

# The Subversion of Holiness

## 2 Samuel 11:4 - 7

Nutshell: The closing aspect of the fruit of the Spirit is **self-mastery**, Gal 5:22. We might call it the keeper of the uni-basket. **Passion** is that impulse that arises in us, demanding to be satisfied, contrary to **controlling ourselves** under God's rule. The battle can't be avoided, but losing the battle can.

I. Context: David committing adultery with Bathsheba.

II. Text

**2 Sam 11:4** And David sent messengers, and he took her. And she came to him, and he lay with her. Also, she was one sanctifying herself from her uncleanness. Then she returned to her house.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

### Review

- A. The Book of Kingdoms, our 1 & 2 Sam + 1 & 2 Kings, is the story of Israel's kings, beginning with the prophet Samuel, who anointed both of the first two kings, Saul and David
  - 1. Samuel warned Israel vs. having a king, 1 Sam 10:19, Hos 13:11
  - 2. **Saul** was apostate *man's* version of king. God previewed *His* version via **David**, 1 Sam 13:14
- ✿ B. 1 Kings 15:5 tells us that David kept God's commands *except* in the Bathsheba incident. This dramatically shapes our approach to each incident in David's life.
- C. The chronicler presents David as God's chosen king, a *picture* of Messiah, but *not* the Messiah; a *reference point* for all subsequent kings of Judah, e.g., 2 Kings 14:3; 2 Chron 34:2
- D. David becoming king
  - 1. David was anointed king over **Judah**, 2 Sam 2, then **Israel**, 5:1-5. Trouble between the two begins in 2 Sam 2:12-32.
- E. DAVID'S WAITING BUSINESS AS KING\*

1. David finally vanquished Jebus (Jerusalem), 2 Sam 5:6-10, where he had taken Goliath's head, 1 Sam 17:54
2. David retrieved the Ark from its 'wanderings', 6:1-19; first, ignoring God's instructions, leading to a death, then properly, with great joy
3. Now David wants to build a permanent form for the Tabernacle. This will be the Temple
- ★ 4. God chose *Abraham* to bless all nations. Now He chose *David's* line to bring forth the King of all nations
5. David fulfilled his oath to Jonathan through his son Mephibosheth, 9:1-13. \*ALL OBLIGATIONS CAUGHT UP.
- F. Hanun of Ammon incited war with David, but David's forces under Joab and Abishai won the day, 10:1-19.
- G. In 2 Sam 11, the battle with Ammon was resumed
  1. David stayed in Jerusalem, as he did in 10:7.
  2. There, at nightfall, from his roof, he saw beautiful Bathsheba washing herself, presumably in her courtyard
  3. He inquired concerning her. God gave him warnings to leave her alone. She was married to one of his chief military officers, daughter of another of them.
- H. David committed adultery with Bathsheba
  1. Now David's life was on a completely different trajectory
  2. The kingdom of Israel was now also doomed to division and strife until the Millennium

**Kid-speak:** Last time, David committed adultery with Bathsheba. Was anything good going to come out of that? No.

Outline:

### **The Subversion of Holiness**

- I. When Passion Guides, Holiness is mangled
  - A. Holy people can choose unholiness, as here
  - B. Holiness will stick by us- as long as we prefer it
    1. What blessings holiness has!
    2. What blessing *does* passion have?
      - a. Immediate gratification only
      - b. God oversees the inescapable payback, 1 Thess 4:6
- II. Passion Bears Fruit After Its Own Kind
  - A. Demanding us as offerings, just as holiness does, Rom 12:1-2

- B. But passion lies, giving us sweet bread; but it turns to gravel!  
Prov 20:17 (Note the automatic deceit in adultery)

### III. Passion Becomes Its Own god and Demands to Rule

- A. We manipulate men to cover ourselves
- B. We become uncaring sub-deities under Passion, willing to destroy

### IV. Passion Must Invent Its *Own* Sense to Replace *Real* Sense

- A. But made-up sense can never be sensible
- B. Which is why it gets angry and does worse

**Kid-speak:** Passion is our feelings taking control of us. We're supposed to have feelings, but are they supposed to control us? No, our mind has to say, "Is that a feeling Jesus is OK with?"

