

## SESSION 4

# SEE THEIR WORTH

### ▶ **The Point**

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

### ▶ **The Passage**

2 Samuel 11:1-9,14-17

### ▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

Let's admit it: we've all been amazed by a magician's trick or illusion. Whether it was making his assistant disappear, sawing a person in half, or even a sleight-of-hand card trick, we've wondered: *How did he do that?* Later, if we discover how he created the illusion, our amazement vanishes as quickly as the assistant. The next time we see that illusion, it seems so obvious what's actually going on. What changed? We were able to see things from the magician's perspective.

The way we see people can play tricks on us, too. Our perception or opinion of a person can be skewed by our own prejudices and self-centeredness, or even by how we hope that person can benefit us. We can be blinded by our own sinfulness.

But when we see people from God's perspective—the One who created us in His image—relationships change. In a famous story from 2 Samuel 11, King David gave us a tragic example of what happens when we fail to see people from God's perspective.

### ▶ **The Setting**

Up to this point in his life, David faithfully served the Lord and sought to please Him in everything he did. Previously, God Himself declared that David's heart mirrored God's heart (see 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.

## What does the Bible say?

**Spring** (v. 1)—This was an optimum time for armies to march to war because of the warmer weather, but also because young men were not needed as badly to work the fields. As a bonus, the crops growing around an enemy camp or city could be scavenged for food.

**Wash your feet** (v. 8)—This was equivalent to saying: “Settle in and get comfortable. Relax.”

### **2 Samuel 11:1-9,14-17**

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

<sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: “I am pregnant.”

<sup>6</sup> David sent orders to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” So Joab sent Uriah to David. <sup>7</sup> When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going. <sup>8</sup> 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 followed him. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master’s servants; he did not go down to his house.

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

<sup>15</sup> 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.

<sup>16</sup> When Joab was besieging the city, he put Uriah in the place where he knew the best enemy soldiers were. <sup>17</sup> 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.

# GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes



**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 37 of the PSG: **“When has your perception of someone changed for the better?”**

**Note:** It may be safest for group members to talk about their perception of somebody well-known, such as a celebrity or a politician. Encourage people to stay positive if they share examples of friends or family members from their past.

Notes

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to “The Bible Meets Life” on page 38 of the PSG. Introduce the principle of seeing people from God’s perspective by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read on their own.

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Supplement “The Bible Meets Life” by performing one or two illusions of your own. You can search online to find easy-to-do card tricks and other illusions. As a bonus, you can ask group members if they know any tricks or illusions they could show the groups.

**Note:** An alternative to performing your own illusions would be to play a video of a famous illusion for your group. You could also research how the illusion was accomplished, and then see if anyone in the group can correctly guess the solution or identify the trick.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to “The Point” on page 38 of the PSG: **“When we see others as Christ sees them, we will treat them accordingly.”**

**PRAY:** Transition into the discussion by expressing your desire to treat everyone as God wants them to be treated. Pray for the Holy Spirit to offer conviction and inspiration as you and your group members engage the Scriptures.

Dotted lines for taking notes.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### 2 Samuel 11:1-4

*<sup>1</sup> 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. <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> So David sent someone to inquire about her, and he said, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite?” <sup>4</sup> 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.*

**READ:** 2 Samuel 11:1-4 on page 39 of the PSG. Read the text out loud or ask a volunteer to do so.

**DISCUSS:** Question #2 on page 39 of the PSG: **“Why is it often difficult for us to see the value in others?”**

**Note:** Another way to ask this question would be, “What obstacles often prevent us from seeing others the way God sees them?”

**GUIDE:** Encourage group members to read through the numbered list on page 40 of the PSG in order to see three stages of David’s spiral into sin.

**RECAP:** Read aloud the final paragraph on page 40 of the PSG:

The way we treat others is supposed to be based on the way God has treated us. Therefore, when we walk with Christ, we see people from His perspective—and we treat them accordingly.

**DISCUSS:** Question #3 on page 40 of the PSG: **“Where do we see people objectified or undervalued today?”**

**TRANSITION:** We’ve seen David’s terrible act of sin. As we jump to 2 Samuel 11:5-9 and 11:14-7, we’ll see his attempts to cover up his actions—attempts that resulted in another terrible crime.

**ALTERNATE QUESTION:**

*What can we learn about David from these verses?*

## 2 Samuel 11:1-4 Commentary

**See others with the value Christ gives them.**

**[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 the time **when kings march out to war**. David dispatched Joab and mobilized the entire Israelite army against the Ammonites. However, **David remained in Jerusalem**.

