

GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

DISCUSS: Draw attention to the picture on **PSG page 50** as you introduce **Question #1: When has your perception of someone changed for the better?**

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Bible Meets Life** on **PSG, page 51**. Highlight the author's reference to magician's tricks or illusions and how our perspective changes when we discover how a trick works.

SAY: "Today we look at how people seem to change when we see them from God's perspective."

Reinforce this thought by reading **The Point (PSG, p. 51): When we see others as Christ sees them, we will treat them accordingly.**

PRAY: Begin the Bible study with prayer. Ask for God's help to see people as He sees them—as individuals created in the image of God.

SESSION 4

SEE THEIR WORTH



The Point

When we see others as Christ sees them, we will treat them accordingly.

The Bible Meets Life

Culture places great emphasis on our personal happiness, but people often take advantage of others to achieve that personal happiness.

When the mindset is solely on our own personal happiness, we fail to take into consideration the ones we are involving. These individuals—just like us—have great value in the eyes of God. They are people made in the image of God for whom Christ died, and we are to show them the same love Christ does.

The Passages

2 Samuel 11:1-9,14-17

The Setting

Up to this point in his life, David faithfully served the Lord as he sought to please Him in all he did. Previously, God Himself declared David's heart mirrored God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). However as David experienced success over Israel's enemies, his passionate focus on God diminished. This led to a downward spiral during which this man of God stooped to commit a series of shocking and atrocious evils.

2 Samuel 11:1-4

- 1 In the spring when kings march out to war, David sent Joab with his officers and all Israel. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, but David remained in Jerusalem.
- 2 One evening David got up from his bed and strolled around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing — a very beautiful woman.
- 3 So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite?”
- 4 David sent messengers to get her, and when she came to him, he slept with her. Now she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness. Afterward, she returned home.

See others with the value Christ gives them.

David had risen to the position of the unquestioned leader of Israel. As king of Israel, he led successful military campaigns, securing Israel’s borders from external threats.

1 ▶ **Verse 1.** Military campaigns came **in the spring** after the winter rainy season. The several months prior to harvest time would have provided for the maximum number of able-bodied men available to join the fighting until they would need to return to their fields back home. .

The writer noted that it was springtime **when kings march out to war**. David mobilized the entire Israelite army and his royal guard to war against the Ammonites. However, **David remained in Jerusalem** living in the luxury and ease of prosperity, thus providing the background for his moral failure. His heart had become complacent, enjoying the warmth and pleasures of his palace. With Joab handling the military campaign and the homeland quite secure, David could sit back and relax on his rooftop, partake of a cool drink, and perhaps take an afternoon snooze. ◀

STUDY THE BIBLE

2 Samuel 11:1-4



10 minutes

SUMMARIZE: Before reading the passage, set the context by summarizing the information in **The Setting** on page 52.

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:1-4.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 1** to explain why the spring was the optimal time for war.

Point out that the passage does not indicate that there was anything wrong with David sending his officers and troops to war while he remained in Jerusalem. However, his decision to stay at the palace presented an opportunity for temptation.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG page 53**, to the progression of actions that led to David's temptation and sin:

1. *David looked at Bathsheba.*
David "saw a woman bathing."
2. *David asked about Bathsheba.* David wanted to know who she was and learned her name. He also learned she was the "daughter of Eliam," the granddaughter of Ahithophel the "wife of Uriah,"
3. *David sent for Bathsheba.* David had objectified Bathsheba and now he used his power as king to gain his own desire.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 2** to give more information about Eliam, Ahithophel, and Uriah.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **Digging Deeper on PSG page 54** to learn how important it was that the Old Testament legal codes found in the law applied to the King.

Verse 2. After rising from one of those late-afternoon rests, David **strolled around on the roof of the palace**. Flat roofs, common in the architecture of the day, provided places to relax in the comparative comfort of cool breezes. David's house had probably been built on the highest point within the city, and from his rooftop he would have had a commanding view of the city. At some point **he saw a woman bathing** in her own enclosed courtyard that surrounded her home. Since no Israelite house would have had indoor plumbing, bathing often took place within the privacy of an enclosed courtyard. The sight of a **very beautiful** woman bathing aroused David's flesh so that he lusted after her.

