

## SECRETS

### "THE SNARE OF SECRECY"

#### 2 SAMUEL 11:6-27

#### **This Week's Core Competency**

**Self-Control** – I have the power, through Christ, to control myself. Titus 2:11-13 *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

If I were to title this article on the harmful effects of 'fantasizing' it would be titled The Facade of Fantasy. While the word *fantasy* should give itself away, far too many allow themselves to be carried off by the superficial veneer of life inside a 'dream world' - only to one day have *reality* rear its ugly head. For instance, men who give in to pornography fail to realize they are quite literally reprogramming their mind, *every* time they succumb to temptation. Once forged, the creation of new synaptic paths is irreversible. Worse still, exchanging relational love of a spouse for images to objectify wreaks havoc on their ability to enjoy marital intimacy as God intended. Only through the Spirit's indwelling and one's exercise of self-control can the influence of these synaptic paths be lessened, and at some point, by God's grace, 'deactivated.' (See related on-line article: *Can you Become a Creature of New Habits* by Janet Rae-Dupree).

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***Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay and cost you more than you want to pay.***

– Unknown

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Another area that is easy to slip into is the fantasy of a 'living-beyond-one's-means' lifestyle. Consumer mantras such as: 'buy now, pay later;' 'charge it;' 'zero down, zero interest;' and 'you deserve it' flood our eyes and ears on a daily basis. But indulging in this standard of living proves not so luxurious when reality sets in. Before long, minimum monthly payments on credit card balances exceed that of an average car loan. Speaking of car loans, perhaps we have not just one—but *two* of those. Most of our carelessly purchased 'treasures' have lost their shine. When you combine these with the mortgage hiding behind the 'more than we need' house, a few unplanned medical/dental expenses, costly home/car repairs and the rumor of more layoffs, the prospect of having others green with envy is overshadowed by all the red lines in our checkbook. Turning this ship around will not be easy, but it can be done. Cut up credit cards, and sell whatever you can to provide an emergency fund and to address any pressing or late bills. Then scale back your outflow of cash until it is noticeably less than your cash inflow. In non-technical terms this is called 'living under a budget.'

So many other examples could be given. Much deception masks the reality that a hasty exit from a marriage will often create new and sometimes more difficult challenges (i.e. social, financial, familial, etc.). Then there is the realization that nearly all addictions, albeit drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc., started with 'recreational' engagement. Even the sense of satisfaction presumed by lashing out in anger (whether verbally, physically, by social media, etc.) can produce painfully regretful results. In all these, something as simple as self-control could

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make all the difference in the world.

Self-control aside, it is possible there exists a common denominator to each of these examples. And that is this: Jesus is simply not enough. When this lie sets in, one's unbridled devotion to Christ wanes amidst the tantalizing fantasy we have planted in the forefront of our minds - yet, that always remains just beyond our reach. Self-serving pursuits always crash against the wall of reality, leaving a wake of destruction and regret in the end. "The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed...so let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissention and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (Ro 13:11b-14).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### 2 Samuel 11:6-27

6 So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. ?

7 When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9 But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

10 When David was told, "Uriah did not go home," he asked him, "Haven't you just come from a distance? Why didn't you go home?"

11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

12 Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15 In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

16 So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at

a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17 When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

18 Joab sent David a full account of the battle. 19 He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, 20 the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall? 21 Who killed Abimelech son of Jerub-Besheth? Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Also, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.' "

22 The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. 23 The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance to the city gate. 24 Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

25 David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab." 26 When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him.

27 After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Circle each occurrence of "Uriah" in this passage.
- \* Highlight each occurrence of "did not go" in this passage.
- \* Box each occurrence of "so", "when" and "then" indicating *transition*.
- \* In the margin write "1st" beside v. 8.
- \* In the margin write "2nd" beside v. 12.
- \* In the margin write "3rd" beside v. 14.
- \* Bracket David's orders to Joab in v. 15.
- \* Highlight "your servant...is dead" in vv. 21, 24.
- \* Bracket comments about Bathsheba in vv. 26-27a.
- \* Highlight and underline v. 27b indicating *climax*.

