

The Life of David: The Deadly Results of Rationalizing Sin II Samuel 11

Most spectacular sins are like most flat tires: they are not usually caused by a loud pop of a blow out, rather, they are almost always a the result of a slow leak. The long-term effect of small rationalizations, of small disobediences, or small neglects can after time snowball into immensely destructive activity. That is what we see in David's life:

Beware of the Slow Leaks In Your Spiritual Life

Jesus said that when we are faithful in little things it shows that we will be worthy of great things. Look at Luke 16:10:

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.

David was amazing at great things, but slowly he began to change because of his rationalizing small little things. This study is about how deadly can be the results of rationalizing sin.

First we must define sin as any transgression of God's Law as it says in I John 3. So there must be an absolute standard from God to have sin. Anything that falls short, or goes against God's standard is sin.

There are also two types of sin described in God's Word: unintentional, unknown transgressions (for example walking over a grave was prohibited in the Law for Jews in the Old Testament and thus caused defilement, whether they knew it or not); and intentional disobedience to a revealed truth.

Some call these **sins of omission** (not doing what we should have done if we had known how or when or why to obey God in that matter); and **sins of commission** (when we know to do good and do it not as James calls it).

All of us are imperfect, and incomplete in our understanding of God's Ways and in one way or another are regularly involved in the first type of unintentional sin for which God's amazing grace cleanses away and Christ's atoning work at the Cross renews us constantly.

But it is the second type of sin, the disobedience, rebellion, and deadliness of intentional sins that we are looking at this evening. These sins have grave consequences in the life of any believer, even though the grace of God has forgiven us. Even though we will never face Christ's condemnation, we will face earthly consequences for our sins.

Although the Lord forgave the sins, and forgot the iniquities, David's consequences and losses were recorded in the Bible—God's "forever settled in heaven" Word.

God not only recorded David's key role in one of the greatest events in history—that climactic moment as a teenaged shepherd boy who victoriously stood alone in battle against the most fearsome warrior of his day—but He also sadly recorded the role David later played in a horrible sequel.

In today's world, books and movies often have sequels. Well, there's a sequel to "David and Goliath" that is perhaps more tragic than the glory of its initial run. You see, less than thirty years after the historic victory over Goliath, David had a disastrous fall. In that sequel known as "David and Bathsheba"—the giant-killer himself was slain by a giant.

But didn't David kill Goliath? Yes, wonderfully by the Lord's power the *humble David* slew God's enemy. However, later on a *proud David* ignored His Word and allowed another giant to come right into God's city, Jerusalem. In fact, David, the man after God's own heart, even welcomed that enemy into his presence. And so, in midlife (perhaps in his late 40s), David was slain by the giant called LUST! And that story is forever contained in the Holy Scriptures.

David Slowly Stepped Downward Into Sin

Far more dangerous than the Goliath he faced as a teenager, the Giant Lust had crept slowly into David's own inner chambers. In a moment, blinded by his own selfish desires, when his guard was down, David was slain. He had been enticed, baited, hooked, and finally reeled in by lust!

David the giant-killer was slain by the Giant Lust because he had ignored God and His Word. It's very insightful how this occurred. As we open to II Samuel 5:13, note David's dreadful steps downward that led to a disastrous fall which destroyed his life and testimony:

FIRST STEP DOWNWARD— David desensitized his conscience By incomplete obedience.

... David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David (2 Samuel 5:13).

Although David was a great servant who loved the Lord and was writing the Scriptures and songs to worship God, he began to slowly desensitize his conscience by not obeying the Lord completely. And that was the first warning sign of danger ahead.

At this point, David had let himself become involved in socially acceptable things that were unacceptable to God. Initially, it was just carelessness—a slight wandering, a tiny loosening in a socially acceptable area. But I believe that David's sin with Bathsheba was sparked by small disobediences back in the earlier days as he relaxed his grip on the way God asked Him to live.

Watch the unfolding of the story of the deadly little things he allowed into his life. David had already been king for seven years when he ... *took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem ...* (2 Samuel 5:13). That verse sounds like you're just reading the news—nothing major, nothing bad, it's kind of neutral.

In fact, you might even be thinking: *Was it really wrong? Didn't all the men back then do it? Didn't Abraham have multiple wives? You know, Jacob had several wives. Since they were all God's people, was it really so bad?* The lesson for us is:

Don't Rationalize Sin

If God says it is wrong, it is wrong—even if everybody else does it. Six hundred years after Abraham God told Moses to *write down* His rules for future kings. Deuteronomy 17:15-20 became the code by which the kings were supposed to live. That passage contains God's instructions for His leaders and, by the way, in principle form they are very much something that we should likewise heed if you want to be a man or woman of God.

