

## Where Did It Go Wrong?

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2 Samuel 11 is the story of David and Bathsheba. What began with accidentally seeing her bathing escalated to adultery, lying, and, eventually, conspiring to have a man killed. The entire awful affair is a warning against the presumption of spiritual safety and status. It is a reminder that everybody is vulnerable and nobody is above God's law. *"The greatest victories are sometimes annulled by foolish mistakes. David's unparalleled success had made it possible for him to enjoy all the comforts of royal life. No longer did he need to be in the field of combat since Joab provided capable leadership and there were no more immediate serious threats to the kingdom. It was in these circumstances that David's greatest failure occurred. It was tragic indeed that such a brilliant career should be marred in this manner; however, it is well known that Satan is most effective in his approaches when the believer is comfortable and successful"* (***The Birth Of A Kingdom***, Davis, p. 141).

### Small Steps

David did not begin his day thinking he would commit adultery (or eventually murder one of his most trusted soldiers). His downfall came because of small, progressive steps. It was a look that lasted too long, a lustful thought that he played out in his imagination, an inquiry and a rendezvous that was somehow justified in his mind. A similar series of unfortunate events has befallen all of us at some point. Everybody's sins are unique in form, perhaps, but the substance of sin (motivation, opportunity, end result) is universal. I think very few Christians wake up in the morning anticipating a sinful end to their day, but hell will be filled with people who all tell the same story, who all have the same excuses (Matthew 7:22-23), and who all ask the same questions: *How did it come to this? How did I get here? Where did it all go wrong?*

Christians do not become unfaithful overnight. Typically, it happens because of a small compromise here and there. The condition of those fallen saints in 2 Peter 2:20-22 came because of a long process:

- What we wear represents the direction we are going spiritually. Unfortunately, when we dress in a way that represents sin, our actions eventually follow (Genesis 38:14-15). How do you dress at work? At church? At school? Should "sexy" ever be a word that describes your public attire?
- How we spend our time is a very telling indication of our priorities. It all starts with missing worship here and there, being "too busy" to help another Christian or spend time with our children. If you are spending more time with your co-workers than your family members (and valuing that time more, as well), often what happens is that the former replaces the latter in terms of your emotional investment. Do not even joke about having a "work wife/husband".
- We also rationalize sin in all of its stages of severity. We make excuses for the lust, which eventually opens the door for flirtation, etc. We allow our feelings to override our thinking on a subject, believing that "having such a good time" is an indication that something cannot possibly be wrong, or that what "feels right" must be right. Many Christians who are caught up in sin refuse to acknowledge it as such. They shy away from words and phrases that make them uncomfortable, and try to put some kind of positive, wholesome spin on their actions. *"Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who substitute darkness for light and*

*light for darkness; who substitute bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter” (Isaiah 5:20).*

- “I’m only human” is a pretty cheap excuse, a sorry rationalization for yielding to temptation. Actually, the statement becomes an accusation against God, since He created us as human beings yet still demands holiness and obedience (1 Peter 1:14). Interestingly, even human laws do not acknowledge “humanity” as a defense against committing crimes, but we think that God will accept us as we are in a sinful state because of such an argument. “I’m only human” is an insult to all other humans who *do* refuse to commit sin. I would rather say that because of my humanity – my built-in spiritual resemblance to God (Genesis 9:6, 1:27) – I am able to rise above animal desires and achieve the potential that God sees in me. “I’m only human” is in direct opposition to the elevated stature of humanity, explained in Psalm 8.