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## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Upon hearing of Bathsheba's pregnancy, what is David's first 'action-rising' scheme? In what way does it fail?
2. David makes a peculiar suggestion to Uriah. What do you think he is *really* implying? Explain.
3. What reasons does Uriah give for not heeding David's advice? In what way does this contrast Uriah with David?
4. Upon hearing that Uriah "did not go home", what second 'action-rising' scheme does David hatch? Compare/contrast Uriah's actions with that of his original response to David.
5. To what third 'action-rising' scheme does David sink? Compare/contrast his orders with Joab's fulfillment?
6. Modifying military orders from a king should not be taken lightly. Why do you think Joab does so?
7. From David's perspective identify the 'climax', 'falling action' and 'denouement' of this story.
8. If you were writing Uriah's eulogy, what would you say about his character?
9. Hindsight being 20/20, what should we see as the climactic moment of the story? What element(s) then of the story can we expect to read in next week's passage?
10. **Discussion:** What lessons can be found from this week's passage?

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## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of its message to clarify your understanding of the passage.

Last week we began our discussion of the key elements of *story* through the lenses of Freytag's pyramid. Our previous passage (11:1-5) provided us with: exposition relative to the story's setting (Israel at war without David), an 'inciting' incident (David sees Bathsheba bathing) and the first rise in action/conflict (Bathsheba's pregnancy). This week, we continue to read through the rising conflict, observing how quickly things can go from bad to worse.

Unique to stories in the bible is divine inspiration. As such, it is no surprise that there is always more than meets the eye. Oftentimes a passage from Scripture is said to have an 'upper' story and a 'lower' story. Whereas the lower story is preoccupied with unfolding human drama, the upper story informs us of that which is truly paramount - God's role in the story relative to his purposes. The casual reader might find the remaining elements of Freytag's pyramid (i.e. - climax, falling action and the denouement) in this chapter alone. After all, Uriah is killed, David does appear to have gotten away with murder (no pun intended) and before the dust settles over Bathsheba's mourning, David whisks her into (un)holy matrimony - seemingly to live happily ever after. However, today's passage ends on a very captivating note. "But this thing David had done displeased the Lord" (v. 27b). In actuality, this represents the true climatic moment of the story. Chapter 12 provides us with the falling action and denouement of God's upper story relative to the life of King David and the impact that this story should have on future generations of Israel, even us.

Fresh off the gut-wrenching news of Bathsheba's pregnancy, David realizes there is a sizable kink in his kingly armor. He hastens to action, summoning Uriah from war-torn Succoth to peaceful and relaxing Jerusalem. By way of diversion, David unnecessarily asks Uriah three questions relative to the Ammonite conflict (v. 7). Go-between messengers provide these updates on a regular if not daily basis. That Uriah's responses are not on biblical record is equally telling.

Dismissing with pleasantries, David puts his cunning scheme into play. "Go down to your house and wash your feet" (v. 8). David was just as disinterested in Uriah *relaxing* as he was in his *reporting*. For, implicit in David's provocation was his hope that Uriah would spend a night of marital intimacy with his wife. One honorable act between

Uriah and Bathsheba would mask David's dishonorable act with her weeks prior and seemingly exonerate him in the process. But Uriah would entertain no such suggestion and sleeps at the entrance of the palace instead (v. 9). It is only when Uriah is questioned by David the following day (v. 10) that we come to appreciate the depths of Uriah's loyalty to: Israel's covenant-keeping God, the nation of Israel, his fellow soldiers fighting on behalf of Israel and lastly, King David for whom Uriah would gladly sacrifice his own life (v. 11; See also "your servant" in vv. 21, 24). By contrast, David, in the moment, is exhibiting disloyalty to *all* of the above.

Undeterred by Uriah's non-compliance, David moves on the 'Plan B.' This time he will get Uriah drunk on wine and then send him home to copulate with his wife. Much to David's dismay, Uriah "did not go home" (v. 13). Push has come to shove and 'Plan C' is set in motion. From David's perspective this conflict had reached its climax. In an egregious abuse of power, David presses his authority to the limit. Taking advantage both of Uriah's and Joab's unquestionable loyalty, David drafts an order to put Uriah deep enough into harm's way that will insure his untimely death.

Joab receives the order but immediately senses something is not right. After all, Uriah is one of David's "Thirty" choice servants (2 Sam 23:39). Surely he thought, "What could have possibly brought Uriah under such disfavor?" That aside, fulfilling the details of David's order, without modification, would certainly call Joab's character and competencies into question. Additionally, it could raise suspicion over the king's involvement in what would clearly be seen as avoidable military faux pas. At great risk of rousing the king's "anger" (v. 20), Joab sends "some men from David's army" (v. 17) up near Rabbah's city walls along with Uriah. Uriah dies but so do numerous valiant men alongside him.

