



06

SESSION 6

David's Story of Sin and Repentance

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we focus on how King David fell into sin and experienced its ugly consequences. In David, we see sin's capacity to enslave us and to motivate us to cover it up. But we also see the possibility of renewal. Believers must see all of our sin as an offense toward God and rely on the forgiveness available to us through the sacrifice of God's Son for restoration.

SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 11:1-5,6-17,26-27; Psalm 51:1-13

THE POINT

A true mark of a Christian life is one of continual repentance.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

Because of our broken hearts and lack of love for God, we often find that sin can be pleasing. Think about it: we don't rush toward sin because it's painful, but because it's so promising. Sin begins with a thrill, with a rush. Even though sin starts off with the excitement of seemingly endless possibilities, it *always* leads to the same place: brokenness, agony, disappointment, and despair.

What is true of sin generally is especially true of sexual sin. Sexual sin is so powerful, so destructive—and yet so easy to access—that it can bring the strongest believer to complete ruin. That's what it did to David, a man “after God's own heart.”

- **Consider the sin of losing your temper and lashing out at someone with words. What is sin's promise to you in this situation? What is the appeal in that moment?**

Option 2

Bring candy (make sure to be aware of any allergies in your group) and a closed shoebox, with an undesirable item such as a sock, inside. Without making students aware of what you placed in the box, describe the good of the “item” in the box. Your goal is to make the box look like the most enticing choice. Present both items to students and ask them to choose the one they would most enjoy. Use this as a lead-in to discuss the way sin often looks good on the outside and tempts us to choose its path, but doesn't truly give us anything.

Then ask:

- **Why do you think you were tempted to choose the box, even though you did not know what was inside?**
- **Looking back, would your choice be different? What can this teach us about sin?**

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

A true mark of a Christian life is one of continual repentance.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God** - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **David** - youngest son of Jesse who was anointed to be king following Saul. David is recognized for a number of things, in terms of both his character—he followed God—and his accomplishments—he defeated Goliath, etc.
- **Bathsheba** - was wife of Uriah at the time David committed adultery with her. After having Uriah killed in battle, David marries Bathsheba, and together they eventually have a son named Solomon

PLOT

After having seen David rise to power and exemplify characteristics of what it means to be a good king and follower of God, we now come face-to-face with David's plummet into sexual sin and the consequences it would bring David and those around him. In this story not only do we recognize David's need for a Savior, but we also catch a glimpse of the damaging results sin can have for us and those around us. While tragic on many levels, the story also offers us the hope of forgiveness and the vital role of repentance in the lives of believers.

TIMELINE

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

David's fall into sin and prayer of forgiveness.

THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Solomon becomes known for his God-given wisdom.

THE WISDOM OF PROVERBS

Solomon instructs on how to walk in wisdom.

DAVID FALLS INTO SIN

Sin doesn't exist in a vacuum. It takes place at specific times and in specific ways. Let's take a look at David's temptation and sin, which gives us insight into how we fall into captivity to sinful desires.

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant." (2 Sam. 11:1-5)

The first thing we should note about how King David became captive to sin is that this temptation comes after he has received the blessing of God. In the preceding chapters, David has emerged as the victor of many battles. So at this point in the biblical narrative, the kingdom of Israel is firmly established. David is at the height of his popularity.

Does it surprise you that David's sin comes after his receiving so much blessing? We tend to think that adversity is what precedes sinful behavior, as if sin becomes nothing more than an escape from reality. But blessings can be just as dangerous.

The danger in times of blessing is that we forget the extent of our dependence on God. When life showers us with goodness, the default response from many is to push God to the side.

- **What blessings has God provided you that are most likely, if you let them, to make you forget your dependence on God? (p. 40, PSG)**

Another element of this temptation is that David was put himself in a place where he could be tempted. It is far easier to avoid temptation than it is to resist sin. Don't get me wrong: resisting sin is important, immensely so. We must cultivate a habit of coming face-to-face with temptation while still resisting sin. But the world throws enough temptation our way. Do we really need to seek out more of it?

