

## Lesson 18 - 2 Samuel 11 & 12:1-25 Lecture

It's good to see every one – a belated Happy New Year – in February! Well, nothing like a little light reading for this week, right? The title for this week's lesson is "Weakness in flesh...Submissive in judgment", and these two points are extending out of the main theme of today's reading which is "*Sin*". As Carol mentioned last week, sin literally means *falling short of the mark*. I would like to offer another definition "*Sin is the rejection of the sufficiency of God's provision.*" We think that's worth repeating, "*Sin is the rejection of the sufficiency of God's provision.*" One of God's names is Jehovah Jireh, which means the Lord will provide. It's not He *might* provide or He *could* provide, but He *will* provide. As our Creator, God knows what we need and what is best for us. If God is providing, what He provides will be sufficient – it will be enough. The issue that we face today is the same issue that humanity has faced from the beginning - "*Do we believe this is true – God's provision is sufficient?*"

No doubt for most of us today's reading likely prompts some serious emotions – outrage, disappointment, and condemnation towards David are pretty natural. Perhaps, for some of us, this is difficult reading because it sparks painful memories of sins either we committed or were committed against us. Regardless of what emotions that we might be feeling after reading this section of Scripture, what we must focus on is how **God** views the situations.

A critical component of maturing in Christ is learning to look at others *and* us through the eyes of *God* – *not* through the eyes of our sin nature. In other words, when we see or hear of something someone has done, do we look to condemn and judge him or her? That's the sin nature that was crucified at the Cross with Jesus that Satan seeks to resurrect and tempt. Or, do we look at people through the eyes of God Who is constantly looking to forgive, redeem, and restore through

compassion and love? We need to remember what God said in Ezekiel 18:23, “*Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign LORD. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?*” Does that sound like God’s first choice is to judge and condemn? And that’s a verse from the *Old Testament*! Please understand we’re not trying to downplay the seriousness of sin. Today’s reading is one of the greatest proofs of the truth that the wages of sin is death from Romans 6:23. The point we are making is, as believers, we are citizens of the Kingdom of God, and the Kingdom of God is about loving others to God through offering compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. You’ve heard me say this before, and I’ll say it again, “*We don’t judge and condemn people to God, we forgive and love them to God.*”

Instead of focusing on the wrongness and awfulness of David’s sins in this reading, we’re going to examine the path that led him *to* these sins as well as how he responded to them. We’re going to find out that the path *David* went down is very similar to the original path *Adam and Eve* took. We’ll even go as far as to say *this* is the most common path to not just the sins David committed but also to the sins most of us commit. The reason we’re doing this is to help us recognize early on *when* we might be starting down a path to sin, come to agreement of its destination, which is *always* destruction, and seek God’s help to get us off that path and get back on the path following Him. Does that sound good?

Ok – let’s begin with the first step David took. We’ll call that step “***Isolation***”. Our reading begins with it being in the spring of the year and it was a time when *kings* went out to battle. This is a different picture than what Hollywood portrays historic kings –they just sat on their majestic thrones with their scepters and ordered people around. The kings of Biblical times were engaged *in* and *on* the fields of battle – fighting alongside their men. However, for the first time, up to this point in Scripture, David is *not* on the field of battle. He has sent Joab and his

servants and all Israel to destroy the people of Ammon and besiege Rabbah. You may recall the people of Ammon were descendants of Ben Ammi – who was one of the two sons borne by the daughters of Lot who got him drunk and conceived through incest.

Where was David? He remained in Jerusalem – alone in his palace – he was *isolated*. Now let's take a trip back to chapter 3 in Genesis and review the story of Adam and Eve and their fateful encounter with Satan. In the form of a serpent, Satan enters into a discussion with Eve. There is no immediate mention of Adam being with her, so it is possible and even likely she was alone – *isolated*. One of my favorite things to watch on television is a program about nature – the Discovery Channel and National Geographic specials - and the Planet Earth documentaries. I can't get enough of them. The clips of predators looking to feed are fascinating to me. What I find interesting is whether it's a predator of the air, land, or sea, the strategy in its hunt to kill is always the same – to separate out a member of the flock/herd/pack and get it alone – to *isolate it* – so it can move in for the kill. When the target is traveling close to its counterparts, he is in a much safer place and less likely to become some predator's dinner. There is strength in numbers.

