

GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

SAY: “In our last session, we looked at having respect for authority. Today we will learn that our relationship with Christ enables and expects us to see others as He does—as individuals with great value in God’s eyes.” Invite members to turn to **page 3** in the **Personal Study Guide (PSG)** and review session titles.

DISCUSS: Draw attention to the picture (**PSG, p. 50**) and introduce **Question #1: When has your opinion of someone changed for the better?**

LEADER PACK: Point to **Item 4: Valuable.** Ask a volunteer to read the quote.

“We can see people as Christ sees them. We can treat them with the dignity and worth Christ has given them.” —Alvin Reid



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 mind-set 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 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.

See others with the value Christ gives them.

Chapter 11 marked a critical juncture in David's life. While he had experienced a few bumps in the road, David rose to be the unquestioned leader of Israel. He led successful military campaigns and secured Israel's borders from external threats.

1 ▶ Verse 1. Military campaigns came **after the year was expired**; this would have been in the spring, after the winter rainy season. The months prior to harvest time provided for the maximum number of able-bodied men to join the fighting until they would need to return to their fields back home. Unlike the kindness we saw in David in the two previous chapters, now we see another side of the king, as he **sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah.**

The writer noted that it was **the time when kings go forth to battle**. Not only did David dispatch Joab, but he mobilized the entire Israelite army to war against the Ammonites. However, **David tarried still at Jerusalem**, thus providing the background for his moral failure. ◀

GUIDE: Direct attention to **The Bible Meets Life (PSG, p. 51)**. Highlight the author's reference to a magician's illusion and how our perspective changes when we discover how the illusion works.

Reinforce the importance of seeing others as Christ sees them 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 God to help us see others with the value that He does. Thank Him for the value that He has placed on us.

STUDY THE BIBLE 2 Samuel 11:1-4



15 minutes

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

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:1-4.

GUIDE: Use Bible

Commentary 1 on page 53 to explain why the spring was the optimal time for war.

SUMMARIZE: Refer members to **PSG pages 53-54**, to the progression of actions that led to David's temptation and sin:

1. **David looked at Bathsheba.** *David "saw a woman washing herself."*
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,"
 - "likely the granddaughter of Ahithophel," and
 - "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.*

GUIDE: Use Bible

Commentary 2 to give more information about Eliam, Ahithophel and Uriah.

Verse 2. With Joab handling the military campaign and the homeland quite secure, David could just sit back and relax on his rooftop getaway and perhaps take an afternoon snooze. Flat roofs, common in the architecture of the day, provided places to relax in the comparative comfort of cool breezes. David's house likely had been built on the highest point in the city, and from his rooftop he would have had a commanding view of the city. After one of those afternoon rests, David **arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house**, and at some point **he saw a woman washing herself**. 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. Though David knew what God said about adultery, he **sent and enquired after the woman**, because he was already conniving how he might set up a rendezvous with her. Someone told the king this was **Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam** as well as the granddaughter of Ahithophel, one of David's most trusted counselors (2 Sam. 16:23); she also 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 walked away, but he lingered. He continued down this devastatingly selfish and wrong path.

Jesus raised the bar concerning adultery: "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already 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. It goes without saying, Jesus' teaching applies equally 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, the man after God's heart, went against his own heart, and ignored every warning and way of escape God set before him. He craved Bathsheba, so he **sent messengers, and took her**. The Hebrew word translated *took* 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. That **she came in unto him** only expressed the result of David's messengers going for her. The focus is on God's chosen leader, with no mention

about whether Bathsheba cooperated or not. David should have known better. Omitting any motive on Bathsheba's part placed the focus of this episode on David's impure motives.

David **lay with her**, expressing how he fulfilled his lustful desires by engaging in sexual intercourse with her. This encounter occurred after **she was purified 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. David controlled the entire sequence with Bathsheba: he sent for her, took her, and slept with her. Had she not become pregnant, Bathsheba might never have darkened the door of the palace 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 the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication" (1 Thess. 4:3). In other words, God says two people should not act like they are married when they are not. Doing so devalues humans who are created in the image of God. *Fornication* includes sexual relations before marriage and sexual relations between people who are married to others.

Paul added that each believer should "know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour" (v. 4). In our day, the use of pornography fuels sinful desires and leads to a fantasy life in the minds of both men and women. God calls us to purity. To live pure lives means we must love people as Christ loves them. Christ calls us to love people, not use them. ◀

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.

DISCUSS: Question #2
(PSG, p. 54): **Why is it often difficult for us to see the value in others?**

GUIDE: 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.

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

NOTE: Be sure to broaden the discussion of ways people are undervalued to include scenarios beyond sexual objectification.

(Alternate: What can we learn about David from these verses?)

TRANSITION: "As bad as David's sin was at this point, it would get even worse. In the next verses we see David's continual downward spiral in his attempt to cover up his sin."

STUDY THE BIBLE
2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17



20 minutes

READ: Ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 11:5-9,14-17.

GUIDE: Use **Bible**

Commentary 4 on this page and page 57 as well as **DIGGING DEEPER** on **PSG page 56** to give more background on Joab and the importance of his relationship with David.

SUMMARIZE: Refer group members to **pages 56-57** in the **PSG** to see how David devised a plan.

David commanded his unsuspecting military commander, 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 go home and sleep with his wife, leading everyone to assume Uriah was responsible for Bathsheba's pregnancy.

(Continued on next page.)

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.

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.

