philistine cities where the ark had been taken, the Ekronites cried out, “They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people.” The whole group sensed that they would share in the guilt of what their leaders had done in capturing the ark of God.

Second, sometimes a single figure represents the whole group. Rather than someone who embodies the psychology of the group, this is a case of one, such as the suffering Servant of the Lord, standing in for many others.

The third factor is oscillation from the individual to the group, and vice versa. The classic example appears in Joshua 7:11, where the Lord affirms, “Israel has sinned,” even though Achan confesses, “I have sinned” (Josh 7:20).

Each situation must be evaluated to see whether it is a principle of a human court that is involved, a divine prerogative of final judgment or a case of corporate solidarity. We in the West still understand that one traitor can imperil a whole army, but we do not always understand how individual actions carry over into the divine arena or have widespread implications. Scripture works with all three simultaneously.

In the case of David and Bathsheba, it is clear that the loss of the baby was linked to the fact that David committed adultery with Uriah’s wife, though Uriah remained determined to serve David faithfully in battle. This did not involve a human court but was a matter of divine prerogative.

The story about Saul’s seven grandchildren takes us into the area of national guilt. Saul violated a treaty made with the Gibeonites in the name of the Lord (Josh 9:3–15). The whole nation was bound by this treaty made in Joshua’s day. Thus when Saul, as head of the nation, committed this atrocity against the Gibeonites, it was an act against God and an act that involved the whole nation. A divinely initiated famine devastated the land until the demands of justice were met. When David inquired into the reason for the famine, God answered, “It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death” (2 Sam 21:1).

Saul and his sons had already fallen in the battle at Mount Gilboa, but his household shared in the stigma. Only God knew why the seven grandchildren shared in the guilt; it is not spelled out in the text. Apparently they had had some degree of complicity in the matter. Because only God knew, it was up to God, not a human court, to settle such cases.

As for the commandment that has the sins of the fathers visiting the children to the third and fourth generations, we can only observe that the text clearly teaches that this happens when the children repeat the motivating cause of their parents’ sin—that is, they too hate God. But when the children love God, the effect is lovingkindness for thousands of generations!

Both individual responsibility and group or communal responsibility are taught in Scripture. We must carefully define and distinguish these types of responsibility. But in no case should the principle of courts be to blame children for the wrongful deeds of their forebears. And if God demanded that principle as a basis for fairness in human governments, should we think he would do any less in the running of his own government?

No one will ever be denied eternal life because of what his or her forebears did or did not do. Each will live eternally or suffer everlasting judgment for his or her own actions (Ezek 18). Our standard of what constitutes fairness and justice, after all, is rooted in the character of God himself.

The graciousness of God and his swift move to forgive and to forget every sin that we call upon him to cleanse is seen in Exodus 34:6–7. The theme of these verses is essentially repeated in Numbers 14:18, 2 Chronicles 30:9, Nehemiah 9:17, Psalm 86:15, 103:8, 111:4, 116:5, 145:8, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2 and Nahum 1:3.

But God’s grace is balanced by the last part of Exodus 34:7, which warns that “[God] does not leave the guilty unpunished.” The reverse side of the same coin that declares God’s mercy and his love speaks of his justice and righteousness. For the wicked persons who by their actions tend to second their father’s previous motions by continuing to sin boldly against God as their fathers did, with no repentance, this text again warns that the chastisement of God will be felt down to the “third and fourth generation.” However, note carefully that the full formula includes the important qualifier “of those who hate me.” But wherever there is love, the effect is extended to thousands of generations!

In this connection, it is important to note that 2 Samuel 12:14 likewise declares about David’s sin with Bathsheba, “But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.” While it true that David was

thoroughly forgiven of his sin of adultery and complicity in murder (see Psalms 32 and 51), there were consequences to his sin that could not be halted, for they followed as inexorably as day follows night. To put it in another way, just because God knows that a mugger will accept him as Savior a number of years after a mugging, God does not, thereby, turn the molecular structure of the bat used in the mugging, and which is now descending on the head of an innocent victim, into limp spaghetti; it leaves permanent damage on the skull of its poor unsuspecting target. The case of David and Bathsheba is similar: the consequences of sin are as real as the creation of a new life that comes out of a sexual affair. This in turn gave occasion for the enemies of God to vaunt themselves and demonstrate even further contempt for God, his people, and their alleged different style of life. It was for this reason that God brought immediate judgment on David: "the son born to [him would] die."

See also comment on JOSHUA 7:1, 10–11; 2 SAMUEL 21:1–9; EZEKIEL 21:4; ROMANS 5:12.

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**QUESTION - [How does my personal, private sin affect others?](#) ([See accompanying video](#))**

**ANSWER** - If you lived isolated on an island in the middle of the sea, then perhaps your private sin would not affect anyone but yourself. However, since the maxim is "no man is an island," there is a good chance that you have family, friends, and acquaintances that you come into contact with on a continual basis. All of them will be affected in some way by sin because sin has consequences (Romans 6:23). That is a principle that follows the pattern laid down at the creation. Everything created has a seed from which it propagates itself after its "kind" (Genesis 1:11, 21, 25). In other words, you do not plant corn and expect to harvest beets. You cannot "plant" sin—even in private—and not expect to reap a harvest of consequences. And consequences have a way of spilling out over everyone and anyone that comes into contact with us because of another principle called "association." This means that those around you can be blessed or hurt by association with you and the choices and actions you make, both privately and publicly. One needs only to look at the recent scandals involving famous evangelical leaders to see the effects on others of "private" sins. Once they are discovered—and the Bible tells us to "be sure your sin will find you out" (Numbers 32:23)—families, friends, congregations, and the Christian community at large will be harmed. Worse still, the cause of Christ will be damaged as unbelievers scoff and sneer at us and blaspheme His name. It may seem that people sin without visible consequences, but what is secret will one day be made manifest. "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open" (Luke 8:17). Can you honestly say that there is no one that would then be affected by your secret sins if they should become known?

Sin that is kept secret produces guilt, and guilt has a way of changing us. Others see those changes and are affected by them. Perhaps a spouse, for instance, is unaware of her husband's addiction to pornography, but his addiction leads to a guilty secretiveness and change in attitude toward her as his sexual partner. She perceives that change and speculates on the possible cause—he finds her unattractive, he doesn't love her any more, or he's having an affair. While none of these things are true, the consequences of his "private" sin are potentially devastating to her, their marriage, and their family, even if his secret is never discovered.

Here is another principle to consider. "But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. . . . So that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:6, 18). When we reason from Scripture, we are able to see a principle here that can be applied both positively and negatively. What we do in secret, God will reward openly. If we pray and fast as unto the LORD, we are rewarded. So, it stands to reason that if we sin in secret, we shall also be "rewarded" openly for that action. In any case, God sees and knows about sin, whether private or public, and He does not let sin go unpunished.

The greatest consequence of private, personal sin is to our own mortal soul. Ezekiel 18:4 says that the soul that sins shall die, and Romans 6:23 tells us that the wages of sin is death. This speaks of a person who is a natural, habitual sinner without the benefit of newness of life. For the born-again child of God—one who has accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his savior—there is a standard of conduct, both in private and in public: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31). A born-again child of God has a desire to live to glorify God, and even though there are times when we can and do fail, God has made provision for us to be in fellowship with Him. He has promised that "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**2 Samuel 12:15 So Nathan went to his house. Then the LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow bore to David, so that he was very sick.**

Ουριου τ Δαυιδ κα ρρ σθησεν

LXE 2 Samuel 12:15 And Nathan departed to his house. And the Lord smote the child, which the wife of Urias the Chettite bore to David, and it was ill.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

NET 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went to his home. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and the child became very ill.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went home. The LORD struck the baby that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick.

NIV 2 Samuel 12:15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill.

NLT 2 Samuel 12:15 After Nathan returned to his home, the LORD sent a deadly illness to the child of David and Uriah's wife.

NRS 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went to his house. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became very ill.

NJB 2 Samuel 12:15 And Nathan went home. Yahweh struck the child which Uriah's wife had borne to David and it fell gravely ill.

NAB 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan returned to his house. The LORD struck the child that the wife of Uriah had borne to David, and it became desperately ill.

YLT 2 Samuel 12:15 And Nathan goeth unto his house, and Jehovah smiteth the lad, whom the wife of Uriah hath born to David, and it is incurable;

GWN 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went home. The LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had given birth to for David so that the child became sick.

BBE 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went back to his house. And the hand of the Lord was on David's son, the child of Uriah's wife, and it became very ill.

RSV 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan went to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became sick.

NKJ 2 Samuel 12:15 Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill.

ASV 2 Samuel 12:15 And Nathan departed unto his house. And Jehovah struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick.

- **struck the child:** De 32:39 1Sa 25:38 1Sa 26:10 2Ki 15:5 2Ch 13:20 Ps 104:29 Ac 12:23
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 32:39+ 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me;**It is I who put to death and give life.** I have wounded and it is I who heal, And there is no one who can deliver from My hand.

1 Samuel 25:38 About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

1 Samuel 26:10 David also said, "As the LORD lives, **surely the LORD will strike him** (SAUL), or his day will come that he dies, or he will go down into battle and perish.

2 Chronicles 13:20 Jeroboam did not again recover strength in the days of Abijah; and **the LORD struck him** and he died.

Acts 12:23+ And immediately an angel of **the Lord struck him** (HEROD) because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and died.

Matthew 1:6+ Jesse was the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon by Bathsheba who had been the wife of Uriah. [Note NAS adds "Bathsheba" but NET is more literal = "and Jesse the father of David the king. David was the father of Solomon (**by the wife of Uriah**)" - Mt 1:6NET]

## THE CHILD STRUCK BY THE LORD

**So Nathan went to his house.** - Mission accomplished. Nathan had been obedient to the LORD. He had confronted the king and not paid for it with his life, as might have occurred with many oriental kings when confronted with their sin. John the Baptist paid for his honest confrontation with his head (Mk 6:21-27, 28+)!

