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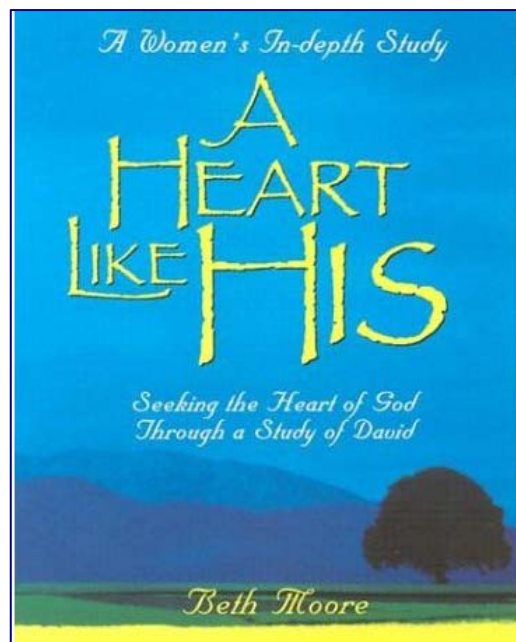
THIN AIR-OGANCE

[THE WAGES OF SIN: 2 SAMUEL 11-12]

WEEKLY SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

MARCH 30, 2008

LESSON #5 FROM THE *MASTER WORKS* SERIES STUDY OF:



THIN AIR-ORGANCE

[THE WAGES OF SIN: 2 SAMUEL 11-12]

John Maxwell in his book *Falling Forward* tells of a story Sergio Zyman, a vice president in a fortune 500 company. After 20 years of lagging sales, Sergio believed the company needed a fresh approach. People listened to Sergio, after all in 1982 Sergio introduced the company to a new product and sales soared. So when Sergio introduced his idea of a new product in 1985, little did he know the negative reaction that greeted him. Sergio had ascended high up the corporate ladder. He had arrived, so to speak.

What did Sergio invent? **NEW COKE**. It lasted 79 days and cost the company 100 million dollars and Sergio lost his job. What a huge mistake. Some would say it was a colossal failure. If we are honest we have all made mistakes – maybe our mistakes were not as costly as Sergio's but you know we have all made mistakes.

As we continue our study of David from the Beth Moore's series, *A Heart Like His*, we have discovered David as a giant killer, a friend, a shepherd, one after God's own heart, and today as a person who makes mistakes. Before we look at the life of David in 2 Samuel, we need to understand the difference in David and Sergio Zyman. Sergio made a mistake in marketing – it cost his company money and eventually his job. David made a mistake in morality and it cost him dearly as we shall see. As we look in the life of David, we must understand he is no different from any of us – we all struggle in the area of sin. Paul wrote all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. This morning I want us to deal – not with our sin, but what do we do after we sin. *It has been said that a man does not go to hell because of his sin but he goes to hell because of the way he deals with his sin.*

Sometimes, you can climb too high for your own good. It's possible to ascend too far, stand too tall, and elevate too much. Linger too long at high altitudes, and two of your senses suffer. Your hearing dulls. It's hard to heard people when you're higher than they.

Voices grow distant. Sentences seemed muffled. And when you are up there, your eyesight dims. It's hard to focus on people when you are so far above them. They appear so small. Little figures with no faces. You can hardly distinguish one from the other. They all look alike. You don't hear them. You don't see them. You are above them.

This is exactly where David is in our Bible study this week, as we spent time in **2 Samuel 11-12**. He has never been higher. The wave of his success crests at age fifty. Israel is expanding. The country is prospering. In two decades on the throne, he has distinguished himself as a warrior, musician, statesman and king. His cabinet is strong and his boundaries stretch for 60,000 square miles. No defeats on the battlefield. No blemishes on his administration. Loved by the people. Served by the soldiers. Followed by the crowds.

David is at an all-time high! Never higher, yet never weaker. David stands at the highest point of his life, in the highest position in the kingdom, at the highest place in the city—on the balcony overlooking Jerusalem as we begin our scripture. First, however, let me point out that there are four simple lessons or principles I think we all can learn from this incident from 2 Samuel 11-12. See if you can't identify each of these: ¹SIN ALWAYS DECEIVES; ²SIN ALWAYS DESTROYS; ³SIN IS ALWAYS DISCOVERED; ⁴CONFESSED SIN IS ALWAYS FORGIVEN.

Now, please open your Bible to **2 SAMUEL 11:1-5 (NCV)**: *¹In the spring, when the kings normally went out to war, David **sent** out Joab, his servants, and all the Israelites. They destroyed the Ammonites and attacked the city of Rabbah. But David stayed in Jerusalem. ²One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace. While he was on the roof, he saw a woman bathing. She was **very** beautiful. ³So David **sent** his servants to find out who she was. A servant answered, "That woman is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam. **She is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.**" ⁴So David **sent** messengers to bring Bathsheba to him. When she came to him, he had sexual relations with her.*

(Now Bathsheba had purified herself from her monthly period.) Then she went back to her house. ⁵But Bathsheba became pregnant and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

I want you to get a picture of this in your mind as verse 1 opens. Springtime in Israel. The nights are warm and the air is sweet. David has time on his hands, love on his mind, and people at his disposal. He may have even been a little bored, maybe wondering is this all there is? "I'm the king"! **But, what was David supposed to be doing?** He should be with his men, at battle, on his horse and against his enemy. But he isn't. He's at home. And he fell for the lies of the enemy—hook, line and sinker. Just like the man in this story:

An Indian was walking up a mountain when he heard a voice. "Carry me with you," it replied. The Indian turned and saw a snake. He refused. "If I carry you up the mountain you will bite me." "I wouldn't do that," the snake assured. "All I need is some help. I am slow and you are fast, please be kind and carry me to the top of the mountain." It was against his better judgment, but the Indian agreed. He picked up the snake, put him in his shirt, and resumed the journey. When they reached the top, he reached in his shirt pocket to remove the snake and got bit. He fell to the ground, and the snake slithered away. "You lied," the Indian cried, "You said you wouldn't bite me." The snake stopped and looked back, "I didn't lie. You knew who I was when you picked me up."

We hear the legend and shake our heads. He should have known better, we say. And we are right. He should have. So should David. AND, so should we. But don't we do the same? Don't we believe the lies of the snake? Don't we pick up what we should leave alone? Isn't that what happened to David here too? Wonder what happened to this man after God's own heart? **What was the key contributor to David's sin?** [pg 57-58: *WRONG PLACE, WRONG TIME; NO ACCOUNTABILITY; LONELY*] *Also, this reminds us that even the godliest people can make fatal decisions.* Max Lucado, in his recent book about David called *Facing Your Giants* thinks David's problem was simple—**altitude sickness**. Max says David's been

high too long. The thin air has messed with his senses. He can't hear as he used to. He can't hear the warnings of the servant or the voice of his conscience. Nor can he hear his Lord. Remember that at this stage of David's life, we're not examining the life of a wild rebel or sexual pervert. But he is one who fell into a period of sin and that sin had devastating consequences, for his family, his reign, and his nation. *Sin always bears consequences!*

Now, look at verses 3 and 4 again. David's temptation turned into three specific **actions**. **What are they?** [SENDS SERVANTS FOR INFO & DISREGARDED WARNING SHE WAS MARRIED; SENDS FOR HER TO COME TO HIS HOUSE; HAD SEX WITH HER] **When David sent someone to find out about her, do you think that felt innocent enough?**

To what degree is Bathsheba culpable in this act? Notice how the adversary always knows just what to do--and how to do it. Back in **2 SAMUEL 11:2**, what do we learn about Bathsheba here, about her beauty? *She was very beautiful*. The Bible never pads the record. When it says a woman is beautiful, she's fabulous. When it says she's very beautiful, she's a knock-out, physically attractive beyond description. Rarely will the scriptures include the word "very," and when it does, rest assured, it is not an exaggeration. I believe both David and Bathsheba were at fault on this occasion, but of the two, certainly David was the aggressor. He stopped. He stared. He lusted. He sought her. He lost control of his passion. He lay with her.

I want to help you put all this into perspective a little better. David didn't fall suddenly; some chinks had already begun to form in his spiritual armor, and we too should take heed because of the terrible price that sin demands. Turn to **2 SAMUEL 5:12**: *"David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel."* Clearly, David realized his God-given privilege. He realized the hand of God was upon him. He realized that the Lord's blessing was abundant, but there were areas of private neglect beginning to take their toll.

