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Lesson 87

David and Bathsheba – Part 1

**Story Elements**

* **Text**: 2 Samuel 11:1-12:23
* **Setting**: approx. 1000 B.C.
* **Main Characters**: God, David, Bathsheba, Uriah, and Nathan
* **Plot**: David's sin with Bathsheba brings tragic results.
* **Key word**(s): “the wife of Uriah ” (11:3, 26)
* **Climax**: “*But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord*.” (11:27)

Idle Hands...(2 Sam. 11:1-5)

1. Chapter 10 closed with Joab battling the Ammonites and their Syrian mercenaries.
	1. Having vanquished the Syrians, Joab waited until springtime to besiege Rabbah, the royal city of the Ammonites. (10:14) Spring was the time when “kings go forth to battle.”
	2. What advantage would there be to waiting for spring to besiege a city? Warmer weather meant easier travel and more available food.
2. The phrase “but David tarried still at Jerusalem” implies that David broke from his normal practice, setting himself up for failure.
3. David walked along the flat roof of his palace, enjoying the evening breeze. From his elevated vantage, he espied Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, washing herself in a nearby house. A lot of artistic interpretation has been interjected into this story. Common houses of that day had no bathtubs or pools. Most washing was done with a wide, shallow bowl.
4. David's admiration of Bathsheba's beauty devolved into sinful lust. He had her brought to his palace, where he committed adultery with her.

If you play with fire...(2 Sam. 11:6-25)

1. Bathsheba became pregnant, and immediately sent word to David. To conceal his sin, David plotted:
	1. He would have Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, return form battle under the ruse of needing an update on the battle. David thought that Uriah would surely go to his house that evening to be with his wife, and so Uriah would assume Bathsheba's child was his own.
	2. Unfortunately for David, Uriah was a highly motivated soldier. His incredible *esprit de corps* forbade him from sleeping in his own house and being with his wife. (11:9)
	3. With his initial plan spoiled, David resorted to getting Uriah drunk. He hoped that a drunken Uriah would lack self-discipline and return to his house. This also failed. (11:13)
	4. Desperate, David sent orders to Joab that Uriah should advance on the city's wall. Such a tactic was a suicide mission. Joab understood David's intent. (11:14-25)
2. Newly widowed, Bathsheba became David's wife after the customary mourning period (7 days).

**Application**

1. The Bible paints an unflattering picture of David in this story. Contrasted with Uriah the Hittite, David looks like an undisciplined, greedy lecher. This is a good reminder that we should view a person's whole life, not just the worst snapshots of their biography.

***Galatians 6:1*** *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

1. Chapter 11 closes with these ominous words: “*the thing that David had done displeased the Lord*.” How often we ignore the truth that God knows our secret sins.

*Prov 15:3 The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

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**Answer Key**

Key word(s): “wife” • 1) a) kings; b) warmer weather meant easier travel and available food • 2) failure • 3) bowl • 4) lust • 5) a) update; b) motivated; c) drunk; d) suicide • 7) whole • 8) secret