**Then** - Marks progression, in this case, the prophet's leaving and the prophecies he spoke beginning to be fulfilled!

**The LORD struck the child that Uriah's widow** (not "Bathsheba") **bore to David, so that he was very sick**- The LORD Himself strikes the child. (See [phrase below](#)) **Uriah's** name is still honored and this served as reminder that David had stolen Uriah's wife (adultery) and made her a widow (murdered her husband Uriah). Indeed Matthew honor's **Uriah's** name, mentioning it in the lineage of the Messiah (Mt 1:6ESV+) (Note - NAS 1977 similar to ESV but newer NAS add "Bathsheba" but fail to put it in italics indicating it is not in the Greek text!) This prophetic word (2Sa 12:14+) describing David's discipline (chastening) was immediate, but most of the prophetic fulfillment would be delayed. Other sons would die but Nathan did not specifically tell David which sons would die but only that "the sword shall never depart from your house." While I may be pushing it a bit, could not the ultimate fulfillment of this prophecy be when a greater Son of David is struck down by the LORD, because He was bearing the sins of the world? The child was made sick by the hand of the LORD because the enemies of the LORD had been given opportunity to blaspheme.

Phrase **the LORD struck** - Ge 12:17; Ex 12:29; Nu 11:33; Jdg. 20:35; 1Sa 25:38; 2Sa 12:15; 2Ki. 15:5; 2Chr. 13:20; Acts 12:23

**F B Meyer** - God's mercy to his erring and repentant children will be shown in converting the results of their sin into the fires of their purification.

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**Struck (Smite)** ([05062](#)) [nagaph](#) means to give a blow, usually from God and either fatal or disastrous (Ex 8:2, Passover - Ex 12:23, 27, smiting Israel after making a golden calf). Prophecy to Israel she would be struck down because of her disobedience (Lev 26:17). Moses warning Israel would be struck down if they went against their enemies after refusing to go into the promised land (Nu 14:42). Lord causes defeat of Israel's enemies if they obey (Dt 28:7) but defeat (striking down) of Israel if the disobey (Dt 28:25)> Striking one's foot (figuratively speaking) is prevented by walking in wisdom (Pr 3:23).

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**Norman Geisler - 2 SAMUEL 12:15–23—How could a loving God take the life of David's child because of the sin of David?**

**PROBLEM:** As a result of David's sin with Bathsheba, the life of the child that Bathsheba bore to David was taken. However, 2 Samuel 12:15 states that it was the Lord who struck the child with illness so that it died. How could a loving God commit such an act?

**SOLUTION:** The taking of the life of the child was not a judgment upon the child, but upon David. The Word of God assures us that death is not the end. This passage in particular indicates that David's child was taken to heaven upon its death (see comments on 2 Sam. 12:23). Consequently, the child was probably spared a life of sorrow and trouble as the illegitimate offspring of the illicit relationship of David and Bathsheba. David's faith in the all-loving God is clearly illustrated in verses 22–23. While the child was alive, David fasted and wept in hopes that God would graciously allow the child to live. However, when the child died, David trusted in the goodness of God to take the child to be with Him in heaven, and that one day David would be reunited with the child. (Borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#))

**2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground.**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:16 καὶ ζήτησεν Δαυὶδ τὴν θεὸν περὶ τὸ παιδί, καὶ νηστεύσας καὶ ἐσθλὴν καὶ ἡλσθη ὡς κκ π τ ς γ ς

LXE 2 Samuel 12:16 And David enquired of God concerning the child, and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all

night upon the earth.

NET 2 Samuel 12:16 Then David prayed to God for the child and fasted. He would even go and spend the night lying on the ground.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with God for the boy. He fasted, went home, and spent the night lying on the ground.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground.

NIV 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and went into his house and spent the nights lying on the ground.

NLT 2 Samuel 12:16 David begged God to spare the child. He went without food and lay all night on the bare ground.

NRS 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child; David fasted, and went in and lay all night on the ground.

NJB 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with Yahweh for the child; he kept a strict fast and went home and spent the night lying on the ground, covered with sackcloth.

NAB 2 Samuel 12:16 David besought God for the child. He kept a fast, retiring for the night to lie on the ground clothed in sackcloth.

YLT 2 Samuel 12:16 and David seeketh God for the youth, and David keepeth a fast, and hath gone in and lodged, and lain on the earth.

GWN 2 Samuel 12:16 David pleaded with God for the child; he fasted and lay on the ground all night.

BBE 2 Samuel 12:16 So David made prayer to God for the child; and he took no food day after day, and went in and, stretching himself out on the earth, was there all night.

RSV 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground.

NKJ 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore pleaded with God for the child, and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground.

ASV 2 Samuel 12:16 David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.

- **inquired of God:** 2Sa 12:22 Ps 50:15 Isa 26:16 Joe 2:12-14 Jon 3:9
- **fasted:** Es 4:16 Ps 69:10 Isa 22:12 Ac 9:9
- **lay all night:** 2Sa 13:31 Job 20:12-14
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID PLEADED FOR THE CHILD

**David therefore inquired of God for the child; and David fasted and went and lay all night on the ground** - David had heard the clear decree that the child would surely die, but still felt compelled to ask God to spare his life, even with fasting and prostrating himself before the LORD.

**Guzik** makes an excellent point - This shows that extraordinary prayer and fasting do not change God's mind. It put David in the right place to receive what he must from God, but it did not "force" God to change His plan. Extraordinary prayer and fasting are not tools to get whatever we want from God. They are demonstrations of radical submission and surrender to God's power and will.

**2 Samuel 12:17 The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them.**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:17 καὶ νηστίασαν πᾶτες οἱ πρεσβυτεροὶ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτοῦ τὸ γεραίνατον πέντε ἡμέρας καὶ οὐκ

θ λησεν κα ο συν φαγεν α το ς ρτον

LXE 2 Samuel 12:17 And the elders of his house arose and went to him to raise him up from the ground, but he would not rise, nor did he eat bread with them.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:17 And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth: but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them.

NET 2 Samuel 12:17 The elders of his house stood over him and tried to lift him from the ground, but he was unwilling, and refused to eat food with them.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:17 The elders of his house stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat anything with them.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:17 And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them.

NIV 2 Samuel 12:17 The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

NLT 2 Samuel 12:17 The elders of his household pleaded with him to get up and eat with them, but he refused.

- **the elders:** 2Sa 3:35 1Sa 28:23
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ELDERS ATTEMPT TO CONSOLE DAVID

**The elders of his household stood beside him in order to raise him up from the ground, but he was unwilling and would not eat food with them** - David is "sin sick", forgiven but suffering the consequences.

**2 Samuel 12:18 Then it happened on the seventh day that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm!"**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:18 κα γνετο ν τ μ ρ τ βδ μ κα π θανε τ παιδ ριον κα φοβ θησαν ο δο λοι Δαυιδ ναγγε λαι ατ τι τ θνηκεν τ παιδ ριον τι επαν δο ν τ τι τ παιδ ριον ζ ν λαλ σαμεν πρ ς ατ ν κα ο κ ε σ κουσεν τ ς φων ς μ ν κα π ς επωμεν πρ ς ατ ν τι τ θνηκεν τ παιδ ριον κα ποι σει κακ

LXE 2 Samuel 12:18 And it came to pass on the seventh day that the child died: and the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive we spoke to him, and he hearkened not to our voice; and thou should we tell him that the child is dead?-- so would he do himself harm.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:18 And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead: for they said, Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him, and he would not hearken unto our voice: how will he then vex himself, if we tell him that the child is dead?

NET 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. But the servants of David were afraid to inform him that the child had died, for they said, "While the child was still alive he would not listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He will do himself harm!"

CSB 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the baby died. But David's servants were afraid to tell him the baby was dead. They said, "Look, while the baby was alive, we spoke to him, and he wouldn't listen to us. So how can we tell him the baby is dead? He may do something desperate."

ESV 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm."

NIV 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child

was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, we spoke to David but he would not listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

NLT 2 Samuel 12:18 Then on the seventh day the child died. David's advisers were afraid to tell him. "He wouldn't listen to reason while the child was ill," they said. "What drastic thing will he do when we tell him the child is dead?"

NRS 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "While the child was still alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us; how then can we tell him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm."

NJB 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. David's retainers were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. 'Even when the child was alive', they thought, 'we reasoned with him and he would not listen to us. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He will do something desperate.'

NAB 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day, the child died. David's servants, however, were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said: "When the child was alive, we spoke to him, but he would not listen to what we said. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

YLT 2 Samuel 12:18 and it cometh to pass on the seventh day, that the lad dieth, and the servants of David fear to declare to him that the lad is dead, for they said, 'Lo, in the lad being alive we spake unto him, and he did not hearken to our voice; and how do we say unto him, The lad is dead? -- then he hath done evil.'

GWN 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. But David's officials were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. They thought, "While the child was alive, we talked to him, and he wouldn't listen to us. How can we tell him the child is dead? He may harm himself."

BBE 2 Samuel 12:18 And then on the seventh day the child's death took place. And David's servants were in fear of giving him the news of the child's death: for they said, Truly, while the child was still living he gave no attention when we said anything to him: what will he do to himself if we give him word that the child is dead?

RSV 2 Samuel 12:18 On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead; for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us; how then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm."

