

The Story – Chapter 12: *Trials of a King*

Introduction

The Story – Chapter 12: *David – The Trials of a King*

Introduction

This week we look at the latter part of King David’s reign, and our focus is primarily on David’s fall and the subsequent challenges within his own family. If you don’t have *The Story* book, you can read 2 Samuel 11-12, 18-19; 1 Chronicles 22, 29; and Psalms 23, 32, 51.

Summary of Chapter 12 – The Trials of a King

David was the least likely among his brothers to be anointed king. He was the last person on the battlefield you’d pick to play the hero’s part against the giant Goliath, but David was the underdog who overcame. And he was the man after God’s own heart who became the king of Israel.

But David’s eyes wandered and so did his heart. He summoned the very lovely and very married Bathsheba to his bed. And then, making matters much worse, when David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant, he concocted a murderous plot which resulted in the death of her husband Uriah.

However, his actions were not hidden from God, who sent the prophet Nathan to visit David. (Guilty kings never fare well when prophets arrive for a visit—it happened with Samuel and Saul, and now with David.) Nathan told a parable and pointed the finger of blame squarely in David’s face. Although David repented of his sin, and God forgave him, after that, things were never the same. David and Bathsheba’s first son died, but they had a second son named Solomon (who later became king after his father).

Sadly, David was a better king than father. One of his sons, Absalom attempted to overthrow his father and usurp the throne, resulting in a rebellion. David instructed his troops to be gentle with his son, but when Absalom was found hanging from a tree limb, Joab, the leader of David’s army, seized the moment and killed the conspirator. King David mourned his son’s death when he heard the news.

The end of this chapter turns to David’s preparation for the building of God’s temple. David knew that his son, Solomon, would build a house for God, so he did all he could to prepare the way, giving generously himself and urging others to do the same. King David’s story draws to a close with poetic psalms of praise, reminders of faithfulness to Solomon, and his sights set on living “*in the house of the LORD forever.*” (Psalm 23)

Discussion Questions

As you read, remember there are discussion questions for each chapter beginning on page 473 of the book and also questions that can be found on *The Story* bookmark (which is also on our website). Also, feel free to consider some of the questions below:

1. What did David ask Joab, the commander of the army, to do about Uriah (2 Samuel 11:14–15)? Have you ever been asked by a boss to do something you knew was wrong? If so, how did the request affect your opinion of and trust for the person. What is a good way to respond when someone in leadership asks you to do something you believe is wrong?
2. God used Nathan to confront David about his sin. Has anyone ever confronted you about a sin in your life? Who has permission to be your "Nathan"? Compare David's confrontation with Nathan to Saul's confrontation with Samuel (p.162-163 and p. 141-143.) What does David seem to understand that Saul does not?
3. What was David's reaction when Nathan told him of the rich man stealing the poor man's precious sheep (2 Samuel 12:5–6)? On whom had David actually pronounced judgment (12:7)? We tend to find fault in others, but often don't see those same faults in ourselves. Can you think of a time when you realized that the fault you were criticizing in someone else was something you also shared? What did you do?
4. On page 165 we read that "the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill." This is a hard one. Why do you think God took the life of the child when it was his father who sinned? How do you feel about God's decision? Does God's punishment of David (and all his family) fit the crime if God truly forgave him?
5. David was excited to give his time, money and effort to building a temple he would not even live to see. Why do you think he felt this way? Is giving easy or hard for you? Why?
6. Psalm 23 is the most well known of all the psalms. It is attributed to King David, and is one of the many ways David spoke with and about God. What in David's background or experience might have contributed to the images that he used in this psalm? Can you think of reasons why this psalm brings such comfort to people still today?
7. What questions came up for you while you were reading this chapter?