

Resting in Christ

The Cost of Rest

Lesson #4 for July 24, 2021

Scriptures: 2 Samuel 11:1-27; 12:1-23; Genesis 3:1-8; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:10.

1. This lesson will focus on the sin of David with Bathsheba and the consequences.

Many people seem desperate to find a little peace and quiet. They are willing to pay for it too. In many big cities there are internet-free rooms, which can be rented by the hour. The rules are strict—no noise, no visitors. People are willing to pay to be able to sit quietly and just think or nap. There are sleep pods that can be rented in airports, and noise-reducing earphones are popular items. There are even canvas hoods, or collapsible privacy shields that you can buy to pull over your head and torso for a quick workplace break.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Sabbath, July 17.

2. Our story begins in 2 Samuel 11:1-5. King David, who had fought many, many battles in his life, decided that time to send his general, Joab, to lead his army against the Ammonites. Meanwhile, back at home, David was resting, taking an afternoon nap, and then, walking on his roof. He looked over and saw a very beautiful woman taking a bath.

2 Samuel 11:1-5: ¹The following spring, at the time of the year when kings usually go to war, David sent out Joab with his officers and the Israelite army; they defeated the Ammonites and besieged the city of Rabbah. But David himself stayed in Jerusalem.

² One day, late in the afternoon, David got up from his nap and went to the palace roof. As he walked about up there, he saw a woman having a bath. She was very beautiful. ³So he sent a messenger to find out who she was, and learnt that she was **Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite**. ⁴David sent messengers to fetch her; they brought her to him and he made love to her. (She had just finished her monthly ritual of purification.) Then she went back home. ⁵Afterwards she discovered that she was pregnant and sent a message to David to tell him.—*American Bible Society*. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation** (2nd ed., 2 Samuel 11:1–5). New York: American Bible Society.[†]

3. What do we know about Uriah and Bathsheba?

2 Samuel 23:24,39: ²⁴Other members of “The Thirty” [David’s most powerful and effective fighting men] included: ...

³⁹ Uriah the Hittite.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [He was not a Jew.][†]

2 Samuel 23:34: Eliam [Bathsheba’s father] son of Ahithophel from Gilo [was also part of “The Thirty”].—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

1 Chronicles 27:33: Ahithophel was adviser to the king, and Hushai the Archite was the king’s friend and counsellor.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

2 Samuel 16:15-21: [Many years later,] ¹⁵ Absalom and all the Israelites with him entered Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with them. ¹⁶When Hushai, David’s trusted friend, met Absalom, he shouted, “Long live the king! Long live the king!”

¹⁷ “What has happened to your loyalty to your friend David?” Absalom asked him. “Why didn’t you go with him?”

¹⁸ Hushai answered, “How could I? I am on the side of the one chosen by the LORD, by these people, and by all the Israelites. I will stay with you. ¹⁹After all, whom should I serve, if not my master’s son? As I served your father, so now I will serve you.”

²⁰ Then Absalom turned to Ahithophel and said, “Now that we are here, what do you advise us to do?”

²¹ Ahithophel answered, “Go and have intercourse with your father’s concubines whom he left behind to take care of the palace. Then everyone in Israel will know that your father regards you as his enemy, and your followers will be greatly encouraged.” ²²So they set up a tent for Absalom on the palace roof, and in the sight of everyone Absalom went in and had intercourse with his father’s concubines.

²³ **Any advice that Ahithophel gave in those days was accepted as though it were the very word of God; both David and Absalom followed it.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡} [That is what actually happened.][‡]

Later, when Ahithophel who had endorsed Absalom found out that Absalom had ignored his counsel, he committed suicide.

2 Samuel 17:23: When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and went back to his own city. After putting his affairs in order, he hanged himself. He was buried in the family grave.—*Good News Bible*.^{*}

4. Notice that Bathsheba was the wife of one of David’s most famous fighting men and the granddaughter of his most trusted counselor.
5. David had taken other men’s wives before including Abigail who was Nabal’s former wife (See 1 Samuel 25.) and also the wives of Saul—because David was the next king.