- **seventh day:** Nu 20:15
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE CHILD DIED ON THE SEVENTH DAY

**Then it happened** - This did not "just happen." Why do I say that? Two reasons - First Webster's says [happen](#)" means to occur by chance. With God there is no such thing as "chance," but it is providence (and sovereignty and omnipotence, etc). Second, in this case there is a clear statement as to what "it happened." If you look at 2Sa 12:14 you will see that the reason it happened is because the "LORD struck the child." And if you compare Deuteronomy 32:39+ God plainly declares 'See now that I, I am He, And there is no god besides Me; **It is I who put to death and give life.**' In summary, this (and any time you encounter "happened" in the Bible) is because it was caused by or allowed by the LORD God Almighty. Nothing just "happens." God is either in full control or He is not in control at all and of all! There is no middle ground.

**On the seventh day that the child died** - Nathan had prophesied and it was fulfilled. **The seventh day** is the day the LORD ordained and would be the day before the male child could have been circumcised according to the OT law (Lev 12:3+). **NIV Study Note** says "If reference is to the child's age, his life was so short that he remained uncircumcised and unnamed (see Lk 1:59+; Lk 2:21+; cf. Ge 21:3-4)—and therefore was not counted among the Israelites." (Borrow [NIV Study Bible](#))

[Guzik](#) on the child died - This illustrates an important principle: *even when sin is forgiven a price must be paid* God does not simply pass over or excuse our sin. It is forgiven, and a price is paid. Often *an innocent party* pays the price.

**And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, 'Behold ([hinneh](#); Lxx - [idou](#)) while the child was still alive, we spoke to him and he did not listen to our voice. How then can we tell him that the child is dead, since he might do himself harm** - Servants feared that David might take his life when he hears the child has died.

2 Samuel 12:18 Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said, "Indeed, while the child was still alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!"

The consequences of sin frequently affect more than just the one who is sinning. Unfortunately, children are often the victims. Some years ago a study was done at Harvard University that found six out of every ten juvenile delinquents had fathers who drank to excess, and many had mothers who did the same. Researchers also discovered that three out of four delinquents had parents who showed no interest in appropriate discipline. Four out of five had parents who took no interest in their children's friends or amusements. Many wayward children came from broken homes, and few had religious training of any kind.

This same scenario played itself out in David's life as well. It's true that David suffered humiliation and shame. But he was not the only one to bear the consequences of his behavior. Sexual sin plagued his family. His son Amnon committed incest by force with his half-sister Tamar (2 Sam. 13:14). Absalom sexually humbled his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel (16:22-23). Even Solomon, in his latter years, had his heart turned away from the Lord by his 700 wives and 300 concubines (1 Kings 11:3). It is apparent that David's sin found fertile soil in the lives of his children.

Even though our children must bear the responsibility for the sinful choices they make, our behavior as parents can strongly influence them in one direction or the other. When we justify sin in our lives, it is all the easier for those who look to us as examples to do the same.

**If you are tempted to sin, remember that the consequences of your transgression can ripple down through the generations that follow. Ask yourself, Is it really worth it? ([Back to the Bible](#))**

**There is no such thing as private sin.**

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#### **QUESTION - [Why did God punish David and Bathsheba's innocent child with death?](#)**

**ANSWER** - In 2 Samuel 12, the [prophet Nathan](#) confronts David concerning his sin with Bathsheba and pronounces a judgment against David. Sadly, that judgment included the death of [David and Bathsheba's](#) infant son (verse 14). The fact that an innocent child dies—instead of the guilty pair—is troubling in light of what we know of God's justice and His care for children. We will attempt to clarify a few issues involved here. At the same time, we recognize that, even when we come to understand God better and accept some of His "harsher" actions, there is no relief from the visceral response we get when a child dies. Everyone should be hurt and appalled at the death of a child.

God does a lot of "uncomfortable" things that simply must be done in a world of sin. But the fact is that God *never intended* for us to be comfortable with sin and its outfall (which includes its punishment). We *should* be bothered by the effects of sin. Mature Christians understand this, but it doesn't make living in a fallen world any easier.

In the case of the death of David's infant son, some people feel anger at God for killing the child. There are two main points of contention that can cause problems in our thinking. The first is that God did not deal with David harshly enough. But this accusation ignores the context of the passage at hand; God did indeed punish David, and He did so threefold. David would never again have peace in his house, he would be publicly shamed for his private sin, and, at the apex, his son would die. Nathan outlined the three judgments:

"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. . . . The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the Lord, the son born to you will die'" (2 Samuel 12:10–14).

In an honor-based culture (as was the ancient Near East), some things were worse than death, like public humiliation. Dishonor would be bad enough for the common citizen, but, as God made a point of reminding David, he was no common citizen—he was the king (2 Samuel 12:7). So, although God did not kill David for his evil deeds, the punishments he received caused him to live in shame. David did not get off easy.

A second point of contention is that, when God sent the illness that killed the child, He was unjustly punishing the child. However, from God's perspective, He was not punishing the child; He was punishing David. The king's grief was so severe that his servants thought he might die himself: "David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth on the ground. The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with

them. On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, 'While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate'" (2 Samuel 12:16–18).

God's intention in taking the infant in death was to punish David. After a brief illness, the child was gathered up into the arms of God—as all innocents are. This is not a bad thing. This does not exculpate David; when David sinned, he stole the potential of a life lived from his child, and that was a horrible theft, because life is wonderful, life is exciting, and God has a purpose for every life. But, using David's other children as examples of how this child's life might have played out, we can say that maybe God was preventing something worse. If this child had grown to reject God like his siblings, then his early death was his salvation. The death of a child will never *feel* right—and in no reasonable eyes would such a death *seem* right—yet it can indeed *be* right when ordained by God. In this case, that was demonstrably true, since God caused the illness.

Finally, we should not confound the high and perfect standards of God's Law with how its subsequent justice plays out through the filter of God's mercy. God's Law and His mercy work together. They are decidedly cooperative, not mutually exclusive. In fact, if it were not for God's mercy—if the Law just had its way with sin—then God would have to destroy every person who ever lived, and that would be counterproductive to His reasons for creating us (to glorify God and to enjoy him forever, as the [Westminster Shorter Catechism](#) says).

It is true that people will be held accountable for their own sins (Ezekiel 18:4). But this does not mean that God must strike them all down immediately. Instead, God brings them through a process called redemption—and processes take time. We see this in David's life (Psalm 51). After he repented of his sin, David was restored to fellowship with God. You see, God wants to work with those who are willing to work with Him, as was David, and He desires that all come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). The Law plays a role here in that we need the Law to clarify sin (Romans 7:7).

God's mercy is evident throughout Scripture. "He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities" (Psalm 103:10). "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail" (Lamentations 3:22).

Today's criminal law works on the principles that God established. We spend our primary energies on the criminals' lives, not on their deaths. Only rarely do we exercise capital punishment.

Some have the idea that Old Testament justice was swift, unyielding, and deadly—that we could use more of that today! But that's simply not how it works. We declare the highest standards of our societies by writing down our laws. But it is difficult to obey these perfectly, which should temper our view of those who sin (like David). The law serves society—and it does not serve a society to kill its citizens, except in isolated, narrowly controlled cases. Executions consume a small percent of law-and-order's resources today—and they are also rare in Scripture.

The concept of atonement existed even before the Law. Godly people were sacrificing animals long before Moses revealed the instructions for the tabernacle sacrifices at Sinai. But the Law showed us that atonement had a greater purpose in view: to *restore* the sinner to God and to the people. This is why the Law used the terminology of "clean" vs. "unclean"—not "alive" vs. "dead"—because death was not in view. Death is the last option in civilized legal proceedings.

Killing King David for his sin with Bathsheba would have sent the wrong message. We all deserve to die for sinning against a holy God. But God's purpose for David then was the same as it is for us today: He wants to restore us to fellowship, not kill us for our sins. This is why the Law had ritual atonement (and why Christ had actual atonement), so that we (and David) do not have to die because of our sins.

It is true that all have sinned (Romans 3:23), but if all sinners receive instant punishment in the form of physical death, then life on earth would cease. God lets people live, and sin is a part of life in this fallen world. Sin and temptation themselves become a trial, and we are better people for having wrestled with them. God had plans for David and Bathsheba—[Solomon](#) would be born to them next. He has plans for His children today, even when they sin. As we stumble along, we are also learning and growing and being sanctified.

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen" (2 Peter 3:18). "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face" (Psalm 89:14KJV). Therefore, let us never rush to judgment. Let us instead rush to mercy. [GotQuestions.org](#)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [How many children did King David have? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**2 Samuel 12:19 But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead; so David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."**

- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID LEARNS THE CHILD IS DEAD

**But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David perceived that the child was dead So David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead."** - So here we see the first death of a sons of David which would be followed by several more, all consequences of David's sins.

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Steve Zeisler - Let me make a couple of observations in conclusion. First, the record suggests that David was never again a great king. He had been a remarkable ruler and a brilliant general, but he declined in stature from this time forward.

On the other hand, he grew and deepened as a man of God. Most of the psalms people have loved in every generation for three thousand years were written as David reflected on what he had learned throughout his life. David was restored as an intimate of God. He was once again the sweet singer of Israel. He could lead others in genuine worship and offer hope to the failed and broken.

History does not remember David as a failure. Neither Jews nor Christians, when they tell David's story, turn primarily to this account. It was not the center of David's life story. He was a man whose life is summarized more by his psalms than by his failures, a man who wrestled with God, a man who loved God. He is, by any standard, one of the greatest and most influential figures in human history. My son is named David in honor of King David.

The only thing Nathan had to persuade David with was God's word, and David assented. He could have refused. But the voice of one man saying God's words changed everything. ([YOU HAVE DESPISED THE WORD OF THE LORD](#))

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**NAIL HOLES** - "I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,' and You forgave the iniquity of my sin." - Psalm 32:5

All sin carries a price tag. Its consequences may range from minor to major, but the bill always comes due.