We cannot emphasize enough that we *must* understand that Satan is a predator of humanity – he is a relentless predator of you and me. We need to engrain in our minds Peter's warning from chapter 5, verse 8 of his first epistle, “*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.*” As a predator – just like in the shows I was talking about, Satan knows he is far more likely to succeed if he can get us *isolated*. This is why I have such a concern over the developments in technology over the last 10 years or so. With the ease of access to - and the accelerating speed of - the Internet and other multi-media resources, people are spending more time

on these devices by themselves than they are engaging with other people. You don't need to go shopping at a mall any longer, you don't need to go to the library or a book store any longer, and you don't even need to travel any longer because all of this has been substituted with the push of a button or two on the computer keyboard or cell phone.

Please understand I know there are many wonderful things that technology offers that makes life, sometimes, easier and more efficient. There are obvious good things that are done *with* and *through* the Internet. However, by making things so much easier to do, people are not leaving their homes and are *isolating* themselves. People – and especially young people – children – are no longer spending as much time physically together because they can connect via the Internet or a cell phone. Facebook<sup>®</sup> was brilliant in associating Internet connections as “*friending*”, but we would argue that the majority of these connections are nothing close to the real friendships that only can be cultivated over time *in person*.

Satan is all about deceptions, so people are being deceived into thinking they have all these friends and relationships through social media. The reality is, though, they are home alone and vulnerable to Satan the predator. Access to websites that offer pornography and other immoral behaviors is far too easy. I was going to try to give you some statistics on how widespread pornography is on the Internet and the number of marriages that have been destroyed because of this, but, to be honest, I was afraid of typing “pornography” into my browser and seeing what garbage might come up. What I have heard from multiple resources that the addiction to pornography has skyrocketed with the Internet. And virtually all of this rapid growth has come when people are isolated in front of their computers.

Before we go to the next step, we want to make an important point. People do not “*fall*” into sin. People *choose* to sin. Yes, Satan relentlessly tempts us, *but*

we *are* responsible for *our* actions. Just as much as it is a choice to believe in Jesus and be saved, so is it a choice to sin. As we go through these steps to sin and our responses to it, at each step – beginning with isolation – we have a choice to continue down this path to destruction or get off it. God will help – this is promised in 1 Corinthians 10:13, “*No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*” God will help, but we have to ask Him – we have to *choose* to ask Him – to help.

The next step down the path to sin is *Focus*. Our story today continues with David walking on the roof of his house, and he looks down and sees a beautiful woman bathing – she is likely naked. To be fair, we cannot always control what our eyes are exposed to. We turn one way and we are confronted with an image or a word that isn’t one we should be looking at. At this point, we have done nothing wrong in God’s eyes. Where we get into trouble is if we *choose* to continue looking at something we shouldn’t. Satan’s no idiot, so if he sees we’re now fixated or gazing at a temptation, he turns up the heat of the temptation by whispering into our ears, “*Go ahead – it’s not a big deal*” or “*Nobody’s going to know – go for it.*”

Let’s go back to the Garden of Eden and see how the story there progresses. Satan likely has Eve isolated and is challenging the truth of God’s warning. We pick up the scene in verse 6, “*When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye..*” Eve *chose* to look at the fruit – undoubtedly it was very appealing – and Satan had her hooked. Shakespeare is believed to have said, “*The eyes are the window to your soul.*” I would add that the eyes are also the windows to your mind. When we choose to look at something for an extended period of time, it is like taking a permanent picture, or even a video,

and implanting it in our minds – displaying or playing it again and again. Guess who is looking to play that inappropriate picture or video in your head over and over? – Satan. David could have chosen to look away – just as Eve could have chosen not to look at the fruit. Tragically, they both made a bad choice, and Satan moved in for the kill. What sin is David committing at this point? Number 10 on God’s “Top Ten” – *you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife*. Actually, he was guilty of Number 7 – adultery – *if* you listen to Jesus’ words. Knowing the minefields of our minds, He raised the bar of accountability by claiming that if we lust in just our minds, we are guilty already of adultery.

David asks about whom this woman was, finds out her name is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the *wife* of Uriah the Hittite. Again, David had a *choice* here upon learning Bathsheba was married, but Satan knew David’s weakness. He has messengers to go get her and physically commits the sin of adultery. I think this is another place to interject what I believe to be true that we should consider in this path to sin. Up until and including the act of the sin, we hear a lot from Satan – he’s working hard convincing us that the sin we’re headed towards is not a big deal. He tempts us with how great it will be to eat that glazed donut – or six – been there done that! Where is God in this process? He is always there and ready to deliver us, but I believe His voice is softer than Satan’s in these situations. Why?

