

SECRETS

"THE SLIDE TO SECRECY"

2 SAMUEL 11:1-5

This Week's Core Competency

Single-Mindedness – I focus on God and His priorities for my life. Matthew 6:33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Our Core Competency *Single-mindedness* is simple to understand yet tremendously challenging to accomplish. This proves true with a great many aspects of our life. For instance many of us can 'diet' for a few days, perhaps a few weeks, only to have a special occasion—birthday, holiday, anniversary, etc., derail our previous commitment. The same could be said regarding regular exercise. Sore muscles, tight schedules, congested parking, work and family responsibilities too easily crowd out even the most sincere effort to follow Dr's orders. Other examples include: daily time in God's word *before* casual reading or TV; frequently 'sleeping in' rather than Sunday morning engagement with a local church body; or investing time/resources into a sport or hobby at the family's expense. Many other examples could be given. But all of these highlight the pertinence of living a single-minded life. What's paramount to all of these? Having a single-minded preoccupation with God, his kingdom/his righteousness, and our role in his divine plan.

God, interrupt whatever we are doing so that we can join you in what you are doing.

– Francis Chan

From the outset, David demonstrated a devotion such as this in every facet of his life. Scripture's first mention of David reveals his unwavering commitment in tending to his father's flock of sheep (1Sa 16:11; 17:34-35). Shortly after, David exhibits unbridled ardor against Goliath in defense of Israel and the one true God (17:37ff). Having already been anointed by Samuel to be Israel's next king, David remains wholly loyal to Saul, refusing to usurp his kingship prematurely (24:6ff; 26:9ff); and this amidst Saul's ever deepening paranoia and intensely hostile actions against David (19ff). When word spreads of Saul's death, David laments (2 Sam 1). As king, David: courageously fights to drive our Israel's enemies (2 Sam 5 & 8), brings the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem (chp. 6) and comes to the defense of (chp. 4) and extends loving-kindness toward (chp. 9) members of Saul's family. David exhibited a heart of love, temperance, humility and devotion to Israel's God. So much so that 1 Sam 13:14 refers to David as a "man after his own heart."

Unfortunately for David, he failed to realize that every day presents itself as a *new* day to say 'Yes' to God and 'No' to anything that might compete with one's single-minded affections for him. "At the time when kings go out to battle . . . David remained at Jerusalem." Perhaps he thought it harmless to stay behind given that he had deployed his entire army to beleaguer and defeat what remained of the Ammonites. While it is true he did not engage in every one of Israel's prior battles, the reader is meant to presume a waning of David's attention to and personal engagement with his army's military

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objectives; and by extension, with God's priorities for both himself and Israel. This short-sighted decision and the events that followed have forever remained in infamy.

We will likely never be called upon by God to replicate the mighty achievements of King David. Nonetheless, we are equally accountable to God for our single-minded devotion to him and his priorities for our life. Don't forget, David's journey began while serving as a lowly shepherd under his father's authority. Perhaps you are wondering why God isn't doing more in and through your life. The answer could be as simple as mismanaging God's priorities for your life. "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much" (Lk 16:10a). We all make mistakes. We all sin. And while God's grace does indeed abound to the contrite, failing to live a properly prioritized life could prove infamous for us as well.

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

2 Samuel 11:1-5

1In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4Then 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. 5The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

Cf., another translation

1When that time of year came around again, the anniversary of the Ammonite aggression, David dispatched Joab and his fighting men of Israel in full force to destroy the Ammonites for good. They laid siege to Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem.

2-5One late afternoon, David got up from taking his nap and was strolling on the roof of the palace. From his vantage point on the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was stunningly beautiful. David sent to ask about her, and was told, "Isn't this Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam and wife of Uriah the Hittite?" David sent his agents to get her. After she arrived, he went to bed with her. (This occurred during the time of "purification" following her period.) Then she returned home. Before long she realized she was pregnant.

