

2 Samuel 11 – David & Bathsheba

Sunday, 16th November 2025

1. What is the difference between rest and idleness? How do you make your rest intentional without becoming idle?
2. In Proverbs 16:27 we read: 'Idle hands are the devil's workshop; idle lips are his mouthpiece.' (The Living Bible). Have you ever got into trouble for having 'idle hands and idle lips' – loose lips sink ships? When, why, how?

Read 2 Samuel 11: 1-5 - David and Bathsheba

11 In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman washing. The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, 'She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.' ⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. ⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, 'I am pregnant.'

3. It has been said that, 'Idleness isn't just the absence of activity ... idleness is also activity to no purpose.' David was being idle when he let his 'eyes' wander.
 - What kind of things do your wandering eyes see?
 - Is it OK to glance but not stare? How long is a glance?
4. Say the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13) together. What line is most pertinent to David situation?

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.*

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

***And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever.
Amen.***

- 5. What is your area of temptation and why?**
- 6. David saw Bethsheba and when he enquired of her, he was told that she was married. At this point his head should have overcome his heart ('or loins!'). Read 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.

How do we stop our hearts ruling our heads when it comes to temptation? (Read 1 Peter 5:8 - Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.)

- 7. David was idle at home while his Army was fighting. Unlike them, he was not wearing his 'armour'. One of the ways we can avoid temptation is to wear the Armour of God. Read Ephesians 6:10-18 – how does this help?**

Read 2 Samuel 11: 6-13

⁶ So David sent this word to Joab: 'Send me Uriah the Hittite.' And Joab sent him to David. ⁷ When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. ⁸ Then David said to Uriah, 'Go down to your house and wash your feet.' So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. ⁹ But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. ¹⁰ David was told, 'Uriah did not go home.' So he asked Uriah, 'Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?' ¹¹ Uriah said to David, 'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!'

¹² Then David said to him, 'Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back.' So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³ At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

8. Do you enjoy period dramas, such as *Downton Abbey*? Which one and why? Do the servants 'down stairs' know all the gossip about what is happening 'upstairs'?
- Using the same principle, do you think that Bathsheba's pregnancy was common knowledge?
 - Is it possible that Uriah might have been told?
 - How secret do you think your secrets are – David tried to hush-up his transgression, but it became one of the well-known stories in scripture!
9. David calls Uriah from the battlefield for a report on the battle, and then encourages him to return to his home, hoping that he would sleep with his wife, and thus cover up David's sin. This happens on two occasions (vs 8-9 and 13). Uriah refuses any 'home comforts' while *'The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents'* (12). Uriah speaks truth to power, the truth that David should be modelling in his kingship.
- How easy is it to speak truth to power?
 - Lord Acton wrote in 1887: 'Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. Do you think this is true?
 - How can we hold our leaders to account?
10. Wiersbe writes that: 'Uriah drunk proved to be a better man than David sober.' Should we judge a leader for one indiscretion or does it depend on how big the indiscretion is? What constitutes a big indiscretion?

Read 2 Samuel 11: 14-27

¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. ¹⁵ In it he wrote, 'Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so that he will be struck down and die.'¹⁶ So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. ¹⁷ When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite

died. ¹⁸ Joab sent David a full account of the battle. ¹⁹ He instructed the messenger: 'When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, ²⁰ the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, "Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall? ²¹ Who killed Abimelek son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?" If he asks you this, then say to him, "Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

²² The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. ²³ The messenger said to David, 'The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate. ²⁴ Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' ²⁵ David told the messenger, 'Say this to Joab: "Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it." Say this to encourage Joab.'

²⁶ When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. ²⁷ After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

11. From this simplified version of the Ten Commandments (read Exodus 20 for the full version), which commandments did David break?

1. Have no other gods.	6. Do not murder.
2. Do not make idols.	7. Do not commit adultery.
3. Do not take the Lord's name in vain.	8. Do not steal.
4. Keep the Sabbath holy.	9. Do not bear false witness.
5. Honor your father and mother.	10. Do not covet (or desire what belongs to others).

12. David kept 'digging a hole' for himself as he tried to get out of trouble – he needed to stop digging and confess his failings. Have you ever 'dug' yourself deeper into a problem? When, and what was the outcome?

13. With Uriah dead, David marries Bathsheba, but is this the last we hear of Uriah? Read 2 Samuel 23:39 - how is Uriah described?

14. With Uriah dead, has David covered-up his sin – read the last sentence of our reading? Whilst we might think we can hide our sins, can we? The Lord knows all things. If you have time, read Psalm 139.