#### I. 2 Sam 11:4 (I. Passion Mangles Holiness)

1. As we noted last time, David sent messengers to Bathsheba
  - a. They probably assured her that this wasn't concerning her husband's death or injury
  - b. She probably had no outright misgivings about going, but probably some question marks
2. It says "he took her," meaning David brought her to himself by means of the messengers
  - a. This shows David's full responsibility for his act. This would never have happened if he hadn't initiated it.
  - b. As an ordinary citizen, he couldn't have orchestrated this, so he was also abusing his kingly powers, which is probably the main thrust behind "and he took her."
3. "And she came to him" shows that she came willingly
  - a. This exact Heb phrase also occurs in Jdg 4:21 and 2 Kings 4:36, both times of willing compliance
  - b. Here, it doesn't mean "came to commit adultery," only that when David sent, she came of her own accord
4. "And he lay with her"
  - a. This exact Heb phrase also occurs 2 other times, Gen 30:16 and 2 Sam 12:24.
  - b. Gen 30:16 is interesting. Leah uses some manipulation to take Rachael's turn with Jacob, but his "lying with her" seems voluntary enough
  - c. 2 Sam 12:24 is especially important. It seems to confirm

Bathsheba's *willingness* (not *seduction*, but allowing David's advances). Same phrase for both encounters.

5. As we said last time, Tamar's objection is noted in 2 Sam 13:12-13. We assume our chronicler would have noted the same of Bathsheba had she objected.
6. On the other side, in Nathan's rebuke, he likened David to a rich man who "took" (same word as in our verse) a poor man's only sheep, 2 Sam 12:4
  - a. However, 2 Sam 15:6 uses even stronger language of Absalom "stealing" the hearts of the men of Israel
  - b. Yet who would suggest that the men of Israel sided with Absalom vs. their wills?

**Kid-speak:** Did David force Bathsheba to commit adultery with him? No.

7. Bathsheba's willingness does not lessen David's guilt one iota
  - a. But it does preserve him from the charge of rape
  - b. We might say that if he had raped her, he would have been stoned, Deut 22:25-27; but that was true of adultery as well, Deut 22:22-24, and that sentence was not carried out in the normal manner here
  - c. In chap 12, we will compare God's verdict with the ordinary sentence for adultery. Preview: Not dying did not necessarily mean relaxation of the punishment.
- J. Last time, we spent the majority of the message doing a subject study on adultery/fornication. Now we continue in 2 Sam 11:4 after "and he lay with her."
- K. 2 Sam 11:4, "Also, she was sanctifying herself from her uncleanness"

**Kid-speak:** We're about to see that Bathsheba was a very godly woman before this, just like David was a very godly man. Even holy people have to watch out for sin, don't they!

1. This is parenthetical: it is an explanatory remark between their adultery and her departure
2. It apparently refers to the removal of her menstrual uncleanness by following the process in Lev 15:19-30.

This is important in order to understand two other things:

- a. She had not conceived through Uriah
- b. She was potentially fertile

L. “Sanctifying herself”

1. This is the verb form of the word “holy.” This particular form, meaning “sanctify self,” occurs 23x.
  - a. The grammar for “sanctify self” is mostly of the priests sanctifying themselves for their work
  - b. a few times of the people sanctifying themselves; 1x of God sanctifying Himself
  - c. But only here of a woman (not unusual in itself)
2. But it is not the *expected* terminology for this case, found in either Lev 15:28, “cleanse” or 15:31, “separate”
  - a. It is still within the parameters of Lev 11:44, which sets the unclean laws (Lev 11-15) in the context of the Israelites “sanctifying themselves”
  - ★ b. But we wonder if the chronicler is again choosing more priestly language to make a point
    - i. As he did by calling David’s sons “priests” (literally) in 8:18
    - ii. (Abigail’s *intercession* may be a particular precursor)

M. The participle, “one sanctifying herself” may mean that she was *still in the 7-day process* of Lev 15:19-30

- ◆ 1. The priestly language may mean that she was attentive to the spiritual aspects of her cleansing- not just going through the motions
2. In which case, she was like David: an OTHERWISE HOLY PERSON who loved God but was swept up by passion (I.A.)
3. But *there’s no way to read any kind of excuse* into this. The child will die. The king’s house will become adulterous and murderous. Israel will split after the next generation.

N. “Then she returned to her house”

1. 1 & 2 Sam are priestly books. 1:19 has a “returning to their house” after worshiping.
  - a. The chronicler is contrasting Bathsheba to Hannah. Bathsheba allowed the interruption of her worship.
  - b. Hannah went home, and Samuel was born. Bathsheba went home having conceived trouble.
2. David and Bathsheba weren’t ‘in love’. They didn’t try to start a new life together. They both knew it was wrong.
  - a. Going home was her only choice

b. And thus they probably both hoped it would end

**Kid-speak:** Why didn't David and Bathsheba stay together? They knew they had done wrong, and they were ashamed.

- c. But with a jealous God- one who puts Himself on the line to do us good- *adultery was never going to stay hidden*
- d. And there was a very natural way it came to light

**2 Sam 11:5** And the woman conceived. Then she sent, and she declared *it* to David; and she said, "I *am* pregnant."

O. "Pregnant" is just the adjective form of the verb "conceived"  
(II. Passion Bears *Fruit* After Its Own Kind. Here- *turmoil* where there should have been joy!)