Somebody always pays.

There's a story about a boy whose father pounded a nail in the barn door every time the boy did something wrong. Soon there were many nails. Then one day the boy accepted Christ as Savior and began living for Him. To impress upon his son the wonder of being forgiven, the father took him to the barn and pulled out every nail from the door. "That is what it means to have all your sins forgiven," he said. "They are gone forever."

The boy was deeply impressed. Then looking at the door he asked, "But Father, how can I get rid of the holes?"

"I'm sorry," said the father, "but they will remain."

The psalmist David paid dearly for committing adultery with Bathsheba and engineering her husband's death to cover up his sin. Guilt sapped his strength (Ps. 32:3, 4). Even though he confessed his sin, and God "removed the nail," David carried with him a deep sorrow (2Sa 12:15 16 17). But this did not rob him of the blessedness or forgiveness.

Even though we may have to live with the consequences of sin, we who have trusted in Christ as the sacrifice for our sins can rejoice in His complete forgiveness. -- D D H ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

How blest is he whose trespass  
Has freely been forgiven,  
Whose sin is wholly covered  
Before the sight of heaven.  
-- Psalter

Although God heals the wounds of sin,  
scars may remain.

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**2 Samuel 12:20** So David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes; and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate.

- **arose:** Job 1:20 2:10 Ps 39:9 La 3:39-41
- **anointed:** Ru 3:3 Ec 9:8
- **house:** 2Sa 6:17 7:18 Job 1:20
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID CEASES GRIEVING AND WORSHIPS THE LORD

**So** (therefore, for this reason, term of conclusion) **David arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself** (NET - put on oil), **and changed his clothes and he came into the house of the LORD and worshiped.** - **Anointed himself** (NIV - "put on lotions") was a practice marking the end of mourning (cf 2Sa 14:2+) David refuses to grieve further. He accepts the Word of the LORD concerning his son. He expresses no bitterness toward God, but instead worships! This is probably the first time he has truly worshiped from his heart for over 9 months! David is showing hereby why he is called a man after God's own heart. House of the LORD is undoubtedly the tent David had prepared to house the Ark of the Covenant (see 2Ch 6:17+).

David's actions remind me of Paul's words in Phil 3:13-14+ "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: **forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on** toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

**THOUGHT** - David gives us a powerful, liberating example to follow when we have sinned grievously against our Great God. Yes, horrible sin; yes, even greater grace and, yes, complete forgiveness in Christ. It is time to move on. Are you stuck in the miry clay of past ugly sins you have committed (and stuck perhaps because you are still experiencing the consequences)? If so, you need to arise, wash yourself with the Word (Eph 5:26+), acknowledge and live in the power of your anointing by the Spirit (2Co 1:21-22+ - Who is now not grieved or quenched after you have confessed your sins!), change your grave clothes and put on your grace clothes (Eph 4:22-24+), and present yourself to the Lord as a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable (pleasing) to Him, as your spiritual service of worship! (Ro 12:1+).

**Guzik** makes an excellent point (see [his related comment above](#)) - This shows that David's extraordinary prayer and fasting were answered. He had a sense of peace when the child died, knowing he did all he could to seek God's mercy in a time of chastisement. The ability to worship and honor God in a time of trial or crisis is a wonderful demonstration of spiritual confidence.

**Then he came to his own house, and when he requested, they set food before him and he ate** - Note he worshiped before he ate. He "fed" his starved soul first and then his starved body. Spiritual food was (is) more important to him (us) than physical food (Mt 4:4+)!

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### The Answer Is No

Children are so lovable and innocent—until their parents say no to their demands. When that happens, some kids scream uncontrollably, insisting on what they want.

When our children were little, my wife and I thought it was important for them to learn to accept no for an answer. We felt this would help them to handle the disappointments of life more effectively. We prayed that it would also help them submit to God's will.

Today's Bible reading records King David's admission of guilt when confronted by Nathan. David was forgiven, but God let the consequence of his sin fall on the baby conceived out of wedlock. David fasted and prayed to the Lord day and night for his son's healing. In spite of his sincere petitions, the baby died.

Instead of behaving like a demanding child and being angry with God, David got up, washed, changed his clothes, "went into the house of the Lord, and worshiped" (2 Samuel 12:20). His actions teach us an important lesson: Sometimes we must accept no from God as the answer to our pleas.

In times of difficulty or loss, we should seek God's help and deliverance. But we must still trust Him if He does not answer our prayers the way we want Him to.

Have we learned to take no for an answer?—Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted

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I do accept Your will, O God,  
And all Your ways adore;  
And every day I live I'll seek  
To please You more and more.  
—Anon

**2 Samuel 12:21** Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food."

- **What is this thing that you have done:** 1Co 2:15
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SERVANTS CONFUSED AND QUESTION DAVID'S ACTIONS

**Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept; but when the child died, you arose and ate food - NLT** - "His advisers were amazed. "We don't understand you," they told him. "While the baby was still living, you wept and refused to eat. But now that the baby is dead, you have stopped your mourning and are eating again."

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**James Freeman** - What astonished the servants of David was that their master should act so contrary to old established customs of mourning in time of bereavement. In 1636, in a book titled *Travels into Persia and the East Indies*, John Chardin wrote: The practice of the East is to leave a relation of the deceased person to weep and mourn, till on the third or fourth day at furthest the relatives and friends go to see him, cause him to eat, lead him to a bath, and cause him to put on new vestments, he having before thrown himself on the ground." In contrast, David changed his apparel and ate food as soon as he learned of the death of his new son. (New Manners and Customs)

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**John MacArthur** explains the servant's confusion - Having seen David suffer so profoundly and deeply over the illness of this child, the servants were afraid to tell David that the child had died. They were afraid David might kill himself upon hearing the news! They could see that David had attached all his personal sense of guilt, shame, and general well-being to the survival of this illegitimate son. When David heard his servants whispering, he perceived the child was dead. He asked, "Is the child dead?" And they said, "He is dead." Startlingly, it was at that point David arose from the ground, washed and anointed himself, changed clothes, and then went to the house of the Lord to worship. Afterward, he returned to his house. He requested that food be set before him and he ate. All the intense intercession, fasting, sorrow, and suffering was over—that fast. **David's servants were astonished.** They had seen how distraught David was at the illness and impending death of his son. They were so concerned about him that they guarded him carefully lest he try to do himself harm in a state of intense grief. Yet instead of seeing greater mourning from David, they saw their master clean up, worship God, and ask for something to eat. They couldn't help but question his behavior, asking him, "What is this that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive, but when the child died, you arose and ate food" (2Sa 12:21). David replied, "While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who can tell whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2Sa 12:22–23). David cherished this little child. Even though he knew his son had been conceived in sin, he loved him and wanted him to live. He fasted and prayed intensely for his fragile life. Like us, David had strong hopes that the Lord would graciously relent and allow the child to live—but he had no assurance that God would do so. Here's the key to the change in David. He ceased his mourning after the baby died. He felt no further reason to fast and pray because his sorrow was instantly and completely replaced by hope. He declared, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (v. 23). (Bolding added - **Borrow [Safe in the arms of God : truth from heaven about the death of a child](#)** - as an aside this is a great book to buy and give to your unbelieving [OR believing] friends who have lost an infant -- I did this several years ago for an unbelieving mother who was very grateful -- I will have to wait until heaven to see if she received Messiah as her Lord and Savior!)

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**Walter Kaiser** on [page 192 in Hard Sayings in the Bible](#) - **What Happened to David and Bathsheba's Son?**

What are the prospects of the dead in the Old Testament? And what shall we say about those who die in infancy and thus have never heard about the wonderful grace of our Lord? Is their future gloomy and dark, without hope? These are some of the questions raised by this passage on the child born to David and Bathsheba as a result of their adulterous act.

Several passages in the Old Testament show that death is not the absolute end of all life. For example, 1 Samuel 28:15–19 says that upon the death of Saul and his sons in battle the next day, they would join Samuel, who was already dead, yet who here was conscious and able to speak.

Likewise, David affirmed his confidence that he would one day go to meet his deceased son; in the meantime, it was impossible for his son to come and join him back on earth. Surely this implies that the child still consciously and actually existed, even though it was impossible for him to transcend the boundaries set by death.

If David's expectation was to see God and to be with God after death, he believed that his son would also be in the presence of God, even though that son never had the opportunity to hear about the gospel or to respond to its offer of grace. Apparently, the grace of God has made provisions that go beyond those that apply to all who can hear or read about God's revelation of his grace in his Son Jesus.

Those psalms of David in which the dead are said to lack any knowledge or remembrance of God are highly poetical and figurative expressions of how unnatural and violent death is. Death will continue to separate the living from each other and from the use of their bodies until Christ returns to restore what has been lost. Psalms 6:5 and 30:9 indicate how central the act of praising God was to the total life of the individual and the congregation. But death would seem, according to the views expressed by the psalmists in these texts, to interrupt that flow of praise to God. Isn't it better, David continues, for people to be alive so that they can praise God? "Who praises you from the grave?" The dead are without the ability to lift praises to God. That seems to be David's burden.

Neither can Ecclesiastes 9:5–6 count against the position we have taken here. To claim that "the dead know nothing" is not to deny any hope beyond the grave. The point of Ecclesiastes is limited to what can be observed from a strictly human point of view, "under the sun." Its statement that the dead "have no further reward" is reminiscent of Jesus' words, "As long as it is day [while we are still alive], we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work" (Jn 9:4).

In 2 Samuel 12:23 David does not take the perspective of this life—as some of these other passages do—but the perspective of an eternity with God. And from that perspective, there is much to hope for.

David took comfort in the hope that God would take this little one to himself. He left the child, therefore, to the grace of God, expressing his hope of rejoining that child in the future. There is life after death, even for infants who die before they have seen any, or many, days.