6Later she sent word to David: "I'm pregnant." (MSG)

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

- * Circle "in the spring" relative to *setting* in v. 1.
- * Highlight "when kings...to war" and "David remained" in v. 1.
- * Draw a line connecting these two phrases.
- * Double underline "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 1.
- * Circle "One evening" relative to *setting* in vv. 2, 4.
- * Identify numerically David's actions in vv. 2-3a.
- * Circle each phrase that identifies the woman in v. 3b.
- * Identify numerically David's actions in v. 4.
- * Place a '?' in the margin next to "purified...uncleanness" in v. 4.
- * Highlight "I am pregnant" in v. 5.

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. What key elements help establish the setting of the story in verse 1?
2. What is the major *contrast* found in verse 1? How does it contribute to the beginning of the story?
3. Since the "whole Israelite army" was dispatched to the battle at hand, could an argument be made that it was unnecessary for David to be joining them? Defend or dissent.
4. Identify David's actions in verses 2-3a.
5. What is the *inciting incident* in the story?
6. Identify what this passage tells us about "the woman."
7. How might who Bathsheba is related to contribute to the story?
8. Identify David's actions in verse 4. How do they contribute to the development of David's *character*?
9. Identify the meaning of "purified from uncleanness." How does this detail contribute to the story?
10. What is revealed to both the reader and to David in verse 5? How does this fact contribute to the story?
11. **Discussion:** What lessons can be found from this week's passage?

day 3

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

Everyone loves a good story. In fact, it seems as though we humans are hard-wired to learn and grow through the stories told to us. This would explain why the major literary style in the Bible is in fact, *narrative*. Over the next three weeks we are going to survey one of the most universally recognized stories in all of Scripture—King David's fall from honor over his adultery, murderous cover-up and 'bell-toll' encounter with God's prophet, Nathan. But what goes into making a great story? One needs look no further than the diagram developed by nineteenth century German novelist and playwright Gustav Freytag. A casual internet search will yield dozens of nuanced versions of Freytag's 'pyramid,' but they all contain at least five key elements: exposition (to establish setting), rising action (conflict), climax (when tension peaks), falling action (an intervening response) and finally, the denouement (i.e., resolution).

To begin, every story must quickly provide enough exposition to establish the basic setting before the story can take flight. This would include important background information, prior events, description of characters' back stories, and an 'inciting' incident to set the wheels of the story in motion. 2 Samuel 10 is perhaps the best place for us to start (aside from reading 1 Samuel through 2 Samuel 10!) in order for us to appreciate our text at hand (11:1-5). Chapter 10 profiles the continued efforts to defeat and drive our Israel's enemies from the land. Both the Ammonites and Syrians were defeated soundly by King David and his armies. However, 'down' did not mean 'out.' Thus, "in the [following] spring" (11:1) fierce battles would ensue once again.

Equally important in establishing the setting is inclusion of main characters; and what a cast of characters it is! There is: David, Israel's mighty warrior king turned egregious sinner; Joab, King David's right-hand military commander; Bathsheba, the captivatingly beautiful, but married object of David's affections; Uriah, a proselyte warrior within Israel who is an unwaveringly loyal subject to the king, the nation that embraced him and to all of his fellow warriors; and lastly Nathan, the one who speaks on behalf of God to bring repentance and order to a once proud, now embarrassingly wayward administration.

Our story begins with the greatest of contrasts. For,

after one reads of David's previous military exploits one cannot help but notice the stark contrast, indeed irony, present in verse 1: "At the time *when kings go off to war . . . David remained* in Jerusalem." One author puts it this way, "In striking irony, David is thus described as performing his rightful (and righteous) role as king of Israel, that is, he is defending the nation against those who want to destroy her (1 Sam 9:16). The irony, of course, is that David stays home, and rather than defend his subjects, he abuses them (i.e., Bathsheba and her family)" (Bill T. Arnold, *1 & 2 Samuel*, NIVAC, 523). This antithetical inclusion in the story serves as the springboard to the 'inciting' incident that sets the rest of the story into motion.