Look at the next verse in **2 SAMUEL 5 (v.13)**: *“Meanwhile, David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron; and more sons and daughters were born to David.”* Although the hand of the Lord was on him and on the people, he increased his wives and concubines. And this was in direct contradiction to God’s commandments in **Deuteronomy 17:17 (NCV)**, which says: ***17The king must not have many wives, or his heart will be led away from God.*** As Beth Moore pointed out last week, our most difficult time are **not** when things are going hard. Hard times create dependent people. You don’t get proud when you’re dependent on God. Survival keeps you humble. Pride happens when everything is swinging in your direction. When you’ve just received that promotion, when you look back and you can see an almost spotless record in the last number of months or years, when you’re growing in prestige and fame and significance, that’s the time to watch out ... especially if you’re unaccountable. That’s David in this chapter. **Beth Moore mentions lack of accountability as a contributing problem. How have you seen accountability work effectively? What role does accountability have in your life? HOW does this apply to you?**

Look at the end of 2 Samuel 11:5: *“David, I am pregnant!”* When David got that news, he had a decision to make. He could take one of two courses. He could go before God and declare himself completely contaminated, sinful, guilty, and then declare to his counselors and the nation, *“I have sinned.”* Obviously, that was exactly what he should have done. **OR**, he could go the route of deception and hypocrisy. Sadly David chose the latter, which led him to even further sin—including the horrific act of murder. And don’t forget that his choosing to lie and deceive set in motion an endless series of heartaches within his immediate family in the years to come. What a fool he was to try and cover up his sin!

Let’s look at **2 SAMUEL 11: 6-27 (NCV)** and finish our story with Bathsheba: ***6So David sent a message to Joab: “Send Uriah the Hittite to me.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and***

how the war was going. ⁸Then David said to Uriah, "Go home and rest." So Uriah left the palace, and the king sent a gift to him. ⁹But Uriah did not go home. Instead, he slept outside the door of the palace as all the king's officers did. ¹⁰The officers told David, "Uriah did not go home." Then David said to Uriah, "You came from a long trip. Why didn't you go home?" ¹¹Uriah said to him, "The Ark and the soldiers of Israel and Judah are staying in tents. My master Joab and his officers are camping out in the fields. It isn't right for me to go home to eat and drink and have sexual relations with my wife!" ¹²David said to Uriah, "Stay here today. Tomorrow I'll send you back to the battle." So Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day and the next. ¹³Then David called Uriah to come to see him, so Uriah ate and drank with David. David made Uriah drunk, but he still did not go home. That evening Uriah again slept with the king's officers. ¹⁴The next morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by Uriah. ¹⁵In the letter David wrote, "Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is worst and leave him there alone. Let him be killed in battle."

¹⁶Joab watched the city and saw where its strongest defenders were and put Uriah there. ¹⁷When the men of the city came out to fight against Joab, some of David's men were killed. And Uriah the Hittite was one of them. ¹⁸Then Joab sent David a complete account of the war. ¹⁹Joab told the messenger, "Tell King David what happened in the war. ²⁰After you finish, the king may be angry and ask, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the city wall?' ²¹Do you remember who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? It was a woman on the city wall. She threw a large stone for grinding grain on Abimelech and killed him there in Thebez. Why did you go so near the wall?' If King David asks that, tell him, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite also died.' "

²²The messenger left and went to David and told him everything Joab had told him to say. ²³The messenger told David, "The men of Ammon were winning. They came out and attacked us in the field, but we fought them back to the city gate. ²⁴The archers on the city wall shot at your servants, and some of your men were killed. Your

servant Uriah the Hittite also died." ²⁵David said to the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't be upset about this. The sword kills everyone the same. Make a stronger attack against the city and capture it.' Encourage Joab with these words." ²⁶When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she cried for him. ²⁷After she finished her time of sadness, David sent servants to bring her to his house. She became David's wife and gave birth to his son, but the Lord did not like what David had done.

It's a horrific story isn't it? This is David, the king after God's own heart and here he is, engulfed in this spiraling story of sex, intrigue and murder. Surely this isn't the same David we've been reading about for the last few weeks. Now before we go on, I think it would be good for us to stop and reflect on the situation here. What David has done is pretty bad, but if you think about it, he isn't so far removed from each of us is he? Who is there in this room today who hasn't ever done something wrong, something they were ashamed of, and tried to cover it up? And how many times has the cover-up led to a greater need for cover-up? How often has one lie led to another--until the situation escalates out of hand? How often have we looked back and thought, "If only I'd owned up from the start, it wouldn't have ended up nearly as badly as it has?" And what's worse, how often have we tried to convince ourselves that God isn't there watching us ignore him?