God gave us free will for the purpose of maximizing the benefits of a love-based relationship. A relationship of choice has far greater potential for a deeper and more loving connection than one that is forced or mechanical. The reason, I believe, God is not as vocal at this point on the path is He is looking to see where we are in our desire for ***Him*** to be our God ***or*** someone else. He absolutely wants us to choose Him, but He realizes that the relationship will be more meaningful if ***we make the choice*** – there’s that word again – to go to Him as opposed to continuing down the path to destruction. When I think of this point on the path, I

envision an angel *whispering* into one ear encouraging us to do the right thing, and Satan *shouting* into the other to not pay attention to what the angel is saying and go have some fun. Can you relate? God is always there; brothers and sisters to help you, but you have to *choose* to ask for Him to help. Again, if you sincerely ask Him, He *will* help!

So David and Eve – along with Adam – go through with their sin. What’s the next step? - Revelation of the truth, or ***conviction***. As with the previous steps, there is a *choice* to make – even *after* the sin is committed. David is confronted with the information that Bathsheba is pregnant. Because her husband, Uriah, was fighting in the battles *David* should have been fighting in, her pregnancy can only be explained by her affair with David. He now has a *choice* – he can confess his sin, or he can *choose* to cover it up.

In the Garden of Eden story, the conviction of their sin comes with the presence of the Lord – He’s walking in the cool of the day. What did Adam and Eve do when they heard Him? – They hid because they were afraid of being naked. That is the first fruits of sin – fear and shame. God, knowing what happened, asks them if they ate from the tree He told them not to. Here’s another place they have a *choice* to make – own their responsibility and confess or....do what Adam did in verse 12, “*The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.*” Adam and Eve took no ownership of their sin, and I have often wondered if human history would have played out any different had they confessed and asked for forgiveness.

Back to David – not only does he not own what he did, but he makes the scene worse by getting Joab to send for Uriah from the field of battle to provide him an opportunity to sleep with his wife to cover up the truth. David even got Uriah drunk in hopes he would go be with his wife. Uriah was a loyal soldier, and

he refused to be with his wife out of respect to his fellow soldiers on the battlefield who couldn't be with their wives.

David sends a note to Joab, – his top general in the battle – in Uriah's hands and tells him to put Uriah at the forefront of the hottest battle and then retreat so Uriah could be killed. Uriah is killed and Joab sends a note back to David updating him on the latest news of the war. As I read it, we can infer that Joab's army was taking heavy losses because he assumes David's wrath is going to rise when he hears the news of how close they were to a wall where they could be shot at by the opposing forces. Joab then concludes the message with the news Uriah is dead.

Let me ask you this, what do you think was going on in Joab's mind regarding David's treatment of Uriah? He probably already knew what David found out - that Uriah was a good soldier – a man of integrity. Joab was also aware of how foolish David's plan was strategically from a military perspective. He knew David knew what he was asking Joab to do was not only endangering Uriah but other soldiers as well. Joab was likely wondering what David had done to concoct this murderous plan that not only cost Uriah his life, but also likely the lives of others who under normal battle strategy would not have died. I would speculate that after this situation, Joab's opinion of David wasn't the same. That's what sin does – it doesn't just damage the individual or individuals committing the sin – it has a ripple effect that extends beyond our imagination.

David's cover up continues by sending back a note to Joab telling him not to let this whole thing displease him – making light of the seriousness of what happened by saying the sword devours one as well as another. The road to rationalizing sin is one that leads to even worse destruction than the original sin. Bathsheba mourns for the loss of Uriah, and David then makes her his wife – and we learn she bore him a son. The last verse of Chapter 11 is chilling, “*But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.*” (2 Samuel 11:27b)



Heading into chapter 12, the LORD sent a friend - Nathan - to David to present a story of conviction that hit home with David. Notably, David pronounces a sentence on the rich man who took the poor man's lone lamb that is more severe than the Jewish Law requires. That is typical of those who are in sin – they become far more judgmental of others who are sinning when they are sinning themselves. Upon being told by Nathan that David was the rich man in the story, he delivers a message from the Lord that begins with an accounting for all that the Lord had provided David. The Lord says that even if what He had provided was too little, which it wasn't, He would have given David even more!