Nothing hints that David tried to continue the relationship with Bathsheba, or that she ever entered David's mind after their encounter. But his secret hit a snag when **the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.** These are Bathsheba's only recorded words 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 swift measures of concealing their sin seemed necessary, for the king's honor and for her safety.

4 ▶ Verses 6-7. Calling on his abilities as a tactician, David quickly devised a plan to cover up his sin. He **sent to Joab**

calling Bathsheba's husband, **Uriah the Hittite**, home from the battlefield on the pretext of bring word how 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? Any messenger David sent easily could have brought back any message Joab may have wanted to send. Obediently, **Joab sent Uriah to David**, but Joab surely sensed that something was not quite right.

When Uriah arrived in Jerusalem, David carried out the charade by asking about Joab and the troops. He had to give every appearance things were normal, when deep within his soul, he surely must have trembled. ◀

Verses 8-9. David soon moved to the real purpose for bringing Uriah home. At that point, 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 thy house, and wash thy feet.** David had no concern for Uriah's personal hygiene; he was focused only on his own reputation. When a person 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 **mess of meat from the king**, so the couple could enjoy a nice meal and a relaxing evening together.

David's basic scheme was to bring Bathsheba's husband home temporarily and order him to spend one intimate night with his wife, then dispatch him back to the fighting. 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, he **slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord.** 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 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. Having sexual relations with Bathsheba would have disqualified Uriah temporarily from serving in the Lord's army (see Lev. 15:18; 1 Sam. 21:5).

David had informants watching Uriah as though he were the enemy. They knew that David expected 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 surely had speculations. At that point, however, David did not care about anyone but himself—not Bathsheba, not Uriah, not Joab, not his servants, not even the nation of Israel.

Uriah 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.

DISCUSS: Question #4

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

SUMMARIZE: Refer group members to **page 57** in the **PSG** to see how David resorted to a more desperate plan when Uriah proved more loyal than he expected.

David's Plan A to cover his sin 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!

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.

GUIDE: Use **Bible**

Commentary 5 to show the extreme lengths David was willing to go to cover up his sin: the death of Uriah.

In the morning, the spies had an astonishing report: "Uriah went not down unto his house" (2 Sam. 11:10). David gently rebuked Uriah, but his words reek of hypocrisy. He had no concern for Uriah; he only wanted Uriah to sleep with Bathsheba to cover his own sin.

Uriah responded that he could not possibly enjoy his wife and the comforts of home while his comrades were **encamped in the open fields. Besides, the ark, and Israel, and Judah abide in tents.** 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 that as a dutiful soldier, Uriah would refuse his offer. So the next evening, David invited Uriah for dinner and made him drunk. But even drunk, Uriah would not violate his conscience and staggered out to bed down in the servants' quarters again.

Verse 14. The next morning, he realized his schemes had been in vain. After two failed efforts to make it appear Uriah would have fathered Bathsheba's child, David was forced to change tactics. Uriah's conduct proved his loyalty in the most public way, making it more than evident he could not possibly have fathered his wife's child. Concluding his only course of action was to have Uriah killed in action, David would compound 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 had become so deranged by his sin he **wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah**—thus, the soldier unwittingly carried his own death warrant under the royal seal.

5 ▶ Verse 15. All that mattered to David now was that Uriah become a casualty of war. In his letter, David clearly ordered Joab to ensure Uriah's death: **Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.** 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 man's wife, committing adultery, bearing false witness, and committing murder. In his attempt to escape his guilt, he only

piled on more guilt. He eventually learned that no one can escape God's judgment. David believed he deceived everyone, but in reality he deceived only himself. He thought he could escape guilt, but as the writer of Proverbs has said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper" (Prov. 28:13a). ◀

Verses 16-17. Joab knew exactly 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, and, **assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.** When the battle became fierce, Joab retreated, making Uriah an easy target for the enemy. He became a casualty of war, just as the king planned. 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, **there fell some of the people of the servants of David.** 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.

David's orders to Joab were very clear: he wanted Uriah killed so that it would look like a simple casualty of war. Joab complied completely with David's orders, and Uriah was dead; 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 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 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.

DISCUSS: Question #5
(PSG, p. 58): How can we help one another see the value in others and treat them accordingly?

(Alternate: How might David have responded differently at each point of his decline into sin?)

OPTION: Form several small groups and invite members to develop and perform brief skits in which David makes a better choice at each critical point in his cycle of sinful choices. Some possibilities are:

1. David chooses to stay home.
2. David observes Bathsheba.
3. David calls for Bathsheba.
4. David sends for Uriah.
5. David sends for Uriah a second time.
6. David writes to Joab.

DO: Invite volunteers to share responses to the activity on **PSG page 58: "See Their Worth."**

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 we will see the value in others when we are abiding in Christ.

PRAY: "Father, help us to see others the way You do so that we can truly show them the love of Christ."

NOTE: Remind group members that **PSG pages 6-9** are there to journal one another's prayer requests.

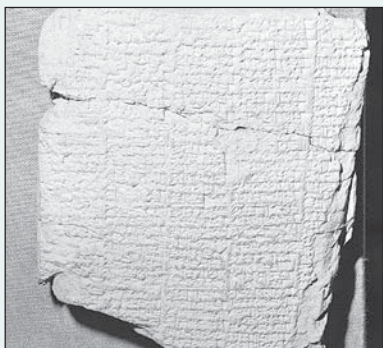
LIVE IT OUT

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.

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 administering 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 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.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Get expert insights on weekly studies through the Ministry Grid.

MinistryGrid.com/web/BibleStudiesForLife