Remember, what happened next? Our third principle is **SIN IS ALWAYS DISCOVERED**. **2 Samuel 12** is for me one of the most wonderful passages in the Old Testament. I love the way Nathan tells the parable of the little pet lamb to David. He has David listening intently, sitting on the edge of his seat. He waits his moment and when David speaks judgment on the man who has done this dreadful thing (verses 5-6) Nathan then tells him simply but directly 'You are the man!' (verse 7). David thought no one knew. David thought it had all been covered up. But sometime later the Lord sent Nathan (verse 1). That is important – it was God's appointed messenger, in God's time and speaking God's Word. You see the messenger, the timing and the words spoken were all important. David respected Nathan. Nathan was trusted as

a friend by David and he brought the Word of God to David. How true the words of **PROVERBS 27:6**, *'faithful are the wounds of a friend.'* The Hebrew there speaks of 'the bruises of a friend'. Nathan's words wound David. But I want you to note he does not storm in and confront David. His words draw David into the situation and they disarm his defenses. When David speaks judgment the trap is sprung. I want you to note as well that David in his judgment goes beyond what the Law of God required in this situation. For taking a sheep like this the Law required a four-fold recompense. David adds that the **'man deserves to die.'** You see when we cover up sin in our own lives. When we are living the life of a hypocrite we become very critical of the sins of others. It is a means of transference.

Before David has time to interrupt, Nathan speaks words of judgment. David will have to suffer and live with the consequences of his sin (verses 11-12). Before we look at the final principle, listen to what happened in the family of David because of his sin: the baby born to him and Bathsheba dies; Amnon rapes his sister Tamar; Absalom murders Amnon in revenge; Absalom rebels against David and David has to flee for a while; Absalom is killed and David is inconsolable; and David is not allowed to build the Temple because of his sin.

Number 4: CONFESSED SIN IS ALWAYS FORGIVEN. This is the best point of our study this week because even in spite of the horrific things David did, we still see God's amazing grace. Look at **2 SAMUEL 12:13**: *¹³Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." Nathan answered, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You will not die.* Also, a few weeks ago we looked at his longer confession in **PSALM 51**, which you might want to revisit this week. David's sin was forgiven the moment he repented in his heart, however the prophet added that there were consequences for these sins even though he was forgiven of them. (1) There shall be constant WAR all the days of your reign. (2) Your OWN WIVES SHALL BE RAPED in broad daylight. What you did secretly I will do before all Israel. (3) I will cause your own FAMILY TO RAISE UP

AGAINST YOU. (4) The BABY conceived from this adulterous act MUST DIE.

What a high price to pay for what began as a wanton night of fleshly indulgence. As Paul told the Corinthians in **1 CORINTHIANS 5**, *"A little leaven leavens the whole lump."* Sin, unchecked, always spreads, always grows, always ensnares. Sin has consequences, right?

When David confesses his sin, Nathan assures him God has forgiven him. When we confess our sin – and note whom David said he had sinned against – God, then God forgives us our sin. He declares that we are forgiven, that we now stand in a right relationship before him because in his grace and mercy he forgives us. He forgives us on the basis of Christ's death for us on the Cross, just as he did David's. The only difference being he was looking forward and we are looking back. But David had to live with the consequences of his sin, just as we do. Why? We learn from Paul in Romans 3:23 that the wages of sin is death. **Is it hard to say, "I have sinned?"** Repeat after me, *"I have sinned!"* Why is it good to say, *"I have sinned?"*

I Corinthians 10:12 gives this warning *'So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall.'* David had indulged his life for over 20 years and his desires and passions were never satisfied. He neglected his duty – he was in bed when he should have been on the battlefield. He did not guard his eyes and he did not avert his gaze. When the 'traveler' came he did not flee temptation—instead he indulged it. He did not flee when warned she was another man's wife. His adultery led to murder and death. He lived with the consequences the rest of his life and so did his family and the nation of Israel.

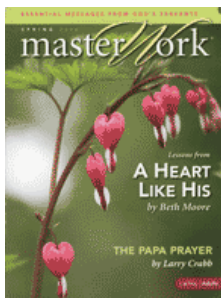
In David's case the passion and desire was sexual – for you it may be something totally different – ambition, vanity and myriad of things. It doesn't matter—when the desire is fed and kindled a raging fire consumes all around it and at that moment, even though we are God's people, God seems unreal to us and the

desire consumes us. Yet, remember even though David sinned, God forgave him and from David's line came Christ Jesus.

Finally, when Nathan confronted David and he confessed – he confessed that he had sinned. He called it as it was. Nathan called it as it was. Today too many of us who are called Christians excuse sin, condone sin, or explain sin. Too many try to justify their actions and their words by pointing to troubled backgrounds, past experiences or the latest trend which is to blame it on 'the spirit of this or that.' Call it as it is – sin and humble yourself before God and confess your sin and receive His forgiveness—just like David.

Sin always deceives, always destroys, is always discovered, but praise God, when we come to him and confess it. He forgives completely.

Let's pray!



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MARCH 30, 2008