David awakes from a carefree late-afternoon nap to enjoy a leisurely walk upon his (flat) roof. Seemingly out of the blue, his eyes take hold of a beautiful woman bathing on a neighboring roof below. God's command to not covet a neighbor's wife, much less strong-arm her into adultery, should have echoed throughout his heart and mind (Ex 20:17; 14). Or perhaps the timeless wisdom, spoken later in James, should have steered him away from temptation—"but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and sin, when it is fully-grown, gives birth to death" (1:14-15)—but, unfortunately, David dismissed wisdom.

Intoxicated by lust, he inquires of her identity, dismisses the information he receives - which in and of itself should have been enough for him to reject his impure motivations - and hastily summons her into his predatory palace. No details of what happens are given because they will prove unnecessary to our understanding upon reading verse 5. A short time later, the tables are turned as Bathsheba initiates communication to David. But, it's the last thing he would have hoped to hear from her: "*harah anoki*"; that is, "I am pregnant." The first scene in our story ends with a jaw-dropping 'cliffhanger.' In the blink of the eye, David's impenetrable fortress of power is set to collapse right before his eyes. As we shall see next week, desperate times call for desperate measures. That aside, one cannot help but surmise the anguished cry that must have haunted David's mind a thousand times after..."If only I had gone to war!"

The Message of the Passage

Neglecting your God-given responsibilities can steer you into temptation and consequence-laden sin, so keep your focus on God and his priorities for your life.

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?

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

- v. 1 **in the spring** "The month of March, named after Mars the Roman god of war, affords a parallel" (R. P. Gordon, *1 & 2 Samuel*, 252). "Springtime which marks the end of the rainy season in the Middle East, assures that roads will be in good condition (or at least passable), that there will be plenty of fodder for war horses and pack animals, and that an army on the march will be able to raid the fields for food" (Ronald F. Youngblood, *1 & 2 Samuel*, EBC, vol 3).
- v. 1 **Joab** Meaning "Yahweh is father." David's nephew by sister Zeruah (2 Sa 2:13; 2Chr 2:16), Joab was the military commander during most of David's reign. But this was no mere nepotism. Rather it was due to his initiative and warring exploits against the Jebusites to capture Jerusalem (1Chr 11:6).
- v. 1 **all Israel** "The whole Israelite army"—Youngblood translation (i.e. the tribal muster). "The narrator leaves the impression that every able-bodied man in Israel goes to war - everyone, that is, except the king himself. The contrast between David and his men can hardly be expressed in starker terms. Indeed, leading his troops into battle was expected to be the major external activity of an ancient Near East ruler" (cf. 1Sa 8:19b-20; Youngblood, 429).
- v. 1 **Rabbah** Rabbah is the capital city of Ammon located about 23 miles east of the Jordan River. Although the region had been designated to the tribe of Gad by Moses (Jos 13:25), it was not conquered during Joshua's crusades. Four hundred years later, Israel, under David's rule, besieged the city (2Sa 11:1). However, it would be some time later before Rabbah fell completely into the hands of Israel under David's reengaged military leadership (12:29ff).
- v. 1 In a fascinating way, this verse contrasts David not only with the Israelites on the battlefield but also with other kings who have gone forth for battle. "David remained in Israel" is emphasized in a way that builds a "thematic bridge of irony between the beginning and the end of the verse. By placing in the foreground the picture of Israel's adversary kings marching off to war, the narrator has put the spotlight on David sitting at home. The contrast would have been too transparent had the first and last phrases of verse 1 been placed together. The narrator has chosen the much subtler method of separating them with the matter-of-fact report of the war." (Arnold, 524-25).
- v. 3 **Bathsheba** Meaning "Daughter of an oath" or "Daughter of seven". Beautiful daughter of Eliam who fell victim to David's lust and abuse of power/authority. Subsequent to her being widowed from Uriah, David took her as a wife. Over the course of time, she would bear David four children (1Chr 3:5) including Solomon - the one whom would accede David's throne and kingship over Israel.
- v. 3 **Eliam** Meaning "God is a relative" or "God of the people." Eliam was the son of Ahithophel, one of David's 'inner-circle' advisors. More significantly though, Eliam, along with Uriah, is listed amongst David's "Thirty" (2 Sam 23:24) most trusted men (v. 34).
- v. 3 **Uriah** Meaning "Yahweh is my light". "Uriah was [most] likely a descendant of those Hittite refugees who more than a century earlier had settled in the land of Palestine, in flight from the collapsing Hittite Empire" (Richard H. Beal, *The Hittites After the Empire's Fall*, 81). "4QSamuel and Josephus' *Antiquities* (7.131 [7.1]) preserve a tradition that Uriah was "Joab's armor-bearer", thus enhancing his importance in the upper echelons of David's mercenary corps" (Youngblood, 432). A proselyte foreigner within the Israelite community, Uriah demonstrates his complete loyalty to the king, the nation and his fellow warriors. Along with Eliam (see above) Uriah is listed amongst David's "Thirty" (2 Sam 23:24) most trusted men (v. 39). His memory is honored in Matthew's genealogy as Bathsheba is simply referenced as "Uriah's wife" (Matt 1:6).
- v. 4 Lit. "Then David sent messengers to *take* her." "The use of "take" here ('go get' in NIV) is probably also intended to recall what the wise prophet Samuel warned long ago: Kings are "takers" (1 Sam. 8:11-18): They will take your sons and your daughters (as David here takes Eliam's daughter), the best of your fields and vineyards..." The Israelites requested a king like the other nations of Canaan. Samuel warned that such kings take and take, and when everything is gone, they force you into slavery. Now it appears that David is [beginning to give] them what they requested" (Arnold, 527).
- v. 4 **purified/uncleanness** "Referring to her menstrual period (Lev 15:25-26, 28; 18:19; Eze 36:17), Bathsheba's "uncleanness" is ceremonial rather than hygienic—although the two are not necessarily unrelated. Note the Mishnaic saying, "Heedfulness leads to physical cleanliness and physical cleanliness leads to ritual purity" (Edward Neufeld, "Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel", *Biblical Archaeologist*, 34/2 (1971), 64). This detail is included to inform the reader that Bathsheba was not pregnant when summoned by David.
- v. 5 **pregnant** Medically speaking, a woman's menstruation cycle can typically be anywhere from 22 to 36 days. The shorter a woman's cycle the sooner she will ovulate. So, if Bathsheba's cycle was closer to, say, 22 days, she would begin ovulating within days after the end of her period. Regardless, no specific timetable is given to indicate how many days of which she had been ceremonially clean.
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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.