- Maybe you know of a certain place where you could be tempted. How can you avoid that place? If you cannot avoid the area, then what can you do to guard yourself against temptation while there? (*p. 41, PSG*)

DAVID ATTEMPTS TO COVER-UP HIS SIN

As the story unfolds, we see David sink lower into the consequences of his sin as he attempts to hide it.

.So David sent word to Joab, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king’s house, and there followed him a present from the king. But Uriah slept at the door of the king’s house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. When they told David, “Uriah did not go down to his house,” David said to Uriah, “Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?” Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.” Then David said to Uriah, “Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back.” So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die.” And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD. (2 Sam. 11:6-17,26-27)

Plan A is an obvious one, but a tricky one to accomplish: David attempted to trick Uriah into thinking the baby is his. He invited Uriah home from battle, asked for a briefing on the war, and then sent him home. David thought he had it covered.

Wrong. Uriah was a noble guy, and he was thinking of all his comrades sleeping in the field. They didn’t have the pleasure of sleeping in their own bed and being with their wives. So Uriah camped out with the palace guards for a night. Imagine how convicting that was for David.

David then concocted Plan B. It now included the step of getting Uriah drunk. Uriah, despite his nobility, walked right into David's plot. Uriah was just a few short steps away from his house (and David just a few short steps away from apparent freedom) when the alcohol overcame him. He passed out right there on his front lawn. Strike two for David.

So David started Plan C. He wrote a note to Joab that told him to put Uriah in the front of the battle and to abandon him. It's a death sentence for Uriah, and Uriah himself carried the message to Joab. In the end, David's plan succeeded. Uriah died in battle, and it looked like David was going to get away with it.

But then comes the chilling end to the chapter: ""

No one else may have seen what truly happened. David may have even convinced himself that it was all behind him. But God's eyes were watching. They always are.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Sin as Rebellion

Because the Bible portrays people as responsible beings, called to respond in faith and obedience to God's revelation, the Bible often portrays sin in terms of defiance and rebellion toward God the King. Isaiah 1:2 is one of many passages that describes sin in terms of rebellion against God: "Children have I reared and brought up, but they have rebelled against me." Seen in this light, sin is personal and willful disobedience, the raising of a clenched fist toward the One who made us.

DAVID CONFESSES AND REPENTS OF HIS SIN

Few of us have sins as flagrant as David did, in open adultery and murder. But we all sin. And every one of us is capable of David's heinous crimes. When confronted with the results of our sin—as David was when Bathsheba got pregnant—we can hide it, rationalize it, or shift blame. And that may work for a season. But there's only one true remedy for sin, and that is repentance. The question is not, "Do you sin?" The question is, "What do you do after you sin?" The answer to that question is a matter of life and death.

Fortunately for David, God chose to expose what David had covered up. He sent the prophet Nathan to remind David that although he thought he had gotten away with everything, God wouldn't let it end there. And in a moment of profound humility, David finally came clean. The result was one of the most beautiful and exemplary songs in Scripture—Psalm 51. In this psalm, David shows us the keys to gospel-centered repentance and confession.

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I

TIMELINE

THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE

Solomon constructs the temple, and God fills it with His presence.

SOLOMON'S FALL INTO IDOLATRY

Foolish decisions ultimately lead to idolatry.

THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

Solomon reflects on the purpose and meaning of life.

know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.(Ps. 51:1-13)

Look at how gospel-centered repentance makes the mercy of God its sole hope. David begins precisely where he should, by centering on God's grace. Nothing in this prayer suggests that David comes to God looking to make a deal. He's not bargaining with God, trying to commute his sentence. He's not reminding God of all the great things he did in the past (Remember Goliath?). He's not trying to explain away his sin. He's not even promising to do better in the future. No, David appeals to God on the only ground that won't crumble, the ground of God's grace.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Throughout Psalm 51, David points out that our repentance needs to flow from the heart. But there's a problem: our hearts are wicked. We can't change them, and David knows it. So he cries out for God to cleanse him: "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Ps. 51:7).

Hyssop is only mentioned two other times in Scripture: once in the Exodus story, as the Jews were supposed to dip hyssop in a lamb's blood and spread that blood on their doorposts; and once as a means of cleansing leprosy. To a Jewish reader, the connection David was making here would have been obvious. David is saying he needs something to free him from sin's slavery (like the slavery in Egypt), something to heal him from sin's disease (like the leprous disease). But literal hyssop wouldn't be enough. What David is crying out for is the hope of the gospel.

David needed someone who could "blot out all his iniquities." That someone was Jesus, the true Passover lamb, dying in our place so God's wrath would pass us by. David needed someone to "create in him a clean heart." That someone was Jesus, who came to cleanse our leprous souls—souls so deeply sick that no amount of personal effort could cure them. David needed someone to "renew a right spirit" within him. That someone was Jesus, who imparted His Spirit to us as a sign of God's grace toward us.

YOUR STORY 10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **When and where are people most vulnerable to facing temptation?** *Answers to this will vary, but may include times and places like spending time with the wrong company, being on one's phone or computer late at night, etc.*
- **How can we avoid putting ourselves in those places?** *Answers to this will vary.*
- **When have you had to cover up your own wrongdoing? How did events spiral out of control?** *Answers to this will vary, but it may help to provide a personal example from your own life to help get the discussion going among your students.*
- **What parts of David's confession stand out to you? What parts can you easily identify with?** *Answers to this will vary.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION 10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

What is clear from this story is that sin hurts people. It affects someone's mother, someone's daughter, someone's son—even if that someone is just you. God's rules, we have to remember, are never unreasonable. They are given to us for our good, to show us the most life-giving way of interacting with others. God doesn't want to keep us from sinning because He's out to ruin our fun. He wants to keep us from sinning because He knows how deeply it will wound us. Sin wounds us and those around us, every time.

- **What are some consequences you or others have experienced because of your own sin?** *Answers to this will vary.*
- **How should the truth that sin affects those around us help us in our fight against it?** *Love for others should be a motivator for us to fight against sin, especially in light of the possibility of damaging results for those within our lives. By putting the joy of others before our joy in sin, we can better resist temptation when it comes our way.*



HEART

All of our sin starts as a dissolution in our relationship with God. It begins as we grow dissatisfied with what God has given us, as we doubt His goodness toward us. So we start to feel God's boundaries as restrictive, not life-giving. What this means is that the way to deal with sin in our lives isn't to merely suppress the sin; it's to increase our delight in God so that we love Him more than we love the sin. The only way to overcome sinful urges is not by learning to love them *less*, but by learning to love God *more*.

- **What are some ways you have typically fought against sin and temptation? How did these strategies turn out?** *Answers to this will vary, but will likely result in failed attempts if the strategy wasn't rooted in a deep love for God and His glory.*
- **How will focusing more on God and loving Him more give us a better chance at fighting the sin in our lives?** *As stated above, a love for God will conquer any love for sin in our lives.*



HANDS

David's fall into sin teaches us, among other things, the central role repentance plays in the lives of believers. Every believer should continually practice this type of repentance—the type that not only calls believers to deeply feel how they have offended God and others, but also the kind that creates a willingness to publicly confess and actively turn away from the sin. It is repentance of this kind that is representative in all Christians, which makes it a key indicator of a genuine relationship with God.

- **Why is it important for people around us to witness continual repentance over sin in our lives?** *One reason is that repentance publicly shows others that Christ is more valuable to us than our sin.*
- **How has this session challenged you in your fight against sin?** *Answers to this will vary.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, refer students to pack item #6, which is an artistic poster of David's prayer asking God to create in him a clean heart.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/TGPKingsSUM16)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at
GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit
MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject