

David and Bathsheba

by Bryan Gibson

The story of David's sin with Bathsheba is told in 2 Samuel 11. Most of our readers are probably familiar with this story, so let's look at some the lessons we can learn from it.

It can happen to the best of us. Here was a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), a man who had displayed remarkable faith on many occasions, taking someone who was not his wife and committing adultery with her. Surely there is a lesson in this for all of us. None of us are immune to this sin, and the sooner we realize that, the better prepared we'll be. "The devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). Take every precaution necessary, or it could be one of us he devours next.

A woman's body, when not properly clothed, can incite lust in a man. What was it that aroused David? What was it that caused him to ask about Bathsheba and have her brought to him? Obviously, it was the sight of her naked body. It couldn't have been anything else, because he didn't know anything else about her. While it is true that Bathsheba did not deliberately expose herself (at least there is no evidence to indicate that), this incident still teaches that women should be very careful about what they wear or don't wear (see 1 Timothy 2:9-10).

Husbands and wives must be committed to strengthening their relationship and keeping their vows. When we read or hear of a case of adultery, it should cause us to think about ways we can keep that from happening to us. Let's go back and read the passages again about the marriage relationship, and then let's get busy applying them (see Matthew 19:1-12; Ephesians 5:22-33; 1 Peter 3:1-7; Colossians 3:18-19; Titus 2:3-5).

Regrettable decisions are sometimes made in the heat of the moment. It is hard to think straight when lust is in the heart. It seems that nothing could deter David from committing this act, not that she belonged to another man, and not that he had other wives to fulfill his desires. But that's the way lust behaves. It ignores right and wrong. It pays no attention to consequences. It runs roughshod over our conscience. So let's not wait until the heat of the moment to make a decision. At the first sight of temptation, we need to run and hide. That is essentially what Joseph did, when Potiphar's wife made advances toward him (Genesis 39:7-12). We know that it is wrong to commit adultery, or to have sexual relations before marriage, so let's develop a plan of action right now to keep it from ever happening to us.

We may be forgiven of adultery or fornication, but we may have to suffer for it the rest of our lives. David was forgiven after he finally acknowledged his wrong, but look at the consequences he had to endure (2 Samuel 12:9-14). Read the rest of 2 Samuel and you'll see that David, in many ways, was never the same man and his empire was certainly not the same. We may not suffer the same consequences David did, but we will suffer nonetheless. It may be nothing more than losing the trust of someone we love, which is bad enough, but often times, it is far worse than that. There are many potential consequences, such as teenage

pregnancy, AIDS and other sexually related diseases, a wrecked marriage, a broken home, etc. “Can a man take fire to his bosom, And his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, And his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife...” (Proverbs 6:27-29).