

8—Bathsheba’s View of David: The Handsome, Smooth-talking King

2 Samuel 11



“But the thing that David had done
displeased the Lord”

2 Samuel 11:27b (NKJV)



mortal whose mother was very concerned about his mortality. She tried various methods to make him immortal. One of those methods was she dipped him into the River Styx because it was believed the waters of the river conferred the immortality of the gods. Yet, as she gripped her son tightly she failed to dip his heel into the water. Later in life Achilles, as the story goes, became a great warrior and joined the Greek army. Achilles, according to Homer’s Iliad, had battled successfully for many years in the Trojan War. Yet, in one hard-fought battle, Achilles was struck in the one place where his mother’s hand had covered his skin—his Achilles’ heel.

Even though this is a fable, we still use the phrase “Achilles’ heel” to speak of the fatal weakness of powerful men. There have been a variety of weaknesses which have destroyed great men—ambition, alcoholism, immorality, etc.

In the Bible, we can find numerous examples of individuals who had an “Achilles’ heel.” Cain’s anger got the best of him with his brother, Abel. The rich young ruler had a hard time letting go of his riches for the sake of the kingdom (Luke 18:22-23).

Likewise, with David, one of his weaknesses is on display in 2 Samuel 11. His army is out to war and many of the fighting men of Israel are away from the city. His companions are gone and he is idle and lonely. He has also experienced several marriage problems up to this point (remember Michal in 2 Samuel 6:21-23?). So, despite David’s good qualities he allows his lust for Bathsheba to get the better of him. Conversely, despite her marriage to Uriah, Bathsheba allows the smooth-talking, handsome king to persuade her. Let’s see what we can learn from this pair.

Discussion Questions:

1. As we come upon this scene, where are the mighty men of Israel (2 Samuel 11:1)? Should David had remained at Jerusalem? What can happen to us when isolated from spiritual companions (Proverbs 18:1; cp. 2 Timothy 2:22)?

Servants of God may have many wonderful, admirable, and endearing qualities. Yet, get to know a person long enough and you will find we have our weaknesses too.

Throughout my life I have been known to try a diet or two or three. Once I make my mind up, I usually do a pretty good job sticking to an exercise and healthy eating routine. Yet, if you catch me at the right moment of weakness and pull out a fresh batch of warm, homemade chocolate chip cookies out of the oven my diet might take a night off.

There is an old story in Greek mythology about one of the pagan gods, Achilles. Achilles was a

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2. What happens, late at night, while David is walking on his roof (2 Samuel 11:2)? Is it a sin to see someone beautiful (cp. James 1:12-15)? What should David had done with his eyes when he saw Bathsheba (cp. Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-29)? At what point did David sin in this instance (11:2-4)?

3. What happens as the result of David and Bathsheba's sin (11:5)? What does David try to do from this point forward to cover up the sin (11:6-24)?

4. In this chapter alone, what sins is David guilty of committing all because of his actions? Although David may feel as though this is behind him, how does God feel about David's actions (11:27)? Based on what we read in 2 Samuel 3:2-5, would you say the temptation with women was one of David's weaknesses?

5. Put yourself in the flip-flops of Bathsheba. What about this situation might have made it difficult for her to say "no" to King David? What kind of guilt, regret, and shame do you think she would have felt in the days afterwards which might have made her wish she had been stronger? What can we learn from her?

Key Lessons:

- David's sin started with a lonely, late night look followed by a message. We need safeguards put in place to help us avoid vulnerable situations.
- No handsome, rich man is worth your soul. You are worth standing up for yourself.
- King David had to sin to cover up his sin and it was still exposed. King Jesus lived sinlessly to cover our sins and to save us from the guilt of brokenness.

Additional Notes: _____
