

SESSION 4

SEE THEIR WORTH



When has your opinion of someone changed for the better?

QUESTION #1

#BSFLrelationships

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

THE PASSAGES

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. 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.

2 Samuel 11:1-4

1 And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

2 And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

3 And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

4 And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

Sin comes in all sizes and shapes. Some sins are blatantly obvious; others hide in the shadows, and we think no one is aware of them. We tend to categorize some sins as worse than others, but all sins share two things in common: they are rebellion against God, and they begin in the heart.

We see in David a prime example that sin begins in the heart. That may seem ironic since Scripture refers to David as a man after God's own heart (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22), but he was still a man with a sinful nature. To fully appreciate the downward spiral of sin David put himself in, consider the historical context. In 2 Samuel 10, the Israelites were forced to deal with a threat from their neighbors, the Ammonites, after the Ammonite king 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 "the time when kings go forth to battle." 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.

David himself didn't go to war this time, but "tarried still at 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.

1. **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 another person on a rooftop, which happened to be a very beautiful woman bathing.

No harm done—yet. We certainly know how easy it is today to see things we shouldn't, whether it's on the television or surfing the Internet. It's one thing to accidentally 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.

2. **David asked about Bathsheba.** David obviously gazed long enough that his "accidental" sighting of this woman bathing turned to lust. Then he wanted to know the woman for whom he was lusting. David learned more than just her name. It turned out Bathsheba was ...

- ▶ ... "the daughter of Eliam," one of his best fighters (23:34).
- ▶ ... likely the granddaughter of Ahithophel, a trusted counselor before conspiring with Absalom against him (15:12–17:23).
- ▶ ... "the wife of Uriah," one of his honored soldiers (23:39).

This wasn't just some random woman David objectified with his lust. She was closely related to three men David knew well!

David no longer viewed Bathsheba as he should—as a woman made in the image of God. He was spiraling further down.

3. **David sent for Bathsheba.** David had objectified Bathsheba from the beginning, and now he used his power as king to gain his desire. We don't know if Bathsheba came out of fear or naïveté, but the point is not Bathsheba's motive, but David's. Once David used Bathsheba for his own plans, “she returned unto her house,” but things would never be the same as 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 (Ex. 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.

Why is it often difficult for us to see the value in others?

QUESTION #2

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 (Gen. 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.

We need to see others as God sees them. The apostle Paul connected our treatment of others to our sanctification, our walk with Christ. He said God's will is “that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence ... that no man go beyond and *defraud his*

brother in any matter (1 Thess. 4:4-6, emphasis added). How we treat 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.

Where do we see people objectified or undervalued today?

QUESTION #3

2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17

5 And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.

6 And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

7 And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

8 And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.

9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

.....
14 And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

15 And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

16 And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

17 And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

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 with child." But instead of confronting and 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 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. David 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. A trivial task indeed for a highly valued soldier.

DIGGING DEEPER



JOAB

Personal name meaning
"Yahweh is father." Military

commander during most of David's reign. He was the oldest son of Zeruah, the sister of David (2 Sam. 2:13; 1 Chron. 2:16). He was loyal to David and ruthless in achieving his objectives. After Saul's death David was negotiating with Abner, Saul's military commander. Joab, whose brother had been slain in battle by Abner, deceived Abner and murdered him. David publicly lamented this assassination (2 Sam. 2-3).

Joab's exploits in the capture of Jerusalem led David to name him commander (1 Chron. 11:4-8). Joab successfully led David's armies against the Ammonites (2 Sam. 10). During this campaign David sent his infamous order to have Uriah, the husband of Bathsheba, killed (2 Sam. 11).

"Joab," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, gen. eds. Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England (Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 923.

David intended that, while Uriah was in Jerusalem to report to the king, he would go home and sleep with his wife, leading everyone to assume Uriah was responsible for Bathsheba's pregnancy. What soldier, given the opportunity to go home from battle, would not spend a pleasant night with his wife? David even encouraged Uriah to do so. He told Uriah, "Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet." The foot washing carried the idea of hospitality and being well-received in his own home. To "sweeten the deal," David even sent a gift, which may have been food and wine to set the stage.

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—which meant refraining from sexual intimacy with their wives (Lev. 15:18; 1 Sam. 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. David had set aside his own commitment to the Lord, and to hide his sin, David did all he could to encourage Uriah to neglect his own commitment.

Thanks to Uriah's unwavering loyalty and commitment, David's Plan A was unsuccessful, so David resorted to Plan B: "David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah." Loyal Uriah unknowingly carried his own death sentence to Joab!

What can these passages teach us about the progression of sin in our lives?

QUESTION #4

It's hard to see David here as the same man who would not lay a hand on Saul, even when Saul sought to kill him. David presents a tragic example of what sin does when we don't confess it. David was

self-focused. He failed to see people—not 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 at all costs.

David should’ve placed the truth and the life of Uriah ahead of his own. Of course, had David lived by this principle in the beginning, he would’ve placed the worth of Bathsheba before his own desires. He never would’ve gotten into that mess in the first place!

But we can do better. We can see people as Christ sees them. We can treat them with the dignity and worth Christ has given them.

How can we help one another see the value in others and treat them accordingly?

QUESTION #5

SEE THEIR WORTH

Prayerfully respond to the following:

What are the names of two or three people you find it difficult to get along with or be around?

.....

In this space, list the ways the people you identified are created in the image of God:

.....

Write a prayer asking God to help you treat these people in a way that honors the image of God in them:

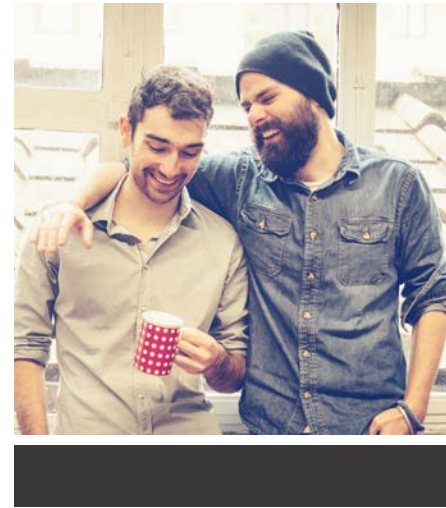
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LIVE IT OUT

This week, how will you see and treat others as Christ does? Consider the following applications:

- ▶ **Evaluate.** People often treat others as objects rather than as God's image bearers. If you've drifted into this tendency, be intentional about confessing your sin and changing your actions.
- ▶ **Restore.** Broken relationships are a great hindrance in the local church. Seek reconciliation and/or forgiveness from someone with whom you've become disconnected.
- ▶ **Contend.** A number of societal evils—human trafficking, pornography, racism, and more—systematically strip away the dignity and worth of thousands of human beings. Take a stand to fight against one of these practices in a tangible way.

Our culture has a way of creating illusions about people: some don't matter. They're not important. Don't believe these lies. Instead, look at all people the way Christ does, and treat them as He would ... and does.



Share with others how you will live out this study: [#BSFLrelationships](#)