**2 Samuel 12:22 He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live.'**

- **I fasted:** Isa 38:1-3,5 Joe 1:14 2:14 Am 5:15 Jon 1:6 3:9,10 Jas 4:9,10
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### DAVID EXPLAINS HIS FASTING

**He said, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, 'Who knows, the LORD may be gracious to me, that the child may live** - This passage might suggest that David's fasting and weeping could have merited God sparing the child. Clearly that is not the case for grace is unmerited. His actions were manifestations of his humbling himself before the LORD.

**2 Samuel 12:23 "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."**

- **I will go:** Ge 37:35 Job 30:23 Lu 23:43
- **he will not:** Job 7:8-10
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### AN ENIGMATIC ANSWER: "I WILL GO TO HIM"

**But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me** The point

is that David is not grieving for he knows the child died before he was able to discern right from wrong, and thus he was safe in Christ, together with the departed spirits of all who had died in true faith, resting in "Abraham's bosom" (LK 16:22), awaiting the coming of Messiah. David was confident he would be with his child in the future, even as he himself was assured that he would "dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (Ps 23:6).

When you know where something is, you haven't lost it.  
-- Vance Havner

**Wiersbe** - "Where sin abounds, grace much more abounds!" Note too that it is wrong to pray for the dead. David stopped praying for the child. (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**Matthew Henry** - Godly parents have great reason to hope concerning their children that die in infancy that it is well with their souls in the other world; for the promise is to us and to our seed, which shall be performed to those that do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not.<sup>15</sup>

**William MacDonald** - David, would one day join the baby when he died. Verse 23 has been a source of great comfort to believing parents who have lost infants and young children. We can be confident that children who die before they reach the age of accountability go to heaven because Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:14). That David possessed a deep understanding of God's character is evident by the way he responded to God's judgment. Before the blow fell he prayed, knowing that Jehovah was a God of mercy. After the blow fell he worshiped, knowing that Jehovah was a God of righteousness. He forgot the things that were behind, accepted the divine discipline, and looked ahead to the future. He did not despair because he knew that God would yet bless him. He was right. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Believer's Study Bible** - David's heart-searching confession is summarized in v13 and elaborated in Ps 51, the pinnacle of all penitential expressions in the Bible. In spite of David's humble but earnest pleas, this child died. When surprised observers noted that David's behavior changed after the death of the child, they requested an explanation. David then asserted that though he could not bring the child back, he would eventually join the child, a thought which he apparently found comforting (v24). In the full light of NT revelation it is clear that infants that die, having personally committed neither good nor evil, are covered by the atonement of Jesus. They are, therefore, present with the Lord, along with all of the children of God, in the heavenly kingdom.

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**Will I See My Child Again?** - Chapter 5 in Dr John MacArthur's book (which can be borrowed) [Safe in the arms of God : truth from heaven about the death of a child](#). MacArthur writes "In spite of his sins, David was a man of God, and his theology was sound. He was a believer. He was chastened. And he was forgiven. He was God's child. **So we know that David certainly wasn't referring to hell when he said, "I shall go to him."** There are those who say, "Well, what David meant was that they'd lie together in the same burial place in the field." How absurd! That idea certainly isn't going to make a person want to clean up and have a meal. There are also those who say, "That child was going to hell because he was a child born of adultery." Scripture gives absolutely no support to that belief. As you will recall, the exact opposite is what Scripture supports: "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself." (Ezek. 18:20) David was able to say, "I shall go to him," because David knew where both he and his infant son were going! He knew that their eternal future was with God. This was the man who wrote, "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever" (Ps. 23:6). And it was David who said, "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in your likeness" (Ps. 17:15). In Psalm 16, David wrote, "My heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore" (vv. 9–11). David knew that at his death he would be going into the near presence of the Lord, and he also knew that this was the eternal home for his baby.

**A Story with a Different Ending** - The baby born to Bathsheba was not David's only son. He had other sons including Absalom, who was an adult at the time of this baby's birth. Absalom later turned against his father and led a political revolt against him, cursing his father as he drove him from the throne in Jerusalem. He was not content to force David from the city, but he pursued him with the intent of killing him. While Absalom was in pursuit of his father, he failed to duck as he rode his mule through a forest, and his head became stuck in the thick boughs of a terebinth tree. He was left dangling there, unable to free himself and unable to touch the ground (2 Sam. 18). When word came to Joab, one of David's generals, Joab immediately went to the scene, took three spears and thrust them through the heart of Absalom's dangling body, and then ten other young soldiers who were Joab's armor bearers surrounded Absalom and struck him. They cut down Absalom's dead body from the tree, dug a large pit in the woods, and buried the corpse right there. They then covered the grave with stones. When a Cushite messenger came to David from the battlefield, he asked him, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" The messenger replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!" The king knew immediately that his son was dead. The Bible tells us, "Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: 'O my son Absalom—

my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!” (2Sa 18:32–33). **David wept uncontrollably and mourned inconsolably for Absalom.** What would otherwise have been a day of victory against a deadly enemy became a day of immense and agonizing mourning. Word quickly spread: “The king is grieved for his son” (2 Sam. 19:2). David covered his face and continued to cry out as the people returned to the city, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!” (2Sa 19:4). **What a contrast from David’s response to the death of his infant son born to Bathsheba. David stopped mourning when his and Bathsheba’s baby died; he started mourning when Absalom died.** What was the difference? David knew that the baby was with the Lord, residing in the heavenly presence forever. He knew that Absalom—his wicked and rebellious adult son—was not. David could anticipate with hope a reunion with his infant son. He had no hope of ever seeing the wicked Absalom again. David mourned for Absalom with unrelieved grief, just as any parent would do over a child who had rebelled against God and died in his sin without repentance.

Shall We Mourn or Rejoice? I believe the following lessons can be drawn from these incidents in the life of King David:

- If you have a little one who dies, rather than focus on your human loss, look to the eternal gain of your child. Your child has attained eternal glory. Your little one is safely in the arms of God, alive forever and fully mature and like Christ.
- Especially for those who die in the womb, at birth, or in very young stages of infancy—rejoice that your child has not known the wickedness of this world. Your child has not struggled against temptation or been subject to the inner pull of sin’s desires.
- Your young child who has died did not lose his or her life, but rather, your child has gained eternal life. (Borrow [Safe in the arms of God : truth from heaven about the death of a child](#))

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### Robert Morgan in From this Verse - Dying Pleas

It took his parents’ dying words to lead Sam Jones to Christ.

His mother’s last words, modeled after 2 Samuel 12:23, were: “Sam, I will never be able to return to you, but you can come to me.”

But Sam became instead a hopeless alcoholic. Then, during a binge, he learned his father was dying. He rushed to the bedside, and his dad moaned, “My poor, wicked, wayward, reckless son. You have brought me down in sorrow to my grave. Promise, my boy, to meet me in heaven.”

Overwhelmed, Sam fell to his knees and cried, “I promise, I’ll quit drinking. I’ll meet you and Mother in heaven.”

I went to the bar and begged for a glass of liquor and looked in the mirror. I saw my hair matted, the filth and vomit on my clothes, one of my eyes closed, and my lips swollen. I said, “Is that all that is left of the proud and brilliant lawyer, Sam Jones?” I smashed the glass on the floor, fell to my knees and cried, “Oh God! Oh God, have mercy!” The bartender ran to my side and thought I was dying. I staggered to my cheap rooming house and asked for black coffee. I went through three days and nights of hell, but when the morning came, something happened to old Sam Jones. I went to the clothing store and said, “I want you to give me a new suit. I got saved last night.” I went to the barber for I had not had a shave in a month. I left to go to my wife whom I had beaten till she was black and blue. She didn’t even recognize her own husband. I said, “Honey, God has given you a new husband and the children a new daddy, and I wonder if you will forgive me and start all over.”

I have been going round the country bragging about Jesus ever since. (Borrow [From this verse : 365 inspiring stories about the power of God’s word](#))

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### Norman Geisler - 2 SAMUEL 12:23—Do those who die in infancy go to heaven?

**PROBLEM:** The Scriptures teach that we are born in sin (Ps. 51:5) because we “all sinned [in Adam]” (Rom. 5:12). Yet David implies here that his baby, who died, will be in heaven, saying, “I shall go to him” (v. 23).

**SOLUTION:** There are three views regarding children who die before the age of accountability, that is, before they are old enough to be morally responsible for their own actions.

**Only Elect Infants Go to Heaven.** Some strong Calvinists believe that only those babies that are predestined go to heaven (Eph. 1:4; Rom. 8:29). Those who are not elect go to hell. They see no greater problem with infant predestination than with adult predestination, insisting that everyone is deserving of hell and that it is only by God’s mercy that any are saved (Titus 3:5–6).

**Only Infants Who Would Have Believed Go to Heaven.** Others claim that God knows the end from the beginning (Isa. 46:10) and the potential as well as the actual. Thus, God knows those infants and little children who would have believed in Christ had they lived long enough. Otherwise, they contend, there would be people in heaven who would not have believed in Christ, which is contrary to Scripture (John 3:36). All infants whom God knows would not have believed, had they lived long enough, will go to hell.

**All Infants Go to Heaven.** Still others believe that all who die before the age of accountability will go to heaven. They base this on the following Scriptures.

First, Isaiah 7:16 speaks of an age before a child is morally accountable, namely, “before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good.”

Second, David believed in life after death and the resurrection (Ps. 16:10–11), so when he spoke of going to be with his son who died after birth (2 Sam. 12:23), he implied that those who die in infancy go to heaven.

Third, Psalm 139 speaks of an unborn baby as a creation of God whose name is written down in God’s “book” in heaven (Ps 139:14–16).