2 ▶ Verse 3. Although David knew what God said about adultery, he **sent someone to inquire about her**. The messenger informed him that the woman was **Bathsheba** and that she was from a prominent family. Not only was she the **daughter of Eliam** and the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of David's most trusted counselors (2 Sam. 16:23), Bathsheba was the **wife of Uriah the Hittite**, one of David's most honorable soldiers. This information should have stopped David cold in his tracks; nevertheless, David burned with lust. David could have ended the temptation by walking away, but he lingered. He continued down this horribly selfish and devastatingly wrong path.

We know adultery is sinful. However, Jesus raised the bar when He said, "Everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). When a man looks at a woman in this way, he devalues her by seeing her only as an object for his carnal satisfaction. Jesus' teaching also applies to a woman gazing at a man with impure thoughts. We must see every person as someone whom God loves and values greatly. ◀

Verse 4. David followed through on his lustful impulse. He craved Bathsheba, so he **sent messengers to get her**. The Hebrew word translated "get" can mean simply "to get, receive, or acquire" or it can also be translated "lay hold of or to seize." No doubt, David sent these messengers to retrieve Bathsheba and to bring her to his palace so he might sleep with her. That Bathsheba **came to him** only expressed the result of David's messengers going for her. The narrative focuses on God's chosen leader, with no concern about whether Bathsheba cooperated or not. The omission of any motive on Bathsheba's part placed the focus of this

episode on David's impure motives. David **slept with her**, an expression that he fulfilled his lustful desires by engaging in sexual intercourse with her. This encounter occurred after **she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness** (see Lev. 15:19), meaning she had completed her monthly cycle, making it more likely for her to conceive.

3 ▶ David used Bathsheba for his own selfish desires. He controlled the entire sequence after he saw her. He sent for her, took her, and slept with her. If she had not become pregnant, Bathsheba might never have darkened the door of David's house again. His actions did not demonstrate love. He wanted one night of sex with this woman, then Uriah could have her. He failed to value Bathsheba as a person, and he destroyed the sanctity of her marriage to her husband, Uriah.

As followers of Jesus, we must make the connection between our treatment of others and our sanctification in Christ. The apostle Paul declared, "For this is God's will, your sanctification: that you keep away from sexual immorality" (1 Thess. 4:3). In other words, God says two people should not act like they are married when they are not married. Doing so devalues people who are created in the image of God. "Sexual immorality" includes sexual relations before marriage and sexual relations among people who are married to others.

Just as Jesus raised the bar with regard to adultery, Paul added that each believer should "control his own body" (v. 4) and lustful passions (v. 5). In our day, the use of pornography fuels sinful desires, leading to a fantasy life that finds its way into the minds of both men and women. God calls us to purity. To live pure lives means we must be moved to love people the way Christ loves them. Christ calls us to love people, not use them. ◀

2 Samuel 11:5-9

5 The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: "I am pregnant."

6 David sent orders to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going.

8 Then he said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king

DISCUSS: Question #2
(PSG, p. 53): **What can we learn about the private life of David from these verses?**

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 3** to show how David used Bathsheba for his own selfish desires. Remind group members of the New Testament teachings regarding the dangers of sexual immorality and adultery. Refer group members to **The Point** at the top of **PSG page 54: When we see others as Christ sees them, we will treat them accordingly.**

DISCUSS: Question #3
(PSG, p. 55): **Where do we see people objectified or undervalued today?**

(Alternate: What are some ways people use others for their own benefit?)

TRANSITION: "In the next verses we discover the results of David's sin and his continual downward spiral in his attempt to cover up his sin."

STUDY THE BIBLE

2 Samuel 11:5-9



10 minutes

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:5-9.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG pages 55-56** and ask a volunteer to read these words aloud:

“David’s downward spiral into sin led him further away from intimacy with God. Surely David felt the sting of sin’s consequences when he received Bathsheba’s clear message: ‘I am pregnant.’ But instead of confronting and confessing he had abused his power and treated Bathsheba with total disregard by committing adultery, David sought to cover up his actions—and that led to even more sinful actions.

“David did not value Bathsheba and had used her for his own ends; now David was going to use her husband, Uriah, to cover up his infidelity.”

followed him. **9** But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master’s servants; he did not go down to his house.

Look out for the needs and interests of others.

Verse 5. David did something harmful to himself and others, and harm and destruction came from it. While it might have appeared David had gotten away with this sin, he would not. No one ever gets away with sin. His secret hit a snag when Bathsheba discovered she had **conceived** and sent a terse message to him, **“I am pregnant.”** These are the only recorded words of Bathsheba in the entire episode, and they must have hit David like a ton of bricks. Implicit in her message to the king: “The next step is yours.” Some immediate measures of concealing their sin seemed necessary, for the king’s honor and for her safety.