The 'cover-up' would prove more costly than David assumed. Such is always the case with sin. Perhaps coupled with fear and trembling, the messenger read Joab's report to David, adding a few extra details to perhaps save face. However, the most important detail to David is shared to the letter: "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead" (comp. v. 24 with v. 21). David callously dismisses the extent of collateral damage, opting to "encourage" Joab instead (v. 25).

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Why should David care? His ultimate objective was met. The falling action of Uriah's death communicated through Joab's message made David's 'story' all but complete. Now all that remained was waiting until the "time of her mourning" was over so he could legally make Bathsheba his.

Weeks later David and Bathsheba wed (v. 27a). Seven to eight months later their son is born (v. 27a). His saga with sin seems to be over. David must surely have been thinking 'all's well that ends well.' Little

does he know that his lower-story resolve marked the beginning of God's upper-story intervention and thusly serves as the true climax of this sordid tale. For, "the thing David had done displeased the Lord" (v. 27b). As is true in David's life, God will have the final say in ours. "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from that Spirit will reap eternal life" (Gal 6:7-8)

## *The Message of the Passage*

*Sin begets more sin and harms others in the process, so exercise self-control by rejecting ungodliness and worldly passions while waiting for Christ's return.*

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

• **Journal your answers to the following *living* questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

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# notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 6 **Joab** Joab, David's nephew, was his military commander during most of David's reign due to his tactical intelligence, bravery and unquestioned loyalty. "Joab is the kind of hatchet man every king must have, someone who acts always in the interest of the king without scruple or reservation" (Walter Brueggemann, IBC, 1 and 2 Samuel, 276).

v. 6 **Uriah** A proselyte of the Hittite peoples into the nation of Israel. If Uriah was part of "the king's men" (11:1) as Jewish tradition holds, then he would have served very closely with Joab in Israel's ongoing battles. By extension, he would have been an inner-circle "servant" (vv. 21, 24) of David's military arm. Even when interrupted via royal furlough, Uriah demonstrates the "the quintessence of fidelity" (Bruggemann, 274) to David, the nation of Israel and his warring band of brothers. So as not to compromise the larger objectives at hand, Uriah refuses to "go" to his home (vv. 9(10); 13) and lay with his wife. "As surely as you [David] live, I will not do such a thing!" In a cruel twist of fate, Uriah's loyalty proved to be the cause for the order of his execution.

v. 8 **wash feet** "David's reference to footwashing was a suggestion that he receive gracious domestic hospitality (cf. Gen 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24) from his wife; implicitly it was an order to spend a night of marital intimacy with Bathsheba" (Bergen, 365). While David's word choice is somewhat "ambiguous [to us], "Uriah's comments in v. 11 suggest he understands it sexually" (Firth, 418). Firth goes on to argue that David is trying to entrap Uriah in violation of military law (Deut 23:10; 1 Sam 21:5) - subject to capital punishment; but the text gives no indication of this. In all likelihood, David's suggestion was simply a ploy to shift plausibility for Bathsheba's pregnancy unto Uriah and exculpate David of any perceived impropriety in the process.

v. 9 **did not go** "Three times the point is made that Uriah did not go home, for, despite what the king had [suggested], Uriah knew where his duty lay" (Baldwin, 233). When David questions, Uriah answers, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my master Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open fields" (v. 11). Uriah's covenant loyalty eclipses the once uber-covenant-loyalist, David.

v. 11 **tents** "The NIV's 'in tents' should doubtless be rendered 'in [the city of] Succoth' (see NIV's note at 1 Ki 20:12, 16)" (Youngblood, 435).

v. 17 Joab did not follow David's orders exactly. For in doing so (to "then withdraw from him" - v. 15) would have aroused suspicion against David and perhaps even more so against Joab. "To kill Uriah through an obvious withdrawal, as David had asked, would place blame upon Joab and could damage morale. His method, placing Uriah where the stronger opposition was and inciting a counter-attack, cost the lives of others" (Firth, 420). "In this fashion, the circle of lethal consequences of David's initial act spreads wider and wider" (Robert Alter, *The David Story*, 254).