Fourth, Jesus said, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14), thus indicating that even little children will be in heaven.

Fifth, some see support in Jesus’ affirmation that even “little ones” (i.e., children) have a guardian angel “in heaven” who watches over them (Matt. 18:10).

Sixth, the fact that Christ’s death for all made little children savable, even before they believed (Ro 5:18–19).

Finally, Jesus’ indication that those who did not know were not morally responsible (John 9:41) is used to support the belief that there is heaven for those who cannot yet believe, even though there is no heaven for those who are old enough and refuse to believe (John 3:36). (Borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#))

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#### **Norman Geisler - 2 SAMUEL 12:21–23—Should we pray for the dead?**

**PROBLEM:** Based on a verse in 2 Maccabees 12:46 (Douay), Roman Catholics believe it is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins. However, David refused to pray for his dead son. Does the Bible teach that we should pray for the dead?

**SOLUTION:** There is nothing in inspired Scripture that supports the Roman Catholic doctrine of praying for the dead that they may be released from their sins. This conclusion is based on strong evidence from many passages.

First, the only verse supporting prayers for the dead comes from the 2nd century B.C. apocryphal book of 2 Maccabees (see comments on 1 Cor. 3:13–15) which the Roman Catholic Church added to the Bible in A.D. 1546 in response to the Reformation that condemned such practices.

Second, the doctrine of prayers for the dead is connected with the unbiblical doctrine of purgatory. The prayers are for the purpose of releasing them from purgatory. But there is no basis for the belief in purgatory (see comments on 1 Cor. 3:13–15).

Third, nowhere in all of inspired Scripture is there a single example of any saint who prayed for the dead to be saved. Surely as passionately as many saints wished for their loved ones to be saved (cf. Rom. 9:1–3), there would be at least one example of a divinely approved prayer on behalf of the dead.

Fourth, the Bible makes it unmistakably clear that death is final and there is no hope beyond the grave. Hebrews declared, “it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment” (Heb. 9:27). Jesus spoke of those who rejected Him as dying “in their sins” (John 8:21, 24), which implies that there is no hope for sins beyond the grave.

Fifth, Jesus set the example in John 11 by weeping for the dead and praying for the living. Upon coming to His friend Lazarus’ grave, “Jesus wept” (v. 35). Then He prayed for “the people who are standing by ... that they may believe” (v. 42).

Sixth, the dead pray for the living (cf. Rev. 6:10), but there are no instances in the inspired Word of God where the living pray for the dead. The martyred saints in glory were praying for vengeance on the wicked (Rev. 6:9). And since there is rejoicing in heaven over one soul saved on earth (Luke 15:10), there is no doubt that there is prayer in heaven for the lost. But the Bible does not hold out even the slightest hope for anyone who dies in their sins (see comments on 2 Thes. 1:9). (Borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#))

**2 Samuel 12:24 Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her; and she gave birth to a son, and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him**

- **she:** 2Sa 7:12 1Ch 3:5 22:9,10 28:5,6 29:1 Mt 1:6
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID'S COMFORT TO BATHSHEBA LORD'S LOVE OF THEIR SON

**Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba** - What would he comfort her with? His assurance that their son was safe. The implication is that Bathsheba may have been or may have become a believer in Messiah.

[Guzik](#) points out that "This is the first time the biblical writer called this woman Bathsheba except for the mere reporting of her name in 2 Samuel 11:3. Each time before this she is called the wife of Uriah. Only now, after the chastisement for sin, is she called Bathsheba his wife." This shows that God did not command that David forsake or leave Bathsheba, even though his marriage to her was originally sinful. He was to honor God in the marriage commitment he made, even though it began in sin.. Paul commands the same principle in 1 Corinthians 7:17+: As the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. In part, this principle in context warns us against trying to undo the past in regard to relationships. God tells us to repent of whatever sin is there and then to move on. If you are married to your second wife, after wrongfully divorcing your first wife, and become a Christian, don't think you must now leave your second wife and go back to your first wife, trying to undo the past. As the Lord has called you, walk in that place right now.

**And went in to her and lay with her** - Euphemism for sexual relations.

**And she gave birth to a son** - She gave David a son, but it was ultimately God who gave him a son. What a picture of the incredible amazing grace of God, truly "unmerited favor" in this passage! Children are a gift from the LORD and here God blessed their marriage with a second son. Note that 1Ch 3:5 suggests that Solomon was actually the fourth son of Bathsheba - "These were born to him in Jerusalem: **Shimea, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon**, four, **by Bath-shua** the daughter of Ammiel."

**and he named him Solomon. Now the LORD loved him** - David (**he** not "they") named their second son [Solomon](#) (their first was never named) which means "Peaceable." Solomon was the tenth son of David, the successor of King David as the third king of Israel, the father of Rehoboam, and an ancestor of Jesus.

[Guzik](#) - Here is the great forgiveness and tenderness of God. He did not hold a grudge against David and Bathsheba. The days of blessing and fruitfulness were not over for David. "David's best sons came of Bath-sheba; because they were the fruit of their humiliation." (Trapp) Remarkably it is *this son*— the son born out of a marriage that began in adultery — that will be heir to David's throne. God chose this son among David's many sons to be heir to the throne and the ancestor of the Messiah to demonstrate the truth that *God forgives repentant sinners*. People may not forgive; we may refuse to really believe that we are forgiven. But God forgives repentant sinners.

**Wiersbe** - God turned the curse into a blessing, for Solomon was the fulfillment of the promise given to David in 1Ch. 22:9 "'Behold, a son will be born to you, who shall be a man of rest; and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side; for his name shall be Solomon, and I will give peace and quiet to Israel in his days.'" (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

**NET NOTE** on **he named** - Heb "he"; the referent (David) has been specified in the translation for clarity. While some translations render the pronoun as third person plural ("they"), implying that both David and Bathsheba together named the child, it is likely that the name "Solomon," which is related to the Hebrew word for "peace" (and may be derived from it) had special significance for David, who would have regarded the birth of a second child to Bathsheba as a confirming sign that God had forgiven his sin and was at peace with him.

**2 Samuel 12:25 and sent word through Nathan the prophet, and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake.**

- **Nathan:** 2Sa 12:1-14 7:4 1Ki 1:11,23
- **Jedidiah:** Ne 13:26 Mt 3:17 17:5
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

1 Kings 1:11 Then Nathan spoke to Bathsheba the mother of Solomon, saying, "Have you not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith has become king, and David our lord does not know it?

1 Kings 1:23 They told the king, saying, "Here is Nathan the prophet." And when he came in before the king,

he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground.

## YAHWEH TELLS NATHAN THAT SOLOMON'S NAME IS JEDIDIAH

**and sent word through Nathan the prophet** - For the first time in 2 Samuel Nathan is specifically designated as the prophet. He would play a role in Solomon's accession to the throne.

**and he named him Jedidiah for the LORD'S sake** - Jedidiah means "beloved of the LORD," which is what the previous verse had stated - **Now the LORD loved him**. It was God's way of saying that He would love and bless Solomon the son of David and Bathsheba.

**2 Samuel 12:26 Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city.**

- **Joab:** 2Sa 11:25 1Ch 20:1
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOAB CAPTURES RABBAH

**Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the sons of Ammon and captured the royal city** - Rabbah (modern day Amman, capital of Jordan) was the chief city of the Ammonites. The narrative resumes the battle story that began in 2Sa 11:1.

**TSK note** - Rabbah, or Rabbath-Ammon, also called Philadelphia, from Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, was situated east of Jordan, and, according to Eusebius, ten miles east from Jazer. It is sometimes mentioned as belonging to Arabia, sometimes to Coelo-Syria; and was one of the cities of the Decapolis east of Jordan. Josephus extends the region of Perea as far as Philadelphia. It is now, says Burckhardt, called Amman, distant about 19 miles to the S. E. by E. of Szalt, and lies along the banks of a river called Moiet Amman, which has its source in a pond, at a few hundred paces from the south-western end of the town, and empties itself in the Zerka, or Jabbok, about four hours to the northward. This river runs in a valley bordered on both sides by barren hills of flint, which advance on the south side close to the edge of the stream. The edifices which still remain, though in a decaying state, from being built of a calcareous stone of moderate hardness, sufficiently attest the former greatness and splendour of this metropolis of the children of Ammon.

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### Back in the Battle

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: 2 Samuel 12:26–31

As a child, she had hurled vicious words at her parents. Little did she know that those words would be her last interaction with them. Now, even after years of counseling, she can't forgive herself. Guilt and regret paralyze her.

We all live with regrets—some of them quite terrible. But the Bible shows us a way through the guilt. Let's look at one example.

There's no sugarcoating what King David did. It was the time "when kings go off to war," but "David remained in Jerusalem" (2 Samuel 11:1). Away from the battle, he stole another man's wife and tried to cover it up with murder (vv. 2–5, 14–15). God stopped David's downward plunge (12:1–13), but the king would live the rest of his life with the knowledge of his sins.

While David was rising from the ashes, his general, Joab, was winning the battle David should have been leading (12:26). Joab challenged David, "Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it" (v. 28). David finally got back to his God-appointed place as the leader of his nation and his army (v. 29).

When we permit our past to crush us, in effect we're telling God His grace isn't enough. Regardless of what we've done, our Father extends His complete forgiveness to us. We can find, as David did, grace enough to get back in the battle. By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What regrets gnaw at your soul? Who in your life might be a safe person to talk to for the reassurance of God's grace?

Father, may we truly realize Your love defines us.

**2 Samuel 12:27 Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, I have even captured the city of waters.**

- **Rabbah:** 2Sa 11:1 De 3:11 Eze 21:20
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JOAB MESSAGES KING DAVID OF VICTORY

**Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah** - This is the same city Joab had besieged in 2Sa 11:1. Presumably it is still under siege and did not fall during David's dark time of covering his sin. That would not be surprising because it would be difficult for God to bless David with victory given his serious unconfessed sins!

