



# CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

DECEMBER 23 2023

**Scripture Story:** 2 Samuel 11; 12.

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

## the fall and rise of David



Photo by Alden Ho

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### flashlight

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

### keytext

“Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the LORD.’

“Nathan replied, ‘The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.’”

(2 Samuel 12:13, NIV)

# what do you think?

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

1                      2                      3                      4

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

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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## did you know?

**In 2 Samuel 12:5 (NIV) the Bible**

says, "David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, 'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die!'" When David heard Nathan

tell the story of how the rich man was unwilling to take a sheep from the many he had and took the one precious lamb from a poor man, he was incensed. As a matter of fact, the phrase "David burned with anger" refers to breathing rapidly in passion, especially through the nose. Perhaps you have noticed that when some people get really angry, their nostrils flare out? Perhaps, David's nostrils were flaring with a demand for justice!

## INTO THE STORY

"The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, 'There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

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

"David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan,

'As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity.'

"Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: "I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own."

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

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'

"Nathan replied, 'The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die.'

(2 Samuel 12:1-13, NIV)

# OUT OF THE STORY

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

Circle all the key people mentioned in this story.

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

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Are any details of this story new to you?

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Why do you think Nathan confronted David with a parable?

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

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

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

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

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## punch lines

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

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

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

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

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

## further insight

**“The prayer of David after his fall, illustrates the nature of true sorrow for sin. His repentance was sincere and deep. . . . David saw the enormity of his transgression. . . . It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart.”**—Ellen G.

White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 24, 25.

# connecting to life

## Sabbath

Read Hebrews 4:14.

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

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## Sunday

Read 1 John 1:9.

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

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## Monday

Read 2 Samuel 12:13.

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

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

## Tuesday

Read Colossians 3:13.

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

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

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## Wednesday

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

## Thursday

Read Psalm 32:5.

In what area of your life do you struggle with temptation—and not just the temptation itself but the hiding of the fact when you give in to it? Maybe this week you could share your struggle with a godly friend who can pray for you and hold you accountable for making the right choice in your next hour of temptation. There's a freedom that comes from sharing your struggle with a safe friend. They may

strengthen you in ways that might be surprising. As you do this, write down what you think was most helpful: (1) the liberating feeling of honest confession; (2) the support you felt because your friend was praying for you; or (3) the knowledge that your friend was going to hold you accountable for a good choice.

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## Friday

Read Psalm 51:10-12.

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

## this week's reading\*

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

\**Beginning of the End* is a special adaptation of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at [www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIHf1rBO9s](http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companion-books#.URIHf1rBO9s). By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.