Verse 6. Calling on his abilities as a tactician, David immediately devised a plan to cover up his sin. He sent word to Joab calling Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, home from the battlefield on the pretext of asking him how Joab and the troops fared. From the beginning, this plan failed the “sniff test.” Why would David call a decorated warrior home for such an insignificant reason? The messenger David sent could have easily brought back any message Joab may have wanted to send. Joab obeyed David’s command to send Uriah, but Joab probably sensed that something was not quite right.

Verse 7. When Uriah arrived in Jerusalem, David carried out the charade as planned by asking about the welfare of Joab and the troops. Any sign of awkwardness on David’s part might have ruined the cover-up. He had to pretend nothing had happened and give every appearance things were normal, when deep within his soul, he must have trembled.

4 ▶ Verses 8-9. After exchanging pleasantries, David moved to the real purpose for bringing Uriah home. David had no concern for Joab, his soldiers, or the war. He had a single purpose—to cover up his sin. David ordered Uriah, **“Go down to your house and wash your feet.”** David had no concern for Uriah’s personal hygiene; he had a single focus on his own reputation. When one entered his house, he removed his shoes and washed his feet in preparation for eating and going to bed. David even sweetened the deal by

sending a gift, perhaps food and wine from his own table, so the couple could enjoy a relaxing evening together.

So David's scheme included bringing Bathsheba's husband home temporarily, ordering him to spend one intimate night with his wife, then dispatching him back to Rabbah. Approximately nine months later, Bathsheba would have her baby, Uriah would be elated, and David would be in the clear.

However, Uriah did not go home that night. Instead, Uriah never left the king's house, choosing to sleep **at the door of the palace with all his master's servants**. This faithful soldier and servant of the king would not enjoy a night alone with his wife; rather, he joined with others who guarded the king's life. Uriah's refusal to have sexual contact with his wife expressed that he understood the heart of God's law and wanted to keep himself ready for service. In order to have the Lord's blessing for success, he needed to refrain from all sexual contact (see 1 Sam. 21:5). Having sexual relations with Bathsheba would have disqualified Uriah temporarily from serving in the Lord's army (see Lev. 15:18).

David had informants watching Uriah as though he were the enemy. They knew exactly what David expected—for Uriah to go home to his wife. If they did not know all the details of what David had done with Bathsheba and his cover-up scheme, they had to have had speculations. David did not care about anyone but himself—not Bathsheba, not Uriah, not Joab, not his servants, not the nation of Israel. In the morning, the spies had an amazing report: "Uriah didn't go home" (2 Sam. 11:10). David gently rebuked Uriah, but his words smell of hypocrisy. He had no concern for Uriah; he only wanted Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba to cover his sin.

Uriah responded that he could not possibly lie with his wife in the comforts of his home while his comrades remained in the field. Besides, the ark and Israel stayed in tents. He absolutely refused to give in to his desires while David's army camped in the open field. Uriah's heart remained with his fellow soldiers and he wanted to return to them as soon as possible. His words should have shocked David into a realization of the depth of his sin and left his heart in tatters.

Instead, David became desperate because he had never entertained the possibility Uriah would refuse his offer. As a dutiful soldier, Uriah would never violate his commitment. So the next evening, David invited Uriah for dinner and made him drunk. David thought he controlled the situation. But even drunk, Uriah would not violate his conscience and staggered out to bed down in the servants' quarters again. ◀

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible**

Commentary 4 on page 56 and this page to explain how David's plan to cover up his sin was thwarted by Uriah's refusal to sleep with his wife. He deferred to loyalty to his men and ultimately to God. (see 2 Samuel 11:10-13 to fill in the gaps of the rest of the story. Point out Uriah's explanation and how David "got Uriah drunk" in a second attempt to get him to go home and sleep with Bathsheba).

DISCUSS: **Question #4**

(PSG, p. 57): What can these passages teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?

TRANSITION: "Having failed in his attempts at covering up his sin by getting Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba, David, in desperation spiraled even deeper into sin."

STUDY THE BIBLE

2 Samuel 11:14-17



15 minutes

READ: Read or ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:14-17.

SUMMARIZE: Use **Bible Commentary 5** on this page and page 59 to show the extreme lengths David was willing to go to cover up his sin: the death of Uriah.