Open with me to these powerful words in Deuteronomy 17:16, these are precise words that David who, as the second king, would have carefully listened to. When David knew that the God he loved so much had something to say in these, the only instructions He recorded for the King of Israel, can't you imagine David's careful reading of these words over-and-over again! Note what God had to say about multiplying horses in Deuteronomy 17:16:

*"But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the LORD has said to you, '**You shall not return that way again.**'"*

Why would that instruction be so important? God had a very good reason. Multiplying horses would cause the people to return to Egypt—a horse breeding area of the world. And if they went back, they would be lured in by the Egyptian's gods, false ways, and immorality! As far as we know, David didn't have any problem with wanting to multiply horses, but he didn't completely obey this next command:

"Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself (Deuteronomy 17:17).

David personally disobeyed God when he multiplied wives for himself (and possibly even wealth). A king wasn't to multiply wives because they would turn his heart away from the Lord. David's going along with a socially accepted custom rather than God's directive reminds me of a sign that appears along I-44 in Missouri: **What part of "Thou Shalt Not" is unclear?**

Now look at the next verse:

"Also it shall be, when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write for himself a copy of this law in a book, from the one before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him ..." (Deuteronomy 17:18).

The Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) has 5,852 verses and nearly 160,000 Hebrew words. At normal speed, it would take a minimum of 900 hours to hand copy the Hebrew letters with ink and quill onto an animal skin or parchment; that is six months of work, non-stop at eight hours a day!

God Wants Our Attention

To be "God's man" he had to give up most of his first year as king to do this Bible Study—and even had to carry a copy of the law around with him. For God had clearly laid out His instructions for the king:

"... He shall read it all the days of his life, That he may learn to fear the LORD his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes ..." (Deuteronomy 17:19).

Some people may ask: "Where does it say in the Bible that we're supposed to read the Bible all the time?" That's an easy answer because the instructions in verse 19 apply to us as well. As believers, we are supposed to have a personal copy, keep it with us all the time, be meditating on it, and read it all the days of our life. Why? A continued exposure to God's Word causes us to learn about the Lord so that we may live a life that acknowledges our fear of Him.

Now note why God says a king of Israel must obey His instructions:

"... that his heart may not be lifted above his brethren that he may not turn aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, and that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel" (Deuteronomy 17:20).

If a king's heart became "lifted above his brethren" he might conclude that he could look over the rooftop of his house at any man's wife he desired—and take her. And that is

exactly what happened.

It appears that somewhere in these years, David's heart became so prideful that he basically said to himself, "Boy, I'm the number one warrior ... the giant killer ... the wealthiest guy in the land! Since I'm the great king of God's people, I can have whomever and whatever I want—*whenever* I want it!"

But GOD had commanded: "*Don't* let your heart be lifted up!" The same God that said it is the little things that reflect our character, still wanted David's obedience. The shepherd boy who had a habit of being careful in his responsibilities was slowly leaking, going flat, and starting to limp along spiritually because of hidden, small acts of disobedience.

Because David ignored God's little warning, his life moved on without the Lord's protection.

SECOND STEP DOWNWARD— David relaxed his grip on personal purity.

*It happened in the spring of the year, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the people of Ammon and besieged Rabbah. **But David remained at Jerusalem** (2 Samuel 11:1).*

David had let little things slide in his life. Everything seemed to be going so well that he forgot to be on guard, and consequently relaxed his grip on personal purity. That reminds me of what we sometimes see in young children's T-ball and Little League games.

At the beginning of the game, those eager ball players are in their positions, ready for anything that comes—especially if they're infielders. They've got that small glove on and they're looking like pros. Then, by about the second inning, they've turned around, no longer watching the game, and start throwing dandelions. *They have lost their focus, and with it their grip on their position.*

At the height of his life, David **lost his grip on purity** and was simply "playing with dandelions" in the presence of a ravenous lion called Lust! For a moment save your place in II Samuel and turn back with me to I Peter 5:8 where we see the first of two strong warnings given to us by Peter and Paul. God warned us so that we can choose to avoid succumbing to such temptation:

*Be sober, **be vigilant**; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.*

Now turn back to I Corinthians 10:12:

*... Therefore let him who thinks he stands **take heed** lest he fall.*

Beware of the Unguarded Moments

Beware of allowing any unguarded moments in your life, thinking you're safe from sin's reach and it won't bother you anymore. For at that very moment the ravenous devourer himself is crouching and preparing to spring. You and I need to be doing whatever it takes to maintain purity in our lives! That is what David discovered—only it was too late.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told us how serious we must be about sexual sin. Most people dismiss His words as hyperbole, overkill, or something other than He intended. But as we consider this moment in David's life, wouldn't it be wise to read Christ's words again and ponder them personally? Listen with new ears to what He had to say:

*"You have heard that it was said, '**Do not commit adultery.**' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew 5:27-30).*

Now consider this excerpt from a magazine article written about this passage by the great Bible teacher John Piper:

Jesus, the Radical¹

Why does Jesus paint this shocking picture? I believe He wants us to take radical steps, to do whatever is necessary to deal with sexual temptation.