**I have even captured the city of waters** -Probably that part of the city situated near the pond, from which the rest received their water. A city without a water supply could not withstand a siege for very long.

**NET NOTE** - The expression translated the water supply of the city (Heb "the city of the waters") apparently refers to that part of the fortified city that guarded the water supply of the entire city. Joab had already captured this part of the city, but he now defers to King David for the capture of the rest of the city. In this way the king will receive the credit for this achievement.

**2 Samuel 12:28 "Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me."**

NIV - Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me."

- it be called after my name: Heb. my name be called upon it, Joh 7:18
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## COME AND GET CREDIT FOR CAPTURING RABBAH

**Now therefore, gather the rest of the people together and camp against the city and capture it, or I will capture the city myself and it will be named after me** - NLT = "Now bring the rest of the army and finish the job, so you will get credit for the victory instead of me."

**Guzik** - Joab goaded David into returning to battle by saying, "I'll take all the credit to myself if you don't come and finish this war." i. Joab struggled for more than a year to conquer Rabbah, and the victory only came when David got things right with God. There was an unseen spiritual reason behind the lack of victory at Rabbah. "David's sin at home had hindered Joab's good success abroad, and retarded the conquest of this city Rabbah, which now is ready to be taken, that David reconciled to God may have the honour of it." (Trapp)

**2 Samuel 12:29 So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it.**

- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DAVID COMES IN RESPONSE TO JOAB'S MESSAGE

**So David gathered all the people and went to Rabbah, fought against it and captured it**- Now that David's sin was no longer covered, Yahweh could prosper him! Proverbs 28:13+ says "**He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper**, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion." David has found compassion from Yahweh. The tragic irony of this verse is that if David had come to the battlefield at the beginning of the siege (2Sa 11:1-2+), the giant of lust which caused the greatest sins of his life would have been defeated!

**Guzik** - David was in victory once again. His sin did not condemn him to a life of failure and defeat. There was chastisement for David's sin, but it did not mean that his life was ruined.

**THOUGHT** - Do not let your past sins which you have confessed prevent you from having present (and future) victories in Christ, by His Spirit and Word!

**Wiersbe** - He had confessed his sins; God had forgiven him; now he could fight for the Lord again. It is bad for believers to sin; it is also bad for them to live in the past and think themselves useless even after they have confessed their sins. Satan loves to shackle God's people with memories of sins that God has already forgiven and forgotten. Satan is the accuser (Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3), but Jesus is the Advocate (1 John 2:1–2). (Borrow [Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament](#))

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**F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - 2 Samuel 12:29 And David went to Rabbah, and fought against it, and took it.**

Victory might seem to have been forever forfeited after so great a fall. We could not have been surprised had we been told that from this time onward the course of David's conquests had stayed. And yet this thought would be a misconception of God's dealings with the penitent. Where there is true contrition, confession, and faith, He not only forgives, but restores; He not only restores to the enjoyment of His favor, but reinstates in opportunities of usefulness. So Jesus not only met the apostle who had denied Him, and put him back into the old position of happy fellowship, but gave him a commission to feed His sheep and lambs.

We have sometimes met backsliders who have doubted the possibility of their forgiveness; or, if they have realized this, they have never dared to hope that they could ever be what they had been. And so long as faith refuses to believe in the perfect work of God's love, it must inevitably take a back seat. Let us seek for such an entire faith in God's forgiving and restoring love as to dare to believe that we are put again into the old place, and allowed to anticipate the same victories as aforetime. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Directly David said, "I have sinned," in the flash of a moment Nathan said; "The Lord hath put away thy sin"; and when Joab sent tidings that Rabbah was about to fall, David was permitted the honor of its final capture, though it had been associated so closely with Uriah's death. Where sin abounds grace superabounds, and reigns through righteousness. Dare to

**2 Samuel 12:30 Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city in great amounts.**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:30 καὶ λαβὼν τὴν στέφανον Μελχὼλ τοῦ βασιλῆως ἀπὸ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ σταθμὸς αὐτοῦ τάλαντον χρυσοῦ καὶ λίθου τιμῆς καὶ πλεονεξίας κεφαλῆς Δαυὶδ καὶ σκλαπύνας πλεονεξίας ἐνεγκεν πολλὰ σφῆρα

LXE 2 Samuel 12:30 And he took the crown of Molchom their king from off his head, and the weight of it was a talent of gold, with precious stones, and it was upon the head of David; and he carried forth very much spoil of the city.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:30 And he took their king's crown from off his head, the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones: and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance.

NET 2 Samuel 12:30 He took the crown of their king from his head— it was gold, weighed about seventy-five pounds, and held a precious stone— and it was placed on David's head. He also took from the city a great deal of plunder.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:30 He took the crown from the head of their king, and it was placed on David's head. The crown weighed 75 pounds of gold, and it had a precious stone in it. In addition, David took away a large quantity of plunder from the city.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:30 And he took the crown of their king from his head. The weight of it was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone, and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount.

NIV 2 Samuel 12:30 He took the crown from the head of their king--its weight was a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones--and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city

NLT 2 Samuel 12:30 David removed the crown from the king's head, and it was placed on his own head. The

crown was made of gold and set with gems, and it weighed seventy-five pounds. David took a vast amount of plunder from the city.

- **took:** 1Ch 20:2
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 20:3 David took the crown of their king from his head, and he found it to weigh a talent of gold, and there was a precious stone in it; and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount.

### DAVID CROWNED WITH AMMONITE KING'S CROWN

**Then he took the crown of their king from his head; and its weight was a talent of gold, and in it was a precious stone; and it was placed on David's head.** Heb "and its weight [was] a talent of gold." The weight of this ornamental crown was approximately 75 lbs (34 kg). The writer of Chronicles adds that David "brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount."

**Omanson** - "The weight of this crown lends support to the belief that it was not taken from the head of a human being who would have had difficulty bearing such a weight for any length of time, but removed from the head of an idol....While the Hebrew word for stone is singular, some versions take it as a collective noun, saying "precious stones" (NIV, NAB, NJPSV, SPCL, NVI) or "gems" (NLT; similarly NCV)....Scholars differ on whether the pronoun it refers to the crown or the jewel. For some versions this pronoun refers to the crown; for example, ICB renders this whole clause as "The crown was put on David's head" (similarly NIV, NLT, NJPSV, SPCL, NVI). Logically, it seems difficult to imagine David wearing a 34 kilogram or 75 pound crown on his head for any length of time. If the reference is to the jewel, then the intended meaning is probably that David later or eventually had the jewel made a part of his crown. FRCL makes this clear by rendering this clause and the previous one as "and it contained a precious stone, which was placed on the royal crown of David" (similarly GNT, BRCL, Peregrino). GNT similarly says "In it there was a jewel, which David took and put in his own crown" (similarly CEV, BRCL). NJB seems to say that David wore just the jewel: "and in it was set a precious stone which went on David's head instead" (similarly NAB, Maredsous, Osty)." ([Omanson - A Handbook on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

**TSK Note** - the weight: If this talent was only **seven pounds**, as Whiston says, David might have carried it on his head with little difficulty; but this weight, according to common computation, would amount to nearly 114 pounds! Some, therefore, think, that {mishkelah} should be taken for its value, not weight; which renders it perfectly plain, as the worth of the crown will be about 5,074#. 15s. 7d. sterling. **The ancients mention several such large crowns, made more for sight than use.** Atheneus describes a crown of gold that was 24 feet in circumference; and mentions others that were two, some four, and others five feet deep. Pliny takes notice of some that were no less than eight pounds weight. Besides the crown usually worn, it was customary for kings, in some nations, to have such large ones as described, either hung or supported over the throne, where they sat at their coronation or other solemn occasions.

**Thompson** has an interesting comment on the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 20:3 writing "He took the crown from their king (or their god; see NIV text note) and took a great deal of booty. The god of the Ammonites is given as Milkom ("Molech," NIV) in 1 Kgs 11:5; 2 Kgs 23:13, having the same consonants as the word malkam, here translated "their king." The term malkam at times must be translated "their king" (Ps 149:2; Jer 30:9; Hos 3:5), but in other places it appears to be an alternative designation for the Ammonite god (Jer 49:1, 3; Zeph 1:5; and probably Amos 1:15). In this verse it could be either, but the weight of the crown would suggest that it refers to the god." (New American Commentary - 1,2 Chronicles)

**Selman** has this note related to the **crown** mentioned here in 2 Samuel and in 1 Chronicles 20:2 - The crown (2Ch 20:2) belonged either to the Ammonite king (NIV), NRSV, RSV) or, with some of the VSS (LXX, Vulg.), to the chief Ammonite deity 'Milcom' (GNB, REB, NEB). Its chief features were (a) distinctive precious stone(s) and its weight (c. 30 kg). Hebrew syntax suggests that the crown rather than the jewel (against GNB, REB, NEB) was placed on David's head, though its heaviness must have made any act of coronation quite brief! (Borrow [1 Chronicles : an introduction and commentary](#))

**NET NOTE** - Part of the Greek tradition wrongly understands Hebrew מַלְכָּם (malkam, "their king") as a proper name ("Milcom"). Some English versions follow the Greek here, rendering the phrase "the crown of Milcom" (so NRSV; cf. also NAB, CEV). TEV takes this as a reference not to the Ammonite king but to "the idol of the Ammonite god Molech."

David's fall should put those who have not fallen on their guard,  
and save from despair those who have.

