Growing Character Together: Insights for Parents

Week #6 | Justice

David and Bathsheba

BIG QUESTION

How can God’s mercy help you do what is right even when you’ve done something really wrong?

VIRTUE

JUSTICE: God’s power for you to do what is right according to His Word.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2 Samuel 12:1-13; Psalm 51 (\*To read the full account of David and Bathsheba, read 2 Samuel 11.)

David is now king and has been for several years. As king, he is a wise, compassionate, and honorable leader–and for those reasons, the people love him. David makes good decisions and fears the Lord, but he is still a sinful human being; and over the over time, he starts to make some very bad decisions–for both himself and his people.

David’s sin was like a snowball; the more he tried to fix his sin, the bigger he sinned. It started when David saw a beautiful woman bathing at night. Her name was Bathsheba, and her husband was away from home, fighting in David’s army. David stayed the night with Bathsheba, and she became pregnant. In order to hide his sin, he sent for Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah. He told Uriah to go home and be with his wife, but Uriah was a faithful and honorable man and would not go home to comfort while his fellow soldiers were still fighting. Uriah’s honor led David to do the unthinkable: He had Uriah murdered in battle.

David lived his life in faithful service to the Lord, but the guilt of his sin never left him. Today’s narrative begins when Nathan confronts David about his wickedness. Psalm 51 is also part of the reading because it is David’s prayer after he realizes how he has sinned against God.

Scripture: <https://live.bible.is/bible/ENGNIV/2SA/11?audio_type=audio>; <https://live.bible.is/bible/ENGNIV/2SA/12?audio_type=audio>; <https://live.bible.is/bible/ENGNIV/PSA/51?audio_type=audio>

Experience It.

Imagine that moment when David recognized the depth of his sin–how horribly painful his actions were to others. Uriah trusted him as king, and God had chosen David and anointed him for the most powerful position in Israel; but David used that position for his own selfish desires. What did David feel when he acknowledged his sin?

*Hint: burned with anger, remorseful, sorrowful, despairing*

Internalize It.

Let’s look at our big question this week. If your ultimate purpose is to glorify God, how can God’s mercy help you glorify God?

*Hint: We are saved by grace alone. Accepting God’s mercy through Christ glorifies God as being a merciful and compassionate God. If we do not accept His mercy, we reject part of His character.*

Activate It.

When have you been faced with a choice to do the right thing? How did you choose to do the right thing instead of the wrong thing?

*Hint: Answers will vary.*

CHRIST CONNECTION

David’s sin was bad, but his sin did not define him. David, is known for being “a man after [God’s] own heart” (1 Sam. 13:14) because he was quick to repent. He wrote Psalm 51 after murdering a man; it is one of the most beloved Psalms because it is a cry to God from someone who desperately needs what only God can give–mercy. David gives us one of the best examples of how to live right after we have done wrong.

We really aren’t any different from David. We haven’t murdered anyone, but Jesus said if you are angry at your brother or sister you are judged as a murderer (Mt. 5:21-22). Romans 3:23 says, “...all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We have all sinned. We are all like David. Maybe we have done some really good things in our lives, but we have also done some really bad things. God is so holy that even our goodness is not good. Isaiah 64:6 reveals just how wicked we are in comparison to God, “All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.” But the good news of Jesus Christ is not that we are good, but that He is merciful despite our wickedness. The Gospel is not about us–it’s about Him. David is a great example of how to overcome sin after we have done wrong: Ask God for forgiveness. When we seek Christ’s mercy, we will be made clean and right before God. The Holy Spirit will empower us to live right after sin.

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.” (Psalm 51:10)

PRAYER

Merciful Father, I am amazed by how quickly You forgive. I am a sinner, and I need Your forgiveness every day. Please help me to be quick to ask for mercy and even quicker to receive Your mercy and keep going. Help me trust You to take my sin and turn it around for Your glory. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