**[Verse 2]** With Joab handling the military campaign and the homeland quite secure, David could just sit back and relax on his rooftop getaway, partake of a cool drink, and perhaps take an afternoon snooze. After rising from one those late-afternoon rests, David **strolled around on the roof of the palace**. Flat roofs, common in the architecture of the day, provided places for relaxation 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 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.

**[Verse 3]** David **sent someone to inquire about her**, because in his heart he had already planned how he might set up a rendezvous. The woman was **Bathsheba**, and she was from a prominent family. She was the **daughter of Eliam**; the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of David's most trusted counselors (see 2 Samuel 16:23); and the **wife of Uriah the Hittite**, one of David's most honorable soldiers. This should have stopped David cold in his tracks; nevertheless, he burned with lust. David could have ended the temptation by walking away, but he lingered.

**[Verse 4]** David, the man after God's heart, went against his own heart and followed through on a 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"; it can also be translated "lay hold of, to seize, or to take away." No doubt, David sent these messengers to retrieve Bathsheba and to bring her to his palace so he might sleep with her. David should have known better. The omission of any motive on Bathsheba's part placed the focus of this episode on David's impure motives.

David **slept with her**. He fulfilled his lustful desires. 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. David used Bathsheba for his own selfish desires. He failed to value Bathsheba as a person, and he destroyed the sanctity of her marriage to her husband, Uriah.

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.



# STUDY THE BIBLE

## Notes

### 2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17

<sup>5</sup> *The woman conceived and sent word to inform David: "I am pregnant."*  
<sup>6</sup> *David sent orders to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent Uriah to David.* <sup>7</sup> *When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab and the troops were doing and how the war was going.* <sup>8</sup> *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 followed him.* <sup>9</sup> *But Uriah slept at the door of the palace with all his master's servants; he did not go down to his house.*

**DO:** Direct group members to complete the activity "True Value" on page 41 of the PSG. If time permits, encourage volunteers to describe what makes these people valuable in Christ's eyes.



*To see others as Christ sees them is to recognize their inherent value. Use the space below each image to write a few words describing what makes that person valuable in Christ's eyes.*



**READ:** 2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 on page 42 of the PSG.

**ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL):** Bring an unopened pregnancy test to your group meeting as an illustration. Pass the box around the group and ask volunteers to share what emotions they feel when they hold it. Then ask what emotions Bathsheba likely felt when we sent her message to the king—and what emotions David likely felt when he received it.

**DISCUSS:** Question #4 on page 42 of the PSG: **"What can these passages teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?"**

## 2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 Commentary

### **Look out for the needs and interests of others.**

**[Verse 5]** It appears as though Bathsheba never entered David's mind after their encounter. His secret hit a snag when Bathsheba discovered she had **conceived** and sent him a terse message: **"I am pregnant."** The only recorded words of Bathsheba in the entire episode must have hit David like a ton of bricks.

**[Verses 6-7]** 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. When Uriah arrived, David carried out the charade by asking about the welfare of Joab and the troops.

**[Verses 8-9]** After exchanging some other pleasantries, David moved to the real reason for bringing Uriah home. 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 usually 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 never left the king's house, choosing instead 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. Ultimately, Uriah's refusal to have sexual contact with his wife expressed his devotion to the Lord. 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 in battle, he needed to refrain from all sexual contact (see 1 Samuel 21:5). Having sexual relations with Bathsheba would have disqualified Uriah temporarily from serving in the Lord's army (see Leviticus 15:18).

In the morning, informants had an amazing report: "Uriah didn't go home" (2 Samuel 11:10). David gently rebuked Uriah, but his words smell of hypocrisy. 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. 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. 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 (see v. 13).



## **2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 Commentary (continued)**

**[Verse 14]** What an agonizing night David must have had. He would not know if his scheme worked until the next morning. After two failed efforts to make it appear Uriah had fathered Bathsheba's child, David changed tactics. 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. 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.

**[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.

**[Verses 16-17]** With Rabbah under siege, Joab and his men only needed to wait out the Ammonites until they either starved or surrendered. Attacking had only one purpose—to eliminate Uriah. Joab followed David's instructions. He ordered Uriah to attack the city where the strongest fighters were stationed. When the battle became fierce, Joab retreated, making Uriah an easy target. He became a casualty of war. Joab knew he could not send Uriah to the city walls alone or it would look suspicious. He sent several of the king's best soldiers into the battle as well. Regrettably, several 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.

There was no mistaking David's orders to Joab: he wanted Uriah killed in a way that made it look like a simple casualty of war. With Uriah 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 encompass more and more people, leading to greater and greater guilt.

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 urged believers to follow the example of Christ. Specifically, 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.