-- Augustine

**2 Samuel 12:31 He also brought out the people who were in it, and set them under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brickkiln. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.**

BGT 2 Samuel 12:31 κα τν λα ν τν ντα ν α τ ξ γαγεν κα θηκεν ν τ προνι κα ν το ς τριβ λοις το ς σιδηρο ς κα δι γαγεν α το ς δι το πλινθε ου κα ο τω ς πο ησεν π σαι ς τα ς π λεσιν υ ν Αμμων κα π στρεψεν Δαυιδ κα π ς λα ς ε ς Ιερουσαλημ

LXE 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought forth the people that were in it, and put them under the saw, and under iron harrows, and axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln: and thus he did to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

KJV 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

NET 2 Samuel 12:31 He removed the people who were in it and made them do hard labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, putting them to work at the brick kiln. This was his policy with all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

CSB 2 Samuel 12:31 He removed the people who were in the city and put them to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to labor at brickmaking. He did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then he and all his troops returned to Jerusalem.

ESV 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them toil at the brick kilns. And thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

NIV 2 Samuel 12:31 and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brickmaking. He did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

NLT 2 Samuel 12:31 He also made slaves of the people of Rabbah and forced them to labor with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, and to work in the brick kilns. That is how he dealt with the people of all the Ammonite towns. Then David and all the army returned to Jerusalem.

NRS 2 Samuel 12:31 He brought out the people who were in it, and set them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, or sent them to the brickworks. Thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

NJB 2 Samuel 12:31 And he expelled its inhabitants, setting them to work with saws, iron picks and iron axes, employing them at brickmaking. He treated all the Ammonite towns in the same way. David and the whole army returned to Jerusalem.

NAB 2 Samuel 12:31 and also led away the inhabitants, whom he assigned to work with saws, iron picks, and iron axes, or put to work at the brickmold. This is what he did to all the Ammonite cities. David and all the soldiers then returned to Jerusalem.

YLT 2 Samuel 12:31 and the people who are in it he hath brought out, and setteth to the saw, and to cutting instruments of iron, and to axes of iron, and hath caused them to pass over into the brick-kiln; and so he doth to all the cities of the Bene-Ammon; and David turneth back, and all the people, to Jerusalem.

GWN 2 Samuel 12:31 He brought out the troops who were there and put them to work with saws, hoes, and axes. He did the same to all the Ammonite cities. Then David and all the troops returned to Jerusalem.

BBE 2 Samuel 12:31 And he took the people out of the town and put them to work with wood-cutting instruments, and iron grain-crushers, and iron axes, and at brick-making: this he did to all the towns of the children of Ammon. Then David and all the people went back to Jerusalem.

RSV 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought forth the people who were in it, and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them toil at the brickkilns; and thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

NKJ 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought out the people who were in it, and put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works. So he did to all the cities of the people of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

ASV 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkiln: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem.

DBY 2 Samuel 12:31 And he brought out the people that were in it, and put them under the saw, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brickkilns. And so did he to all the cities of the children of Ammon. And David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

- **set them under saws** 1Ch 20:3, Also, 2Sa 8:2 Ps 21:8,9 Am 1:3
- [2 Samuel 12 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

1 Chronicles 20:3 He brought out the people who were in it, and cut them with saws and with sharp instruments and with axes. And thus David did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.

### DAVID PUTS AMMONITES TO WORK

**He also brought out the people who were in it, and set them under saws, sharp iron instruments, and iron axes, and made them pass through the brickkiln. And thus he did to all the cities of the sons of Ammon. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem** - This verse literally says "and he sawed [them] with the saw and with the iron picks and with the saws." While some interpret this as David's killing them, most commentaries and translations interpret this as David making them his laborers. Thus the **ESV** says "he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws." See Omanson's [lengthy note below](#).

**Charles Ryrie** - **set them under saws**. Lit., put them to the saw. There are two views as to the meaning of this verse: (1) David imposed hard labor on the captives. However, this requires a change from "pass through" (KJV and NASB) to "toil at" (NIV, "work at"). (2) David had them killed in accordance with cruel Ammonite ways (cf. 1Sa 11:2; Amos 1:13). (Borrow [Ryrie Study Bible](#))

**MacArthur** - David imposed hard labor on the Ammonites. But these verses can also be translated with the sense that the Ammonites were cut with saws, indicating that David imposed cruel death on the captives in accordance with Ammonite ways (cf. 1Sa 11:2; Am 1:13).

KJV Bible Commentary - David was a violent and austere warrior for the Lord, but the implication of various forms of sadistic torture given in this translation is not in keeping with his character. The Hebrew text here and in the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 20:3 may be satisfactorily translated as work or labor with saws.

**William MacDonald** - Bible scholars are disagreed as to whether the last verse describes cruel punishment to which David subjected the people of Ammon (KJV rendering) (Keil and Delitzsch believe that the more cruel meaning is correct and that the facts should not be softened by re-translating. However, they see the punishment as meted out either only on the fighting men taken prisoners or referring "at the most to the male population of the acropolis of Rabbah" - "Samuel," VII: 396) or whether it simply describes menial agricultural work or industrial servitude (NKJV rendering). The latter seems more typical of David's way of dealing with his enemies. (Borrow [Believer's Bible Commentary](#))

**Henry Morris** - "Pass through" should be read as "cross over to." This verse is not describing a cruel genocide of the Ammonites, for they continued as a distinct and relatively strong nation for at least several centuries after David. However, he did place them under forced hard labor, wielding saws and axes, working the kilns, etc. The parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 20:3 should also be understood in this way, with the verb "cut" understood as "vanquished." (Borrow [The Defender's Study Bible](#))

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**Omanson** on meaning of **cut them with saws** as stated in the parallel passage in 1 Chronicles 20:3 - The main difficulty in translating this verse lies in deciding what David did to the people of the city of Rabbah. Did he torture them, or did he force them to do hard labor with tools? This verse as it stands in the MT most likely should be understood as meaning that David tortured the Ammonites with the tools mentioned here. KJV, for example, says that David "cut them with saws, and with harrows of iron, and with

axes” (similarly NASB, NJPSV). ITCL also follows the MT, saying “and tortured them with saws, iron picks and axes.”

Since the MT does not have an object after the verb “sawed,” it is also possible to understand the object to be the fortified places in the conquered city. A translation reflecting this interpretation reads “and he ripped the city apart with saws, and iron cutting tools, and axes” (Klein).

However, most interpreters correct the MT to agree with the parallel text of 2 Sam 12:31 and understand this clause to mean that David forced the people to do different kinds of work, using these tools for that work (so RSV, GNT, and nearly all modern versions, including even NKJV). They change the Hebrew verb wayyasar (“and he sawed”) to read wayyasem (“and he put [to work]”). Despite this decision of most modern versions, CTAT gives an {A} rating to the MT and recommends that translators not change the text to agree with the parallel in 2 Sam 12:31.

If the reading of most versions is followed, it is not clear whether the conquered people were forced to further destroy their own city, whether they were forced to rebuild it, or whether they were forced to do work for King David’s city. Forced labor of a defeated army was not unusual in Old Testament times (see Deut 20:11; Josh 16:10; Jdg 1:28–35).

The Hebrew word for saws is megerah. It now seems probable that translations have been inaccurate in rendering this word as “saw[s].” Archaeology knows of no use of saws either to quarry or to shape stones in the time period described. Many building stones have been found which were finely smoothed, but these stones show none of the marks that would have been left by a saw. It has been proposed that the megerah was a heavy metal instrument with a wide rough surface, like that of a file. This instrument was pushed and pulled across the surface of the stone until it was quite smooth. For a good description of the megerah, see WTH, pages 68–69.

The Hebrew word for picks (charits) occurs also in the parallel text of 2 Sam 12:31. It comes from a verb meaning “to cut” and refers to a “cutting thing” or “sharp instrument.” The same word is used for “cuts of milk” or “cheeses” in 1 Sam 17:18, but this should not affect the translation here. Peregrino says “chisels,” and SEM reads “harrows.” NJPSV and SPCL translate “threshing boards,” apparently reading the Hebrew word charuts.

Instead of axes, the MT has “saws” (megeroth, which is the plural of megerah in Hebrew). CTAT gives a {C} rating to the MT here. However, RSV follows the parallel text in 2 Sam 12:31, which has the Hebrew word magzeroth. The word magzeroth is found only there in all the Old Testament, but most scholars are agreed that it refers to a blade or cutting instrument. If translators follow the parallel in 2 Samuel as RSV has done, in some languages the picks and axes may have to be translated by a single term since there may not be equivalents to distinguish the two terms. However, many languages do have different words for “hoes” and “axes” and these may be used here. For the three tools REB has “saws and other iron tools, sharp and toothed.” ([Omanson - A Handbook on 1-2 Chronicles](#))

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#### **Norman Geisler - 2 SAMUEL 12:31—How can we justify David’s cruelty to his enemies? ([When Critics Ask](#))**

**PROBLEM:** This passage implies that David tortured his enemies, since he “put them under saws, and under axes or iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln” (KJV). But torture is wrong, and Jesus said “love your enemies” (Luke 6:35).

**SOLUTION:** Several things should be observed in response to this criticism. First, the KJV translation is open to this misinterpretation here. More recent translations clear up the difficulty. The NKJV correctly renders it, David “put them to work with saws and iron picks and iron axes, and made them cross over to the brick works.” Likewise, the NIV says, David “brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made them work at brick-making.”

Second, the writer is merely relating these events here—he is not necessarily placing his stamp of approval on them. As noted earlier (see Introduction), not everything recorded in the Bible is condoned by the Bible.

Third, the punishment of forced labor given to these vicious enemies of God’s people is not extreme. Considering the cruelties they unleashed on the children of Israel (cf. 1 Sam. 11:2; Amos 1:13), by comparison, their treatment was humane (Borrow [When critics ask : a popular handbook on Bible difficulties](#))