GUIDE: Refer group members to **PSG page 57** and ask someone to read these words:

“It’s hard to see David here as the same man who would not lay a hand on Saul, even when Saul the king sought to kill him, yet now David the king sought to kill an innocent man who was one of his most loyal subjects. David presents a tragic example of what sin does when we don’t confess it but allow it to spread. Sin causes us to give excessive focus on self-preservation and can lead to self-destruction. Sin takes us on a continuously downward spiral. Sin can take us to a place where we wonder how we got there.”

2 Samuel 11:14-17

14 The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.

15 In the letter he wrote: Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies.

16 When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were.

17 Then the men of the city came out and attacked Joab, and some of the men from David’s soldiers fell in battle; Uriah the Hittite also died.

Consider others as more important than yourselves.

Verse 14. After two failed efforts to make it appear Uriah had fathered Bathsheba’s child, David changed tactics. Uriah’s conduct proved his loyalty to his duties in the most public way, making it very evident he could not possibly have fathered Bathsheba’s child. Believing his only course of action was to have Uriah killed in action, David compounded his sin of adultery with murder. With Uriah out of the way, David could marry widowed Bathsheba and raise the child as his own—and the sooner the better. David’s sin-sickness had made him so unhinged he **wrote a letter to Joab** and made Uriah unwittingly carry his own death warrant under the royal seal.

5 ▶ Verse 15. All that mattered to David was that Uriah become a casualty of war. In his letter, David clearly ordered Joab to arrange Uriah’s death, **“Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies.”** As one of David’s mighty men, Uriah would have regularly led a contingent of soldiers and may have been expected to hold a strategic position. However, David’s order intentionally placed Uriah in a vulnerable position, ultimately resulting in his death.

David spiraled downward in sin—coveting another’s wife, committing adultery, bearing false witness, and committing

murder. In his attempt to cover his sin, he only piled on guilt. Soon he would learn that no one can escape God's judgment. David believed he had deceived everyone, but in reality he had deceived only himself. He could not escape his guilt. ◀

Verses 16-17. Joab knew what to do. With Rabbah under siege, Joab and his men only needed to wait out the Ammonites until they either starved or surrendered, so attacking the city had only one purpose—to eliminate Uriah. Joab followed the king's orders. He ordered Uriah to attack the city at its strongest point, perhaps at the city gate, where the strongest fighters were stationed. When the battle became fierce, Joab retreated and made Uriah an easy target for the Ammonites. He became a casualty of war, all according to the king's plan. Joab knew he could not send Uriah to the city walls alone or it would look suspicious. He covered for himself and David by sending several of the king's best soldiers into the battle as well. Regrettably, several of these men lost their lives in this needless maneuver. Consequently, David's guilt was compounded by not only being responsible for murdering Uriah, but also for murdering a large number of his best men.

No one could mistake David's orders to Joab: he wanted Uriah killed as if it were a simple casualty of war. Joab completely obeyed David's orders, and Uriah was eliminated; he was no longer an obstacle to David's plans. In giving this order to Joab, David made him a part of this conspiracy, making him share the guilt for the spilled blood of Uriah and the other casualties. David's sin continued to involve more and more people, leading to greater and greater sin.

Previously, David used Bathsheba for his carnal pleasure. He attempted to manipulate Uriah to cover his sin with Uriah's wife. When Uriah would not conform to David's scheme, David had him eliminated by using Joab to orchestrate the scenario that resulted in the loss of several good men. Without a doubt, this marked the spiritual and moral low in David's life. He demonstrated the opposite of humble service to others as he used people for his purposes.

We should follow the example of Christ, who never manipulated or used people. Rather, He came to serve them. The apostle Paul issued a strong word on unity and humble service in Philippians 2:1-4. He knew the human tendency to grab for position and the spotlight; therefore, he called on believers not to do anything out of rivalry and to consider others as more important than themselves (Phil. 2:3). We should look for ways to serve God and others, rather than waiting for or expecting them to serve us. In so doing, we follow the example of Christ.

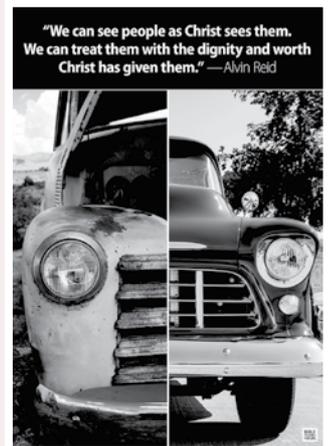
SAY: "David was self-focused—he focused only on himself. He failed to see Bathsheba or Uriah as God sees them, and he used both of them for his own ends. His self-focused actions led to self-preservation."

DISCUSS: Question #5

(PSG, p. 58): What are some warning signs that show we're viewing people as objects or obstacles?

(Alternate: What are practical ways to value others and treat them accordingly?)

LEADER PACK: Point to **Item 4: Valuable in God's Eyes.** Read the quote.



DO: Encourage group members to take a few minutes to complete the activity **"See Their Worth"** on **PSG page 58.**

LIVE IT OUT**5 minutes**

GUIDE: Emphasize **The Point: When we see others as Christ sees them, we will treat them accordingly.**

REVIEW: Review **Live It Out (PSG, p. 59;** see text to the right). Encourage each group member to follow through this week with at least one of the applications.

WRAP IT UP

GUIDE: Emphasize that occasionally putting our lives on pause and evaluating our attitudes and practices is a healthy thing for us to do. Encourage group members to be responsive to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as He reveals to us when we treat others as objects.

PRAY: "Father, help us change our thoughts and behaviors to align our treatment of others with your values."

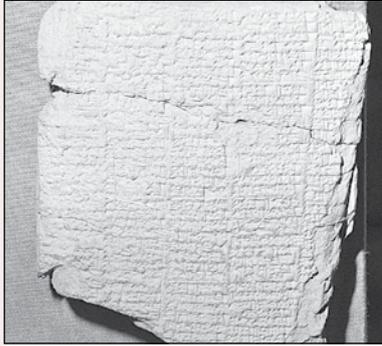
LIVE IT OUT

This week, how will you see and treat others as Christ does?

- ▶ **Evaluate.** The tendency of our fallen human nature is to treat people as objects rather than as God's image bearers. When we do this toward a whole group of people, we see prejudice and racism. Confess to God if there is a group toward which you do not treat with the same respect or worth that God desires.
- ▶ **Serve.** Is there a person in your life you have treated more as an object for your happiness or called a friend as long as he or she can help you? Change your attitude and find a way to serve the person instead of seeing him or her as someone to serve you.
- ▶ **Restore.** Broken relationships are a great hindrance in the local church. Do you have someone with whom you need to be reconciled, or someone you need to encourage to seek reconciliation?



BIBLICAL
ILLUSTRATOR



Fragment from the law code of Hammurabi written in Babylonian contains paragraphs 145-179 of the original 282 laws.

In the ancient Near East, the king was primarily in power to establish order. In most nations, he served as warrior, judge, and even priest. As warrior, he was to protect the state from external enemies and internal threats. As judge, he was to guarantee order by administrating justice and equity. As priests, Israel's neighboring monarchs were the earthly representatives of the divine realm.

The Code of Hammurabi, a legal code promulgated by a

Babylonian king, states that as king, Hammurabi was responsible to "cause justice to prevail in Babylon, to destroy wicked and evil, to stop the strong from oppressing the weak, and to rule like the sun." Consequently, Hammurabi was the purveyor and enforcer of the laws of the land.

Old Testament legal codes take this expectation a step further. In them, the king himself was accountable to faithfully observe the requirements of God's law.

Other monarchies allowed their kings to commit immoral behavior, viewing it as a privilege, but God's law for Israel held the action as a punishable offense—even for a king. Since David was a king, his sins were committed by a man against a woman, a commander in chief against of his soldiers, a king against one of his subjects, but most of all a man of faith against his God.

The excerpt above is from the article "King's Privileges or King's Crimes?" (Winter 2003-04), which relates to this session. More *Biblical Illustrator* articles are available that relate to this session. See page 7 about *Biblical Illustrator*.

SHARING THE GOOD NEWS

We were created in the image of God. Even though we marred that image through sin, God restores that image when we turn from our sin and trust in Christ for salvation.

Each week, make yourself available either before or after the session to speak privately with anyone in your group who wants to know more about becoming a Christian. See the article, "Leading Someone to the Greatest Decision of All," on page 2 for guidance in leading a person to Christ.

Remind group members that **page 2** in the **PSG** offers guidance in how to become a Christian. Encourage believers to consider using this article as they have opportunities to lead others to Christ.

**BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE®**

Free additional ideas for your group are available at

BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra