

David: Highs and Lows

David and Bathsheba

Introduction:

Two stories loom large in the life of David. One is regarded as his great and defining victory (Goliath), and the other is known as his most shocking failure (Bathsheba). David triumphed over the most imposing threat. He fell to the most alluring pleasure. A fight was called for in both instances, but David did combat in only one of them. As the old wisdom tells us, "Always be killing sin or sin will be killing you."

We've already spent some time reflecting on David's glorious and God-honoring win against Goliath. This week we'll look at his fall to Bathsheba. Both stories turn out to be God-exalting stories.

One story exalts the name of God.

The other story exalts the grace and mercy of God.

Our intent this week will not be merely to rehearse what David did (we all know what he did). Our intent will be to examine the nature of sin itself and its work in our life. The details vary. David shipwrecked on the rocky crags of adultery and murder. Your danger spots may be somewhere else – substance abuse, pornography, fits of rage that turn violent, being less than honest in your business, gossiping about someone you don't like.

We begin today with some basic but critical questions: When and where are you vulnerable? How does temptation come to you? When is it most likely to happen? What are you doing? Are you alone or with certain people?

Our spiritual enemy constantly searches out our vulnerable places. Do you know them too?

Scripture Reading:

2 Samuel 11

For discussion and Reflection:

1. What is 2 Samuel 11 about? What are we meant to see in this story?
2. In 2 Sam. 11:1-2 what circumstances do you notice that might have made David vulnerable to temptation?

3. What do 1 Peter 5:8-9 and James 1:13-15 teach us about temptation?
4. How can an experience like this Wednesday morning gathering (or any men's ministry) help us defend against temptation (of any kind)?
5. Engage this quote from Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*.

"The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. The fact is that we are sinners."

Prayer:

Guide me throughout this day, O God, and lead to where I need to be. Keep me from any and every dalliance with things that pull me from you and wage war on my soul. Keep me honest about my own vulnerable places. I pray the words of David's own prayer: "Search me and know my heart; try me and know thoughts. And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Amen.