2 Samuel 12:7-8: “And this is what the LORD God of Israel says: ‘I made you king of Israel and rescued you from Saul. ⁸**I gave you his kingdom and his wives**; I made you king over Israel and Judah. **If this had not been enough, I would have given you twice as much.**’”—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

6. David had killed other men before.

1 Chronicles 28:2-3: ² David stood before them and addressed them: “My friends, listen to me. I wanted to build a permanent home for the Covenant Box, the footstool of the LORD our God. I have made preparations for building a temple to honour him, ³but he has forbidden me to do it, because I am a soldier and have shed too much blood.”—*Good News Bible*.^{*} (See also 1 Chronicles 22:8.)

7. With this history behind him and recognizing his position as king, **David felt that the rules that applied to others did not apply to him!**
8. But, there are some very interesting questions surrounding this whole story. How are we to explain the fact that Bathsheba was the wife of a vigorous fighting man, and yet, she had never been pregnant? If she had had children, she would never have taken that bath

outside. Then, she had one encounter with David, and she became pregnant. If Bathsheba had had children already, she would not have done what she did. And if Uriah had gone home to sleep with his wife, David's plans might have succeeded without detection. Did God arrange all of this so that David would get caught? Or, did the Devil?

9. Then, David was in a real dilemma. What was he going to do?

2 Samuel 11:6-27: ⁶ David then sent a message to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." So Joab sent him to David. ⁷When Uriah arrived, David asked him if Joab and the troops were well, and how the fighting was going. ⁸Then he said to Uriah, "Go home and rest a while." Uriah left, and David sent a present to his home. ⁹But Uriah did not go home; instead he slept at the palace gate with the king's guards. ¹⁰When David heard that Uriah had not gone home, he asked him, "You have just returned after a long absence; why didn't you go home?"

¹¹ **Uriah answered, "The men of Israel and Judah are away at the war, and the Covenant Box is with them; my commander Joab and his officers are camping out in the open. How could I go home, eat and drink, and sleep with my wife? By all that's sacred, I swear that I could never do such a thing!"** [Years earlier, Eli's sons had taken the Covenant Box into battle and lost it!][†]

¹² So David said, "Then stay here the rest of the day, and tomorrow I'll send you back." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³David invited him to supper and made him drunk. But again that night Uriah did not go home; instead he slept on his blanket in the palace guardroom.

¹⁴ The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. ¹⁵He wrote: "Put Uriah in the front line, where the fighting is heaviest, then retreat and let him be killed." [Didn't Uriah know how to read? Or, was that a sealed scroll?] ¹⁶So while Joab was besieging the city, he sent Uriah to a place where he knew the enemy was strong. ¹⁷The enemy troops came out of the city and fought Joab's forces; some of David's officers were killed, and so was Uriah....

²¹ "If the king asks you this, tell him, 'Your officer Uriah was also killed.' "...

²⁶ When Bathsheba heard that her husband had been killed, she mourned for him. ²⁷When the time of mourning was over, David sent for her to come to the palace; she became his wife and bore him a son. **But the LORD was not pleased with what David had done.**—*Good News Bible*.^{*†‡}

10. David did not have the option of sending Bathsheba to the doctor to get an abortion as many would want to do today. He launched into an elaborate scheme to try to cover up his sin. But, God—or the Devil—was not going to allow David to get away with that cover-up.

2 Samuel 12:1-14: ¹ The LORD sent the prophet Nathan to David. Nathan went to him and said, "There were two men who lived in the same town; one was rich and the other poor. ²The rich man had many cattle and sheep, ³while the poor man had only one lamb, which he had bought. He took care of it, and it grew up in his home with his children. He would feed it with some of his own food, let it drink from his cup, and hold it in his lap. The lamb was like a daughter to him. ⁴One day a visitor arrived at the rich man's home. The rich

man didn't want to kill one of his own animals to prepare a meal for him; instead, he took the poor man's lamb and cooked a meal for his guest."

⁵ David was very angry with the rich man and said, "I swear by the living LORD that the man who did this ought to die! ⁶For having done such a cruel thing, he must pay back four times as much as he took."

⁷ **"You are that man,"** Nathan said to David. "And this is what the LORD God of Israel says: 'I made you king of Israel and rescued you from Saul. ⁸**I gave you his kingdom and his wives;** I made you king over Israel and Judah. If this had not been enough, I would have given you twice as much. ⁹Why, then, have you disobeyed my commands? Why did you do this evil thing? **You had Uriah killed in battle; you let the Ammonites kill him, and then you took his wife!** ¹⁰Now, in every generation some of your descendants will die a violent death because you have disobeyed me and have taken Uriah's wife. ¹¹I swear to you that I will cause someone from your own family to bring trouble on you. You will see it when I take your wives from you and give them to another man; and he will have intercourse with them in broad daylight. ¹²You sinned in secret, but I will make this happen in broad daylight for all Israel to see.' " [That was the story of Absalom.]

¹³ **"I have sinned against the LORD,"** David said.

Nathan replied, **"The LORD forgives you; you will not die. ¹⁴But because you have shown such contempt for the LORD in doing this, your child will die."**—*Good News Bible*. *†‡ [Was that fair to the baby?][†]

11. David had been trapped into pronouncing his own sentence! Nathan managed to tell a story that led David into that trap. Try to imagine David's emotions at that moment.
12. One of the challenges that Bible scholars have struggled with in respect to this story is found in 2 Samuel 12:13 and Psalm 51:4. **Why would David say that he had sinned only against the Lord instead of sinning against Uriah and/or Bathsheba?** Was it because Uriah was gone and he had already married Bathsheba? Or, was it because David was most concerned about his relationship with God?

The prophet's rebuke touched the heart of David; conscience was aroused; his guilt appeared in all its enormity. His soul was bowed in penitence before God. With trembling lips he said, "I have sinned against the Lord." All wrong done to others reaches back from the injured one to God. **David had committed a grievous sin, toward both Uriah and Bathsheba, and he keenly felt this. But infinitely greater was his sin against God.**—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 722.1.[†]

13. It is interesting to note that Nathan immediately assured David that he was forgiven. How was Nathan so certain that God had forgiven David? Clearly, Nathan had been told by God about a number of the consequences that would occur because of David's sin. God's forgiveness did not remove the consequences of David's sin.
14. Before this whole sordid story was over, four of David's sons died. See 2 Samuel 12:13-23. Those four sons included that first child born to Bathsheba, plus Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah.
15. Psalm 51 records David's earnest prayer to God about his sin. Psalm 32 is similar.

Psalm 51:1-6: ¹Be merciful to me, O God,
because of your constant love.

Because of your great mercy
wipe away my sins!

² Wash away all my evil
and make me clean from my sin!

³ I recognize my faults;
I am always conscious of my sins.

⁴ **I have sinned against you—only against you—**
and done what you consider evil.

So you are right in judging me;
you are justified in condemning me.

⁵ I have been evil from the day I was born;
from the time I was conceived, I have been sinful.

⁶ Sincerity and truth are what you require;
fill my mind with your wisdom.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

16. David must have understood and appreciated what it was like to stand in a right relationship with God. In Psalm 51, he was praying for a return to that right relationship.

When we consider the cost of rest in Jesus, we need first to recognize that we need outside help; we are sinners and need a Savior; we recognize our sins and cry out to the only One who can wash us, cleanse us, and renew us. When we do this, we can take courage: here is an adulterer, a manipulator, a murderer, and someone who violated at least five of the Ten Commandments who called for help—and claimed the promise of God's forgiveness.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*^{*} for Tuesday, July 20.

17. Perhaps one of the most important reasons for including in Scripture these two chapters dealing with David's sin is the hope it gives for those of us who find ourselves caught in sin. However, wouldn't it have been better just to leave this whole story out of the Bible?

18. So, what did David say as he continued his prayer?

Psalm 51:7-12: ⁷ Remove my sin, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

⁸ Let me hear the sounds of joy and gladness;
and though you have crushed me and broken me,
I will be happy once again.

⁹ Close your eyes to my sins
and wipe out all my evil.

¹⁰ Create a pure heart in me, O God, and put a new and loyal spirit in me.

¹¹ Do not banish me from your presence;
do not take your Holy Spirit away from me.

¹² Give me again the joy that comes from your salvation,
and make me willing to obey you.—*Good News Bible*.*

19. Did David fully understand the joy and gladness associated with an innocent service to God? Was it unreasonable for David to ask God to restore that relationship with him?
20. Think of Adam and Eve and their experience after sinning in the Garden of Eden. They were trying to hide from God's presence. Contrast David's request in Psalm 51:11-12.
21. So, what is it that separates us from God?

Isaiah 59:2: It is because of your sins that he doesn't hear you. **It is your sins that separate you from God** when you try to worship him.—*Good News Bible*.*†

22. David was very anxious to restore a right relationship with God. He knew that in every aspect of his life, even including fighting battles against his enemies, he could not accomplish anything without God's help.
23. A victorious Christian life is not about us and how hard we struggle. It is about how often we allow God into our thoughts to transform our characters. In Psalm 51:10, David cried out for God to create a new heart within him. Compare 2 Corinthians 3:18.
24. Can you think of any sins that you have committed of which you are not sure that you have been forgiven? **Does the example of David encourage you to seek to restore the best possible relationship with God?**
25. Humanly speaking, the most natural thing for us to do after having committed a sin and believing that we have been forgiven is to try to forget it. Sometimes, memories are painful. But, compare David's prayer.

Psalm 51:13-19: ¹³ Then I will teach sinners your commands,
and they will turn back to you.

¹⁴ Spare my life, O God, and save me,
and I will gladly proclaim your righteousness.

¹⁵ Help me to speak, Lord,
and I will praise you.

¹⁶ **You do not want sacrifices,
or I would offer them;
you are not pleased with burnt offerings.**

¹⁷ **My sacrifice is a humble spirit,** O God;
you will not reject a humble and repentant heart.

¹⁸ O God, be kind to Zion and help her;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

¹⁹ Then you will be pleased with proper sacrifices
and with our burnt offerings;

and bulls will be sacrificed on your altar.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†}

26. When a bowl or a precious vase falls and breaks into pieces, we normally sigh and throw the useless broken pieces away. In Japan there is a traditional art called *kintsugi*, which specializes in re-creating broken pottery. A precious metal, such as liquid gold or silver, is used to glue the broken pieces together and to turn the broken item into something of beauty and value.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** for Thursday, July 22.[§]
27. We cannot repair ourselves; we cannot undo our past sins. God's "books" in heaven record every detail of every single life that has ever existed. What we can do is to restore a right relationship with God and with His help try to live better in the future.
28. What relationship do you see between Psalm 51 and 1 John 1:9?

1 John 1:9: But if we confess our sins to God, he will keep his promise and do what is right: he will forgive us our sins and purify us from all our wrongdoing.—*Good News Bible*.^{*†} [Is that a summary of Psalm 51?][‡]

29. It is no problem for God to forgive us; He is forgiveness personified. (Luke 23:34) He has already paid the infinite price to make that possible. First John 1:9 might be considered as a summary of Psalm 51.
30. There is one possible problem with reading and rereading Psalm 51 and 1 John 1:9. **If we become obsessed with our past sins, by beholding we become changed into the likeness of our past sins! We should not be focusing on our past sins; we should be focusing on Jesus and how He can help us to live better lives in the future.**

David's repentance was sincere and deep. There was no effort to palliate his crime. No desire to escape the judgments threatened, inspired his prayer.... He saw the defilement of his soul; he loathed his sin. **It was not for pardon only that he prayed, but for purity of heart....** In the promises of God to repentant sinners he saw the evidence of his pardon and acceptance....

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:16, 17.

Though David had fallen, the Lord lifted him up....

David humbled himself and confessed his sin, while Saul despised reproof and hardened his heart in impenitence.

This passage in David's history is ... one of the most forcible illustrations given us of the struggles and temptations of humanity, and of genuine repentance.... Through all the ages ... thousands of the children of God, who have been betrayed into sin, ... have remembered ... David's sincere repentance and confession ... and they also have taken courage to repent and try again to walk in the way of God's commandments.

Whoever ... will humble the soul with confession and repentance, as did David, may be sure that there is hope for him.... The Lord will never cast away one truly repentant soul.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 725.2-726.5.[†]

31. What do you think David will say to Uriah in heaven? God wants to treat each of us as if we are a son or daughter of the King of the universe. Does He really want to treat us that way despite our sinfulness? David prayed that he might be forgiven his sin against God.

Would it be correct to say that, ultimately, all sin is against God? What would that mean?

32. How would you try to explain to an unbeliever the tragic things that happen to many innocent people? Are they “acts of God”? Is this a story about how God behaves?
33. Through the ages, millions of innocent victims have died because of sin. We live in a dangerous and vicious world, again, because of sin. **It is essential that we recognize the issues in the great controversy in order to make sense of all this.**
34. Do we fully recognize the implications of Isaiah 59:2? **It is sin that separates us from God. Each time we sin, we are saying to God, “Step back and leave me alone!”**
35. What ideas and what emotions come into your mind when you review this sordid story about King David and Bathsheba? One thing that is very important to understand: **Forgiveness did not prevent the terrible consequences of David’s sin.** Not only did David suffer but also four of his sons died. Was that punishment sent by God? Or, was it the consequence of David’s children seeing his behavior and mimicking it?
36. Do you think it would have been better for God to leave this story out of the Bible?
37. Consider the four lessons which we can learn from this story:

(1) David should have been out on the battlefield doing what God had called him to do. When we fail to follow God’s directions, Satan is more than happy to suggest other possibilities.

(2) Satan’s temptations attack us when they are least expected. (Proverbs 4:23)

(3) At times, we may feel that we have successfully covered up our sin; but, sin can never be covered up for long.

Numbers 32:23: [Moses told the people:] “But if you do not keep your promise, I warn you that you will be sinning against the LORD. Make no mistake about it; **you will be punished for your sin.**”—*Good News Bible*.^{*††}

(4) David may have wept, confessed his sin, repented of his evil deed, etc.; and he was forgiven by God. However, the consequences of his sin remained.

38. Sin is like cancer in many ways.

Edwin Cooper was famous across America, yet almost no one knew his real name. Coming from a family of circus clowns, Cooper began performing before audiences when he was just nine years old. After a stint with the Barnum and Bailey Circus, he became a fixture on television in the 1950s as Bozo the Clown. In addition to entertaining both young and old, Cooper had a message for his “buddies and partners” every week: get checked for cancer. Yet Cooper was so busy working that he neglected to follow his own advice. By the time his cancer was discovered, it was too late for it to be treated. Edwin Cooper died at just forty-one years of age from a disease he had warned many others to watch out for.

Sin is far more deadly than the most aggressive and fast growing cancer. Sin kills and destroys everything it touches. From the Fall of Adam in the Garden of Eden until now, sin takes no prisoners. This is the purpose behind everything Satan does. Jesus said, “*The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy*” (John 10:10). Because of his evil nature and his hatred of everything good, the devil brings destruction to everything within his reach.—“No Laughing Matter,” in *Reading Eagle*, July 5, 1961, accessed

5/11/2021, <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/no-laughing-matter.>[§]
[Similar is quoted in *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 54].[‡]

39. In addition to the death of Bathsheba's first son, David lived to see the death of both Amnon and Absalom. He did not live to see the fulfillment of 1 Kings 2:1-25 when the eldest remaining son of David, Adonijah, thought he should be the next king. He humbly permitted Solomon to take the throne, but asked to marry Abishag, David's former concubine. As a result, Solomon, fearing that Adonijah would try to take the throne, arranged for his murder.
40. What should we learn from Psalm 51? This is certainly one of the most powerful prayers in all the Bible. It is hard not to accept the fact that David's repentance was full and deep. Notice specifically the actions David asked for in his prayer.

He prays, "Have mercy upon me, . . . blot out my transgressions" (*Ps. 51:1, NKJV*). "Wash me . . . cleanse me" (*Ps. 51:2, NKJV*). "I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is always before me" (*Ps. 51:3, NKJV*). "Purge me," "Wash me" (*Ps. 51:7, NKJV*). "Make me hear joy and gladness" (*Ps. 51:8, NKJV*). "Create in me a clean heart, O God" (*Ps. 51:10, NKJV*). "Do not cast me away from Your presence" (*Ps. 51:11, NKJV*). "Restore to me the joy of Your salvation" (*Ps. 51:12, NKJV*). Reading David's prayer, we can almost hear his heartfelt plea. Our own hearts are touched by his sincere confession. The incredibly good news is that God honors a "broken and contrite heart" (*Ps. 51:17*).—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 55.[§]

Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ** 52.2.

- Christ longs for you to come to Him just as you are. If, as David, you come with an honest heart, not making excuses for your sin, you, too, will experience God's forgiveness.
- Christ has never, ever cast out or rejected anyone who has sincerely come seeking His grace. In fact, He assures us that " 'the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out' " (*John 6:37, NKJV*).
- Christ's promises of forgiveness and restoration are as certain as His eternal throne. Your feelings are not the criteria of whether you are forgiven. You may not feel forgiven. You may still have feelings of guiltiness, but you can still have the assurance based on the Word of God that your sins are forgiven and that you are a child of God.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide** 55.[§] [However, forgiveness is not all that we need. Jesus forgave those nailing Him to the cross; but, they are not saved. We need to be changed; we need to have "a new heart."][‡]

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