
BIG WORD: 2 Samuel

Homework for Chapters 11—14

Discussion Dates: 24 October 2012 (in house)
and 25 October 2012 (online)

DAY ONE: Overview

PRAY for the Holy Spirit to clear your mind so that you may focus on God's Word without distractions or preconceptions. Ask Him to help you discern only what He wants for you in this reading and for this day.

READ: 2 Samuel 11—14.

If possible, read all four chapters in one sitting. Make notes of any details that stick out to you, questions that rise and/or personal insights God gives you while you read.

DAY TWO: David's Big Mistakes

Up to this point, we've all been overwhelmed by David's godliness. He seems to do everything right, from the time he was a teenaged shepherd, throughout his exile and life as a soldier straight into his graceful and rightful reign as the king of Israel. He seems to do no wrong. Until now.

In 2 Samuel 11 we read about some major mistakes. What sins did David commit?

What do you think contributed to this uncharacteristic change? What motivated him toward these behaviors?

When David first became an army commander, he set standards, standards which his men – including Uriah – took seriously. One of those standards is outlined in 1 Samuel 21:5. It is based on Leviticus 15:16-18. What was it?

Contrast Uriah with David. What differences do you see?

How do you think Joab felt about his role in this drama?

How do you think Bathsheba felt?

On my website I have a 5-part series titled “Victim or Vixen?” that dissects more of this story. It presents some valid points and arguments about these events. You don’t have to read all the posts, but I would like you to read this one:

<http://tanyadennisbooks.com/2009/06/05/victim-or-vixen-part-2-who-started-it/>

When we meet, we’ll discuss the relational connections between David, Bathsheba and Uriah. They will arise again later in 2 Samuel.

DAY THREE: Nathan’s Confrontation

READ 1 Samuel 12:1—6 and Proverbs 28:13.

Summarize, in your own words, Nathan’s story to David and the response it evokes.

Nathan’s confrontation to David comes quite a while after the offending incident. At least nine months later! Why do you think it came so late?

A couple “coincidences” exist in chapters 11 and 12. Compare the passages below and note what significance (if any) you see. The connections may be more obvious in certain translations.

- David to Joab’s messenger in 11:25 → God to David in 11:27
- Nathan in 12:3 → Uriah in 11:11

READ Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22-24. According to the Law, what should David’s punishment have been?

Historically the population has been split over Bathsheba's culpability. Opinion runs the gamut of her being raped and completely innocent to her being a deliberate and evil temptress such as Delilah. Jewish tradition even places sole responsibility on her, alleviating (or rather dismissing) any possible responsibility owed to David.

We know from the Leviticus passage that, if her involvement were volitional in any way, she would receive the same punishment as David. If this were a case of rape, however, what would her punishment be based on the passage in Deuteronomy?

God's grace overrides the Law. Rather than giving them what they deserve, what punishment does God pronounce? (*READ 1 Samuel 12:7–14.*)

In verse 13 Nathan tells David that "the LORD has taken away [his] sin," but then announces a final consequence of his sin. What does this tell you about the nature of forgiveness?

How does this apply to our relationships with each other? With God?

DAY FOUR: David's Heart

READ Psalms 32 and 51.

What do you learn from these psalms about David's heart?

What do they teach us about God?

How do these passages impact your life today?

DAY FIVE: Finishing Battle

READ 2 Samuel 12:26—31 and 1 Chronicles 20:1—3.

While David deals with his personal dramas, Joab is still at war, fighting the king's battles. He sends a report to David with a sort of threat. What was it? (v. 28)

What does this say about their relationship?

How did David respond?

DAY SIX: Amnon and Tamar

READ 2 Samuel 13:1—21.

Here we have a brother tricking then raping his sister only to have everyone seemingly try to cover it up. What significance do you find in this story being placed immediately after the account of David and Bathsheba?

Compare the actions of these brothers to those of the brothers of Dinah, an Israelite who was also raped. (See Genesis 34.)

READ Proverbs 22:6.

These children – Amnon, Tamar and Absalom – had all been raised by David, a man after God's own heart. Even Jonadab, Amnon's advising friend, was a nephew of the king, raised by one of David's brothers. How does one account for this lack of regard for the "the way they should go"?

Interestingly, Tamar is the only one who makes any defense of righteousness. Read about her namesake, an ancestress of King David and eventually the Messiah, in Genesis 38.

DAY SEVEN: Absalom

READ 2 Samuel 13:23—38.

Amnon's sins are not easily forgotten. Rather than appealing to the Law or to his father, the king, Absalom takes matters into his own hands. Why do you think he does this?

What actions does he take?

READ 2 Samuel 14.

David seems a different man since his humbling mistake with Bathsheba. In place of the confident, assertive leader we've seen in the past, a timid, broken man stands in his place. In 14:1 we see him again refusing initiative.

Who stepped up to fix things this time?

What is his plan?

After three years of exile and the execution of Joab's plan, Absalom returns, but things are still rocky. Describe his relationship with the king.

Describe his relationship with Joab.

What do his actions say about his character? About his esteem for the monarchy, specifically his father, David?