Now, the hand and eye are not the causes of sin. A blind man can still lust and a man without a hand can still steal. But the eye is a means of access for both godly and ungodly input. And the hand is a means of performing righteous or sinful acts. We must therefore govern what the eye looks at and the hand does.

If we take Jesus seriously, we need to think far more radically about sexual purity.

The battle is too intense, and the stakes are too high to approach purity casually or gradually.

Some men fall into mental adultery through lingerie ads, billboards, women joggers in tight pants, women with low cut blouses or short skirts, cheerleaders or dancers, movies, TV shows, and commercials of the beer-and-bikini variety. Some men's weakness is the Sunday newspaper's ad inserts or nearly any magazine.

¹ <http://afajournal.org/2003/september/903purity.asp>

So, **stop looking**. And then **stop putting yourself in the position to look!** ...

Romans 13:14 instructs us to "make no provision for the flesh" (NASB).

It's a sin to deliberately put ourselves in a position where we'll likely commit sin. Whether it's the lingerie department, the swimming pool, or the workout room at an athletic club—if it trips you up, stay away from it.

Proverbs describes the loose woman meeting up with the foolish man after dark (see Proverbs 7:8-9). We must stay away from people, places, and contexts that make sin more likely.

*If it's certain bookstores or hangouts, **stay away from them.***

*If cable or satellite TV or network TV, old friends from high school, the Internet, or computers are your problem, **get rid of them.***

Just say no to whatever is pulling you away from Jesus. Remember, if you want a different outcome, you must make different choices. ...

[You may be thinking:] But you're talking about withdrawing from the culture. What you're saying is too radical.

No, what I'm saying is nothing. Jesus said, "If it would keep you from sexual temptation, you'd be better off poking out your eye and cutting off your hand." Now that's radical.

Many claim they're serious about purity, but then they say, "No way; I'm not going to give up cable TV," or "I'm not going to have my wife hold the computer password."

Followers of Jesus have endured torture and given their lives in obedience to Him. And we're whining about giving up cable?

When Jesus called us to take up our crosses and follow Him (see Matthew 10:38), didn't that imply sacrifices greater than forgoing Internet access?

How sold out are you to the battle for purity?

How desperate are you to have victory over sin?

How radical are you willing to get for your Lord?

How much do you want the joy and peace that can be found only in Him?"

Are we Hearers Or Doers of the Word?

I thank the Lord for the strong voices of men like John Piper who tell it like it is, framed in God's Word as a warning to us in our culture today.

Before we go, stop and ask your self: "Am I a DOER of what I just HEARD from the Lord?"

Jesus said take radical steps to maintain purity: have we taken them?

Are you accountable to anyone? Does someone have your invitation to poke around your life and ask you questions? That is a responsibility you have if you want to be pure. You need to ask a saint that is either older, and more mature; or if you are older, one that you trust and respect—to ask you those hard questions.

Personal Accountability for Spiritual Growth

Here are the ones that you need to ask someone, and have them ask you on a regular basis, eye-to-eye, and heart-to-heart:

1. **SANCTIFICATION:** This is surrendering to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. Have you intentionally exposed yourself to anything that feeds either your:
 - ***lust of the flesh*** (sensual things in God's sight that He would call: bad words, bad music, bad pictures);
 - or your ***lust of the eyes*** (material things in God's sight that He would say make you covet for more or be discontented with what you have);
 - or the ***lust of the pride of life*** (mental attitudes in God's sight such as wanting recognition or fame; or thinking more highly of yourself than proper so that you are above serving lesser people; or taking credit for what God has done in any area of your life; or longing to be looked at, admired, thought highly of by others, etc. All of these are forms of pride).
2. **APPLICATION:** This is what Jesus called "living by every Word of God" in Matthew 4:4. It is not mere reading of a bit of the Bible and closing the Book and merrily going on with life. Christ's words means applying, which is eating His Word. What do we call someone who eats food and never allows any of it to digest? Bulimic right?
 - What personal application have you made from God's Word to your own life: as in what did you last read and how did you apply it?
3. **MEDITATION:** This is what God's Word calls fullness of the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) or lettings God's Word richly dwell in us. We get some part of the Bible into our minds and allow it to tumble around and be worked on in our mind. This makes us most able to walk in the Spirit and be led by the Spirit.
 - What portion of Scripture have you memorized to the point that you are meditating on God's Word in your heart, so that God can speak to you through His Word at any time?