



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

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 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 Samuel 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?

2 Samuel 11:1-9,14-17 (CSB)

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 Hethite?” 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.

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

⁶ David sent orders to Joab: “Send me Uriah the Hethite.” 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 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.

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 Hethite also died.

GET INTO THE STUDY



10 minutes

Notes



DISCUSS: Invite your group members to discuss **Question #1** on page 37 of the PSG (Personal Study Guide): **“When has your perception of someone changed for the better?”** Allow time for each person to respond.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 38):

Let’s admit it. We’ve all been amazed by a magician’s trick or illusion. Later, if we discover how he created the illusion, our amazement vanishes as quickly as the as-

sistant. Then, the next time we see the illusion, it seems so obvious what he is actually doing. What changed? We saw that the trick was no trick after all. We could see things as they really are. We saw it from the magician’s perspective.

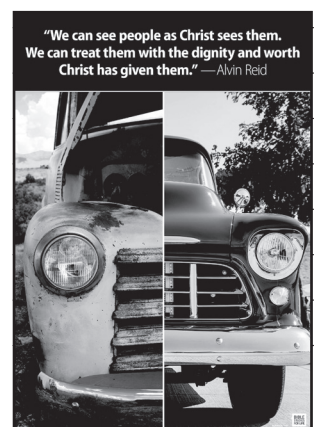
SAY: “The truth is, our perspective on magic tricks and people can change. As Christ-followers, we’re called to see people as God sees them. King David gave us a tragic example of what happens when we fail to see people from God’s perspective.”

ACTIVITY (OPTIONAL): In advance, post **Pack Item #4**, “Valuable” poster, and cover it with newspaper so that only a portion of the text and image can be seen. Invite group members to describe the poster. Ask: “Can we give a complete description of this poster?” Discuss responses. Explain that our perspective is limited, but when we pull off the newspaper we have a complete view. In the same way, we sometimes approach people with a flawed, incomplete perspective. When we do, we fail to see them as God sees them.

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 with prayer. Spend some time praising God for the specific things He has done recently in your church or small group.

TIP: Schedule a time for your group to gather for a meal together. Time spent developing relationships outside of your group time will pay off with deeper discussion and engagement in your Bible study.



PACK POSTER:

Pack Item #4
“Valuable” poster

PLAYLIST PICK:

“All Yours”
By Chris Tomlin

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. David dispatched Joab and mobilized the entire Israelite army and his royal guard to war 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. After rising from a late-afternoon rest, 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 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.

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, 2 Samuel 16:23), and the wife of Uriah the Hethite, 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" or 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. This encounter occurred after "she had just been purifying herself from her uncleanness" (see Leviticus 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.



STUDY THE BIBLE

NOTES

2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 (CSB)

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

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

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 Hethite also died.

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 2 Samuel 11:5-9.

SAY: "David's downward spiral into sin led him further and further away from intimacy with God. Instead of confessing that he had abused his power, treated Bathsheba with total disregard, and committed adultery, David sought to cover up his actions—and that led to even more sinful actions."

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGES 41-42): David devised a plan.

- » He commanded Joab to send Uriah back from the battlefield to give a field report. David intended that, while Uriah was in Jerusalem to report to the king, he would also go home and sleep with his wife, leading everyone to assume Uriah was responsible for Bathsheba's pregnancy.
- » David, however, was not a soldier on leave; he was a soldier still on duty. David had led his men to keep the law and keep themselves ritually pure while on duty—which meant, in part, refraining from sexual intimacy with their wives (Leviticus 15:18; 1 Samuel 21:5). Uriah was showing a greater obedience to his king and a clear devotion to the Lord by not sleeping with Bathsheba.
- » In verses 12-13, David tried this tactic again. But this second time, David got Uriah drunk, hoping that Uriah would forget his commitment to the Lord.

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

Look out for the needs and interests of others. Verse 5: David's 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: Ultimately, David had a single purpose—to cover up his sin. He 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 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, 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.



STUDY THE BIBLE

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ALTERNATE QUESTION:
What are some warning signs that show we're viewing people as objects or obstacles?

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2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 (CSB) (Continued)

READ: Ask a group member to read aloud 2 Samuel 11:14-17.

SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 42): David's Plans A and B to cover his sin were unsuccessful, so David resorted to Plan C.

- » David sent a letter to Joab stating: "Put Uriah at the front of the fiercest fighting, then withdraw from him so that he is struck down and dies" (v. 15).
- » Joab was also a soldier who obeyed his king; however, Joab surely saw this command for what it was: a death warrant on Uriah.
- » Uriah was placed on the front lines of battle where he was killed. The other soldiers who were placed there with Uriah also died.

DISCUSS: Question #4 on page 41 of the PSG: **"What can this passage teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?"**

DISCUSS: Question #5 on page 42 of the PSG: **"What are practical ways to seek out the value in others and treat them accordingly?"**

DO: Instruct group members to complete the activity on page 43 on their own. If time allows, invite volunteers to share their responses aloud.



A NEW PERSPECTIVE

- » What do you find most surprising in this passage? Check all that apply.
 - That David had been previously named in Scripture as a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14)
 - How many lives were affected by David's actions
 - The number of ways David tried to cover up his sin
 - That David was willing to have Uriah killed to cover his sin
 - Other: _____
- » Each person you encounter is an image-bearer of God. How does that truth influence the way you relate to others?

2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17 Commentary (Continued)

Instead, David became desperate. 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.

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.



5 minutes

LIVE IT OUT

Notes

Dotted lines for taking notes.

LEADER PACK: Bring your group’s attention to **Pack Item #4**, “Valuable” poster, to reinforce the Point of this session.

SAY: “This week, how will you see and treat others as Christ does?”

GUIDE: Lead group members to consider the responses to the Bible study listed on page 44 of the PSG.



- » **Evaluate.** Take a moment to evaluate your own heart. Is there a person or group of people you tend to see as less than God’s child?
- » **Confess.** Is there a Bathsheba in your life, someone or something you’ve failed to see and treat in a God-honoring way? Confess this to God in prayer and ask Him to change your perspective of that person.
- » **Restore.** Broken relationships are a great hindrance in the local church. Is there someone with whom you need to be reconciled, or someone you need to encourage to seek reconciliation?

Wrap It Up

SAY: “Selfishness is a tough battle to overcome. Thankfully, we’re not commanded to be like Christ in our own strength. The Holy Spirit empowers us to follow Christ each day. So, whom do you see in a typical week? Do you recognize them as image bearers of God, or something less? **When we recognize and honor the value of those around us, we honor God, the Creator.**”



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