v. 21 **Abimelech** After his father Gideon's death, Abimelech sought to establish himself in the likeness of a 'Canaanite city king' over Shechem (Jdg 9). As quickly as he was 'crowned', a revolt erupted, leading to the death all Shechem by his forces. He then sought to capture the city of Thebez. He is disparagingly mentioned in today's passage because, his disregard for sound fighting tactics - which were successful in Shechem - proved fatal, and culturally embarrassing, as a woman dropped an "upper millstone" upon him. This led to his death by a soldier's sword at Abimelech's urgent plea.

v. 21, 24 **servant** In both Joab's report and the messenger's retelling of the account, Uriah is referred to David as his "servant" denoting his loyalty and dedication unto the king's service.

v. 26 **wife** Bathsheba's name is never used in vv. 6-27. Rather twice (v. 11 and here) she is referred to as "Uriah's wife"; once (v. 27) with her husband's life having been taken from him, she is then taken to David to be *his* wife.

v. 27 **time of mourning** Bathsheba's actual sorrow over her husband's death (v. 26) had not ended. Rather, the "time of mourning" was somewhere between 7 days (cf. Gen 50:20) and the full cycle of a moon (cf. Num 20:29) depending upon the social status of the deceased (See Bergen, 368).

v. 27b This is unquestionably the climactic moment of the story of David's fall from honor. A literary device known as chiasm is frequently used in Scripture to creatively identify a passage's most important feature. Chapter 11-12 form a chiasmic arrangement (See Arnold, 531; Youngblood, 428). God's displeasure bridges David's sin with Nathan's looming judgment

## Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Special Note to Parents: For the next 3 weeks we will be using Psalm 51 instead of the 2 Samuel passage for The Scrolls study. We will be teaching the story of David and Bathsheba in age appropriate ways in our theaters, however, this will give you an opportunity to cover these texts in the best way for your child.

There is a funny cartoon of two snowballs. One is extremely larger than the other and has on a sweat band. He says to the smaller one, "I don't understand, the more I run the more weight I seem to put on." The snowball effect. A traveling snowball will continue to gain mass. So does our unconfessed sin. The longer we continue in it or ignore it, it will spiral out of control. The consequences grow impacting not only us but the people around us as well. In Psalm 51, David recognizes the impact his sin has on others. He describes it as feeling like his bones have been crushed and he begs the Lord to not cast him from His Presence. As bad as it is to live with the consequences of our sin, it is much worse to live apart from our loving Heavenly Father who is waiting for us to return to Him in repentance. May we model that well for our children.

### What Does The Bible Say

**Weekly Verse:** read Psalm 51:7-12

1. How does David describe the way his sin makes him feel?
2. What does he ask God to create in him in verse 10?
3. What does he ask God to restore in verse 12?

### What Do You Think

David obviously felt bad about his sin. He confesses it to God and asks God to (1) restore his joy and right standing with God and (2) grant him a spirit to be strong in the face of sin the next time. Talk with your family about ways to stand strong against sin.

### What R U Going To Do

Draw a picture of two hearts. One heart should represent a heart that has been cleansed by God. The other should represent a heart that has unconfessed sin. Which one do you want? Post it somewhere where you will see it often.

## MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Self-Control – Taking charge of myself with Jesus' help.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8 - *If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.*

## KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC \_\_\_\_ and Verse \_\_\_\_\_. Family completed **Say** \_\_\_\_\_ **Think** \_\_\_\_\_ **Do** \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_ Parent's signature \_\_\_\_\_

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.  
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### **Trinity** 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **Salvation By Grace** Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Authority of the Bible** 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### **Personal God** Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### **Identity in Christ** John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### **Church** Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### **Humanity** John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### **Compassion** Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### **Eternity** John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### **Stewardship** 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### **Worship** Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### **Prayer** Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Bible Study** Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### **Single-mindedness** Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### **Spiritual Gifts** Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### **Biblical Community** Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### **Giving Away My Time** Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Money**

#### 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Faith** Ephesians

#### 6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### **Giving Away My Life** Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### **Joy** John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### **Peace** Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### **Faithfulness** Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### **Self-Control** Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### **Humility** Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### **Love** 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### **Patience** Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### **Kindness/Goodness** 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### **Gentleness** Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### **Hope** Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

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**Wendy Hollabaugh** (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.

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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).