

DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

DISCIPLINE OF PURITY

LESSONS FROM A FALLEN KING (continuation from last week)

Where are we to turn for help? The most instructive example in all of God's Word is the experience of King David as it is told in [2 Samuel 11](#).

Rationalization

From deadly *fixation*, King David descended to the next level down, which is *rationalization*. When his intent became apparent to his servants, one tried to dissuade him, saying, “Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” But David would not be rebuffed. Some massive rationalization took place in David's mind, perhaps very much as J. Allan Peterson has suggested in *The Myth of the Greener Grass*:

Uriah is a great soldier but he's probably not much of a husband or a lover — years older than she is — and he'll be away for a long time. This girl needs a little comfort in her loneliness. This is one way I can help her. No one will get hurt. I do not mean anything wrong by it. This is not lust — I have known that many times. This is love. This is not the same as finding a prostitute on the street. God knows that. And to the servant, “Bring her to me.”

The mind controlled by lust has an infinite capacity for rationalization.

- “How can something that has brought such enjoyment be wrong?”
- “God's will for me is to be happy; certainly He would not deny me anything which is essential to my happiness — and this is it!”
- “The question here is one of love — I'm acting in love, the highest love.”
- “My marriage was never God's will in the first place.”
- “You Christians and your narrow judgmental attitudes make me sick. You are judging me. You are a greater sinner than I'll ever be!”

Degeneration (Adultery, Lies, Murder)

David's progressive *desensitization*, *relaxation*, *fixation*, and *rationalization* set him up for one of the greatest falls in history — and his *degeneration*. “Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and

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sent word to David, saying, ‘I am pregnant’ ” ([vv. 4-5](#)). David was unaware he had stepped off the precipice and was falling, and that reality would soon arrive — the bottom was coming up fast.

We are all familiar with David’s despicable behavior as he became a calculating liar and murderer in arranging Uriah’s death to cover his sin with Bathsheba. Suffice it to say that at this time in the king’s life, Uriah was a better man drunk than David was sober ([v. 13](#))!

A year later David would repent under the withering accusation of the prophet Nathan. But the miserable consequences could not be undone. As has often been pointed out:

- It was the breaking of the **Tenth Commandment** (coveting his neighbor’s wife) that led David to commit adultery, thus breaking the **Seventh Commandment**.
- Then, in order to steal his neighbor’s wife (thereby breaking the **Eighth Commandment**), he committed murder and broke the **Sixth Commandment**.
- He broke the **Ninth Commandment** by bearing false witness against his brother.
- This all brought dishonor to his parents and thus broke the **Fifth Commandment**.

In this way he broke **all of the Ten Commandments** that relate to loving one’s neighbor as oneself (**Commandments Five through Ten**). And in doing so, he dishonored God as well, breaking, in effect, the **first four Commandments**.

David’s reign went downhill from there on, despite his laudable repentance:

- His baby died.
- His beautiful daughter, Tamar, was raped by her half-brother Amnon.
- Amnon was murdered by Tamar’s full-brother Absalom.
- Absalom came to so hate his father David for his moral turpitude that he led a rebellion under the tutelage of Bathsheba’s resentful grandfather, Ahithophel.
- David’s reign lost the smile of God. His throne never regained its former stability.

Men, we must understand that David would never have given more than a fleeting glance to Bathsheba if he could have seen the shattering results. I believe with all my heart that few, if any, would ever stray from God’s Word if they could see what would follow.

The record of the tragic fall of King David is God-given and should be taken seriously by the Church in this “**Corinthian age**” as a warning regarding the pathology of the human factors that lead to a moral fall:

- The **desensitization** which happens through the conventional sensualities of culture.
- The deadly syndrome which comes through moral **relaxation** of discipline.
- The blinding effects of sensual **fixation**.
- And the **rationalization** of those in the grip of lust.

In David’s case the cycle included **adultery, lying, murder, familial degeneration, and national decline**. The pathology is clear, and so are the horrible effects of sensuality. Both are meant not only to instruct us, but to frighten us — to scare the sensuality right out of us!