I want to pause right here and examine God's character and attitude to those He loves. He gave David great protection, provision, power, wealth, and honor. David was one of the more blessed men in history. Yet, look at what God offers, which He didn't have to – He would have given David even more! God is looking to pour out blessings on us. However, He will withhold some of them when we are in disobedience or sin. That doesn't mean He doesn't love us while we are sinning, but He will allow circumstances to discipline us, like any good parent would when a child is misbehaving.

In verse 9 the message from the Lord shifts to the fact despite David's efforts to hide his sin, God knew what was going on the whole time. Brothers and sisters – *there is no such thing as a secret sin*. Jesus said in Mark 4:22, “*For there is nothing hidden which will not be revealed, nor has anything been kept secret but that it should come to light.*” We may be able to hide our sins from our friends and families for a while, but God knows what's going on all along. Furthermore, God promises in Numbers 32:23b, “*you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.*” There are no secret sins, and they will ***always*** be found out. The sooner your sin is confessed, the sooner the forgiveness and healing can begin.

Nathan then relays the consequences of David's sins in verse 10-12, "*Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.*" Thus says the LORD: "*Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.*" One of God's important character traits is that He is *just*. When we reflect on David's sins, you can see the "eye for an eye" pronouncement of judgment. David caused death and destruction to Uriah's house, so David's own house will now suffer. David's sin with Bathsheba was secret, but there will be no secret about what will happen to David's wives. David even acknowledged the fairness of God's judgment in Psalm 51.

Now we get to a critical moment in these steps of sin – ***the accountability of confession***. David is confronted with the reality that God is aware of his sin. Some people have a problem with David because it took God's notification to get him to confess – it was as if he only confessed because he got caught. Yes, it is better if someone comes to his own confession without being caught. However, how he steps forward upon the conviction – be it on his own or receiving a message that God knows about the sin – is what is really important. David confesses plainly in verse 13, "*I have sinned against the LORD.*" Notice what is missing in this confession – no "because" or explanation or blaming it on anyone else. David owns his sin with no excuses.

Now listen again to Adam's response to God once he is busted in Genesis 3:12, "*The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it.*" What's Adam doing? He's become a new contestant on that game show I talked to you about last year – *The Blame Game*. Are we influenced to make poor decisions? - You bet. Does God have a problem with those who try to

influence us in the wrong direction? - Yep! But when it comes to being accountable for our own actions, do you think God gives a flying rip about these excuses? No way! Brothers and sisters, we are “on the hook” for our actions – remember, we *always* have a *choice*!

Because of David’s sincere confession – owning his sin, Nathan gives him the good news that the Lord has put away David’s sin, and he won’t die. However, there are *always* consequences to sin, and the baby who was conceived from this affair is going to die. For some of you, this may seem like a harsh judgment. Why would the *baby* have to suffer? It’s an innocent victim of this sin. My personal belief is that until a child reaches the age of accountability for his/her own actions, that child is secure in its eternal destination. God is fair, and I believe without a doubt we will see this child in heaven. When you think about it, the child gets off pretty well as he/she will not have to endure the pain and suffering of the consequences of David’s sin – he gets to be with God.

Some of you also might be asking where is God’s forgiveness if the baby dies? Forgiveness from God brings *peace* with God. However, forgiveness from God does not necessarily mean the consequences of sin are erased. God initiates some of those consequences like in this story with the baby, but more often than not the consequences come from those who are impacted by the sin. One of the revelations of sin to the sinner is to see the breadth of the consequences – how many people are impacted by just *one* sin. I have some thoughts for these people in a few minutes. Sin’s consequences are always painful, but they can be put to good use if we *choose* to view them as opportunities to grow in our relationship with the Lord and how to *walk out* our faiths in how we respond to them. If we choose to just be imprisoned by the consequences, recovering from them will take a long time – if we ever recover at all. However, if we choose to look at the consequences as ways to learn from them and bless others in ministering to them with a desire to

help prevent them from committing the same sins we did, then we are allowing God to paint beauty with the ashes of our consequences.

David pleaded with God for the child, fasted, and lay all night in pursuit of God's mercy. Upon news that the baby had died on the seventh day, David's servants were worried how they could inform him of this news. They were worried he would hurt them. David, though, sees the servants whispering and assumes the worst. They admit the child is dead and brace for the worse. What does he do? He gets up, washes and anoints himself, changes his clothes, and then worshipped. Then he goes and eats. This baffles the servants and they ask him "what gives?" David's response is healthy, in my opinion. While the child was alive, he knew there was a possibility the Lord could be gracious and let the child live. However, upon the child's death, he realizes the efforts he was making are over. Did you note David's comment at the end of verse 23? "*I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" This is one of the verses that support my position that children who die before the age of accountability will be in heaven.