**Kid-speak:** What happened to Bathsheba after they committed adultery? It put a baby inside her. Now could they hide their sin?

P. David had "sent" to inquire about her in v 2. Then he "sent messengers" to fetch her in v 3. Now she "sends" a return message to David. OK, let's keep the "send" ball rolling.

**2 Sam 11:6** And David sent to Joab, Send Uriah the Hittite to me. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

- Q. David sends a message to Joab, military commander assaulting Ammon, telling Joab to send Uriah to him. Joab sent him.
- R. All this sending because Passion had taken charge  
(III. Passion Becomes Its Own god and Demands to Rule)
- S. Note that David apparently didn't respond to Bathsheba! He was immediately overtaken with the desire to cover his tracks.
  - 1. Frightful that such a God-fearing man could so quickly and intuitively work to hide his sin!
  - 2. What could Bathsheba do? She probably had visions of David and herself being stoned for adultery.

**Kid-speak:** David came up with a plan right away so no one would find out what he did. He sent for Uriah, who was away fighting in the war. Uriah was Bathsheba's husband. Do you

know what David wanted Uriah to do? Go lay with his wife, so Uriah would think the baby in Bathsheba was his.

**2 Sam 11:7** And Uriah came to him. And David inquired *concerning* the peace of Joab, and the peace of the people, and of the peace of the war.

- T. First, the inside joke (not really funny in this case)
1. See the recurrence of “peace” in the verse? That’s literal. Exact same construction all 3x.
  2. Does “the peace of the war” sound funny to you? It should! They’re opposites! Ps 120:7; Eccl 3:8; 1 Kings 2:5
  3. What’s the point? David was ‘blathering on’, as we would say, making **no** particular **sense**.  
(IV. *Passion Must Invent Its Own Sense to Replace Real Sense*)
    - a. *Uriah knew from the start that this was irregular*. He was a commanding officer, not a messenger.
    - b. *David knew that Uriah knew*. There was no *sensible* way to pull this off.

**Kid-speak:** Did David have a good reason for bringing Uriah back from the war? No, so David sounded dumb when he was asking Uriah questions.

4. The whole point was to get Uriah down to his house
    - a. At which point Bathsheba would have known David’s cowardice!
    - b. But she bore the blame as well
- U. Sidebar: No translation has “peace” all 3x. YLT is the only one that has the same word all 3x, “prosperity.”
- V. Lessons:
1. Holiness will stick by us- as long as we prefer it
    - a. What blessings holiness has!
    - b. What blessing *does* passion have?
      - i. Immediate gratification only
      - ii. God oversees the inescapable payback, 1 Thess 4:6
  2. Passion demands offerings from us, just as holiness does, Rom 12:1-2
    - a. But passion lies, giving us sweet bread, not telling us that it turns to gravel! Prov 20:17

- b. Passion becomes a god during our cover-ups, deputizing *us* as gods of lying and manipulation

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”)  
If you make friends with holiness, you cannot be truly hobbled.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?  
How have I lost righteousness?**  
Am I as intent to be holy as passion is intent to subvert me?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
I will seek this intention in my daily connection with God.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How will I avoid the error and follow Christ?**  
O Holy One, You who make us holy as well, I lay hold of the purpose for which You called me.

Wrap-up: The subversion of holiness. For holiness to be subverted, it must first be present. How precious few people are holy! A great company, but in comparison to the mass of humanity, precious few!

For holiness to be guarded: 1) it must be counted precious; 2) it must not be taken for granted. This is why I emphasize private prayer in my preaching. The presence of God = our holiness, and prayer is where the presence of God is found.

When God is present to our minds, no temptation can lure us away. David could not avoid being *tempted*. None of us can. We can only avoid being “*led into*” it, comp Jms 1:13 w Lk 11:4. How? By walking in God’s light, being constantly **exposed**.

☑ Being “led into” temptation is when the presence of God becomes secondary, and God releases us, first to distraction (because we chose it), then to whatever other temptation distraction might invite.

Next time, we’ll see further into the workings of being “led into” temptation as we consider Uriah’s reactions.