

# 4

## *See Their Worth*



*When has your perception of someone changed for the better?*

**QUESTION 1**

#BSFLrelationships

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



## 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. 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.

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 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. King David gave us a tragic example of what happens when we fail to see people from God's perspective.

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# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

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## 2 Samuel 11:1-4 (CSB)

<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 Hethite?” <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.

In 2 Samuel 10, the Israelites were forced to deal with a threat from their neighbors, the Ammonites, after the king of the Ammonites died and his son took bad advice from poor leaders. Israel prevailed, and the Ammonites retreated, but they remained a threat. As chapter 11 begins, it was “spring when kings march out to war” (v. 1). Spring was an optimal time to deal with such enemies because the winter rains were easing up, the soldiers did not have to be home working their own fields, and they could easily feed themselves from the Ammonites’ own fields.

King David himself didn’t go to war this time, but remained in Jerusalem. David was not in every military campaign (10:7); in fact, his men may have encouraged him to stay home as they did in a later battle (21:15-17). We won’t conclude that David was not where he should’ve been, but this does explain why Uriah was not at home with his wife, which made it easy for David to do what he did.

While David might not have *been* in the wrong place, he *looked* in the wrong place, and that led to this downward spiral of sin.

- » **David looked at Bathsheba.** David’s palace was likely at the highest point of the city, and walking on his flat roof—a common practice in their culture, especially on warm evenings—would give him a great view of the city. From this vantage point, he saw on another rooftop “a very beautiful woman” (v. 2) bathing. No harm done—yet. However, it’s one thing to accidentally

*Where do we see people objectified or undervalued today?*

### QUESTION 2

see something; it's another thing to keep looking. We know David didn't just see Bathsheba and then avert his eyes, because of what he did next.

- » **David asked about Bathsheba.** David obviously gazed long enough that his “accidental” sighting of her bathing turned to lust. Then he wanted to know who he was lusting for. Through a series of events, David learned about Bathsheba's family and life. David no longer viewed Bathsheba as a woman made in the image of God but as an object of enjoyment.
- » **David sent for Bathsheba.** David then used his power as king to gain his own desire. We don't know if Bathsheba came out of fear—this was a summons from the king, after all—or naiveté, but the point is not Bathsheba's motive, but David's. Once David used Bathsheba for his own plans, “she returned home” (v. 4). But things would never return to what they were before.

At this point, discussions of this passage usually center on the sin of adultery. Sex outside a marriage relationship was explicitly prohibited in the law (Exodus 20:14), and David certainly knew that. But behind David's willingness to commit adultery was an equally grievous sin: failing to see Bathsheba's worth in God's eyes.

It is sin to treat anyone as less than God's image-bearer, regardless of race, gender, or status in culture. We were created in His image (Genesis 1:26-27), and even though we have sinned and rebelled against our Creator, He still sees us with value. That image is marred by our sinfulness, but Jesus Christ came to set us free from our sin and restore us to be the full image-bearers He created us to be.

The apostle Paul connected our treatment of others to our walk with Christ. He said God's will is “that each of you knows how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passions. ... This means one must not transgress against and *take advantage of a brother or sister in this manner*” (1 Thessalonians 4:4-6, italics added). Our treatment of others is grounded in holiness and our walk with Christ. When we walk with Christ, we see people from His perspective and we treat them accordingly.

***What are the dangers of attempting to use people for our benefit?***

### QUESTION 3

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

<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 Hethite.” 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.

<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 Hethite also died.

David’s downward spiral into sin led him further and further away from intimacy with God. Surely David felt the sharp sting of sin’s consequences when he received Bathsheba’s unambiguous message: “I am pregnant” (v. 5). But 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.

David came up with a plan. He commanded his unsuspecting military commander, Joab, to send Uriah back from the battlefield to give a field report. That may sound innocent enough, but Uriah was one of the top soldiers in the Israelite army, and David was now using him as one of the many runners who kept the king informed. 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.



*What can this passage teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?*

### QUESTION 4



***What are practical ways to seek out the value in others and treat them accordingly?***

#### QUESTION 5

In spite of David's instructions, Uriah was obedient to David in another way. He 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.

In verses 12-13, David tried this tactic again. But this second time, David got Uriah drunk, hoping in an inebriated state, Uriah would forget his commitment to the Lord.

Thanks to Uriah's unwavering loyalty and commitment, David's Plans A and B were unsuccessful, so he resorted to Plan C: "David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah" (v. 14). Loyal Uriah unknowingly carried his own death sentence to Joab! David did not give his reasoning to Joab, but he made his intention clear: "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.

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.

What led to this destructive path? David was self-focused. He failed to see people—neither Bathsheba nor Uriah—as God sees them, and he used both of them for his own ends. His self-focused actions led to self-preservation.

David may not have placed the needs of others before his own, but we can. We can see people as Christ sees them. We can treat them with the dignity and worth Christ has given them. We can honor God by honoring those made in His image.

"It is sin to treat anyone as less than God's image-bearer, regardless of race, gender, or status in culture!"

ALVIN REID

## 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?***

## LIVE IT OUT

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

- » **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?



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.**

My thoughts