The next step of the story is a great example of the grace of God. Yes, he pronounced judgment on David's sin, but *He never stopped loving David.* Moreover, he honored the marriage with Bathsheba and blessed them with another child – this would be Solomon and note what the writer says about the Lord's feelings towards Solomon at the end of verse 24 – "*Now the Lord loved him.*" David and Bathsheba gave the baby's name Solomon, but God had a different name – Jedidiah. This name literally means *loved by the Lord*. Each of us has the names our parents gave us, but God has a new name for each of us. Remember Peter's name was originally Simon and Paul's original name was Saul? My name is Daniel, and that means "Judged by God". For a while, I struggled with this, but when I realized that God's judgment of me was His Son crucified, I am thankful to have the name I have - but I still wonder what my God-given name will be?

To bring this to a conclusion, we arrive at the final step *forgiveness or condemnation*. Just as we have pointed out in all the other steps, we have a choice. God made *His* choice known in responding to sin – to send His Son to die on a Cross as a mechanism for forgiveness. The question for us is, what is our choice? I have a message for each of the three parties to sin. First, for those of you who are on the path to sin, get off it! We’ve said earlier that sin is a rejection of the sufficiency of God’s provision. If you are on the path to sin – the path to destruction –*be content* with what God has provided you. This doesn’t mean to say to yourself, “*I’m good with what I have*”. What being content means is giving sincere thanksgiving and praise to God for what He has provided through taking care of – loving and cherishing – the blessings He’s given to you out of His grace. If that provision is a relationship – a marriage or friendship – sacrificially invest in it, spend time with it, and show God’s love to it. *You’ll be amazed at how abundantly sufficient God’s provision is when you take care of it.*

If you are *in* sin, *repent*. Repent means to literally turn around. It is not too late to be forgiven or be restored from the destruction that *always* comes with sin. Don’t let the enemy, Satan, convince you that what has been damaged by sin isn’t recoverable. If you’re feeling that way, look at the Cross. Jesus didn’t go the Cross to just forgive us of our sins, but through His resurrection, He brought the promise of the hope of new life – as a new creation who is bathed with forgiveness and filled with the constant presence of the Holy Spirit. If we choose to believe, *repent*, and accept all of what was accomplished at the Cross of Christ, great healing and restoration is available and possible.

Finally, for those who have been hurt by sin, *be heaven sent*. You as victims of sin have *your own paths to choose* to walk. One path is paved with unforgiveness, bitterness, anger, and countless other burdens that come with the pain and suffering of sin. By walking this path, we are crowning Satan the full

victory of his evil works. For those of us who walk this path, we heap coals on the fire of those who have sinned against us – making God’s job to forgive, heal, and restore more difficult. The other path is paved with mercy, forgiveness, and compassion. This is the tougher path, but it is the better path because God is on it. To walk this path requires putting on God’s glasses and seeing the people who have hurt us through Jesus’ eyes. Remember, He didn’t come to condemn the world and people for their sin – He came to save the world and people from their sin. If we choose this path, we become instruments of mercy, grace, and forgiveness – we become instruments of God’s healing love.

We’ve talked about the 5 steps of the sin process. It begins with Isolation. Next comes Focus. After the sin comes Conviction. The 4<sup>th</sup> step is Accountability, and the last step is Forgiveness or Condemnation. At each step, *God is there*, ready to deliver you off the path. The problem is, so is Satan. What *Adam and Eve* had to do, what *David* had to do, and what *each of us* has to do is *make a choice to ask God for help*.

If you are on the path to sin – learn to ***be content***. If you are in sin – ***repent***. If you are a victim of sin – ***be heaven sent***. The key point is at each step, you ***always*** have a ***choice***. You may think that you can’t help yourself – the temptation or the pain is too great to change. You’re right, you can’t help yourself, but ***God can***. With God, all things are possible, so if you ***choose*** Him, He can bring deliverance, forgiveness, and healing beyond your imagination. He’s *that* powerful. He’s *that* good. He loves you *that* much. But it’s ***your choice to ask for help***. Because you have the Holy Spirit in you, and you are a new creation in Christ, your new identity carries the same character traits as God’s. You are mercy because God is mercy. You are forgiving because God is forgiving. You are love because God is love. God is like this all the time, but you must make a choice to walk in your new identity. What’s your choice? Let’s pray.