We are in the process of teaching our last child how to drive. If you could see me now, you would see me doing a happy dance. Our youngest son just received his learner's permit and by the end of the year will be driving himself to school and his many other activities. It is a bittersweet thought. As sometimes happens in parenting, I am a little more relaxed this third time around. However, I don't want to become so laid back that I fail to warn him on the dangers of driving. As we pass warning signs, I remind him that these are designed to alert him to unseen dangers ahead. My prayer as a parent is that I am doing the same thing for him spiritually. I am constantly asking the Lord to give me insight and wisdom to speak into my kids so they don't fall into sin. I am praying they recognize the warning signs and they choose to flee instead of moving ahead. I'm praying for your kids today too!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: read Psalm 51:1-6

1. What does David ask of God in the first verse?
2. According to this passage, when do we become sinful?
3. What two virtues does God desire for us in verse 6?

What Do You Think

David says his transgressions and sins are always before God. He recognizes when he sins. Do you always recognize when you sin? What do you usually do about it when you recognize it?

What R U Going To Do

All of us sin. There are ways to help us confess that sin quickly and get back growing in our friendship with God. A few of those are (1) find someone to talk to, it keep us accountable when we sin (a parent, sibling, teacher), (2) memorize scripture that encourages us to repent, (3) stop and pray immediately after we sin.

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Single-mindedness - I pay attention to the important things God has for my life.

Memory Verse

1Jn 1:7 - *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*

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.