

Moral Alertness in 2025

II Samuel 11:1-5

Introduction

A few years back - Tim Tebow [who was the quarterback at the University of Florida] was asked an unusual question from a sports reporter

The reporter said: 'You've worn your religion on your sleeve . . . and I think that's made you very popular in the South and all over the country, that even if you're beating . . . their teams, they still like you personally. **Are you saving yourself for marriage?**'

Tebow answered that he was – but inside he was a little put off that that kind of question was brought up in an interview. 'since when does anybody get asked that?'

The reporter later told him that he knew what his answer would be and thought it would be positive for kids and others to hear his answer

Tebow: 'Even reporters who were sometimes critical of me wrote that in a time when so many athletes were having children out of wedlock they appreciated my stance. Seeing my words have that kind of impact made me realize that God had a plan for this, too - of course.' [Tim Tebow, pp. 214-216]

David Jeremiah once wrote a chapter in a book – 'I never thought I'd see the day when marriage would become obsolete'

He cites various statistics – one of which is that more than 60% of adults do not think that pre-marital sex is wrong

In our day and age – we can look at our world – and see shacking up / adulterous affairs / homosexuality – rampant pornography - all kinds of statistics that point to what we might call sexual chaos in our world

Does the Bible have anything to say to us about this topic?

I Cor. 6:18 - 'Flee immorality, every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.'

I Peter 5:8 - 'Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.'

As we enter into a new year - - - I would like to call us to what the Bible refers to as moral sobriety / moral alertness

We are to be sober / alert – to the spiritual dangers that exist in our world

We live in a world with many temptations – giving in to moral laxity can be not only dangerous but deadly – and lead to far-reaching consequences

This morning – I chose to call an audible

That is when the quarterback changes the play at the line of scrimmage - - - this was not my original plan to do this – this was to be the evening service message

But as I began looking at the text on Thursday - - - I thought – yes – this is for Sunday morning

This is a sober passage of Scripture where we see one of God’s mightiest men of the faith fall to the power of the flesh and indulge in adultery – spiraling down further to try and cover his sin / even committing murder / etc.

This is **David!!!** – the great man of God / of faith – who was the man after God’s own heart – who wrote the Psalms / etc.

Calvin: 'Now here is a story which should make our hair stand straight up on end whenever we think of it - that a servant of God as excellent as David should fall into such a serious and enormous sin that he could be judged as the most morally lax and promiscuous person in the world!'

We see David in a moral crash and burn

I mentioned a couple months ago - - - of a Master’s seminary professor / who had to resign all his ministry positions this year - - - because of an inappropriate relationship with a younger lady

We see this stuff all the time

I Cor. 10:12 - 'If any man thinks he stands - let him take heed lest he fall'

David – while he will be forgiven – will still suffer tremendous consequences from this event for the rest of his life

Can we learn anything from such events?

We learn to be morally alert

May we be those who are morally alert in 2025

I. David Stays Home - v. 1

We are told that this was a time when kings normally went out to battle

This little detail - - - seems to be given to us for a reason

Had David gone out to battle – as kings generally did - - - this incident that brought great devastation into his life would not have happened

While kings are going out to battle - - this king does not – for some reason – he stayed home

'Idle hands are the devil's workshop'

Calvin says David was being lazy

Calvin: 'He remained lazily in his house, instead of superintending the country and valiantly fighting for the common good.'

Today – too much idle time with the computer or phone / internet – often leads to little of redeeming value - - - if not habits and behavior that are altogether toxic and corrosive

Sometimes an overlooked key to winning the battle against a particular sin – is to be profitably occupied in something worthwhile

Instead of looking for mental stimulation on the internet - - - read a good Christian book / read the Bible / listen to a Christian podcast / etc. - - - spend time in prayer – take your wife on a date!

It's often pointed out that sins rarely occur as isolated incidents

David's spiritual and devotional life is showing some cracks here

He's gotten complacent

Joel Beeke: 'Satan is a confident, experienced adversary. Who has wrestled with him without being wounded? If great men like Noah, Lot, David, and Peter fell under Satan's temptations, how can we hope to withstand the tempter? Do not presume that you can defeat the devil in your own strength.' [Fighting Satan, p. 73]

We are complacent when we think we don't need to take spiritual matters very seriously

David is complacent – he is at the height of his power politically / internationally - - - he can take pretty much what he wants - - - now he thinks he can take another man's wife

David did much better in fighting and going up against Goliath – than he will do in facing the giant of lust or sexual temptation

He lived a far more virtuous life – while on the run from Saul - - - than we will see now as he stays at home in his palace

Times of ease – can be times of greatest spiritual danger – and should call forth our spiritual vigilance

II. Temptation - v. 2

It's in the evening

David – gets up to walk about on his palace roof - - - and his eye catches Bathsheba bathing

Whether she was being immodest is not stated – or implied

But – we are told that David sees a woman bathing and she was not just beautiful but very beautiful

This reminds us of a first area of moral vigilance we are called to

We are to exercise vigilance in what we allow our eyes to see or gaze upon

Psalm 119:37 - 'Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Thy ways.'

David should have turned away - - - and there would have been no sin

He saw her accidentally - - - turn away - - - go back inside David

But – that's not what he does

Martin Luther once said you can't stop a bird from landing on your head – but you can keep it from making a nest there!

David has choices to make here

He is in one what we might call a moment of temptation

Our world is filled with temptations

God's Word says one thing - - - and the sinful heart presents reasons to our mind as to why we might not want to do what God says

Temptations are often interwoven with various threads of weakness

What was David's particular sin here?

For one – as he allows himself to desire another woman - - - he is expressing a lack of contentment with all that God has given to him

Even though – he is not reasoning this out in his heart - - - that is one of the underlying sinful drives which is taking place here

When Nathan confronts David [12:7, 8] – he speaks for God saying - - - I have given you so much – and if that weren't enough – I would have given you more

David should have been content

Luther: 'The heart is a constantly yawning chasm; it wants everything, and even if it obtained everything, it would go on looking for still more.'

When our kids were young – I watched a fair amount of Veggie Tales with them

This episode is depicted as the story of King George and the Rubber Duckie

Even though King George has a full tub full of rubber duckies - - - he is still tempted to take Thomas' rubber duckie!

The bible calls that coveting

Calvin: 'We know the order which God has established, which should be inviolable: 'It is not good for a man to be alone; let us make a helpmate suitable for him (Gen. 2:18). He did not say: 'Let us make him two or three!' Indeed, David was not content with a dozen wives but took up to eighteen and then, in addition to that, he showed himself worse than brutes when he ravished the wife of someone else, polluted holy marriage, and even engaged in the act of thievery - he who should have preserved the Law in its integrity.'

*** Sin is a failure to appreciate or give thanks for what we have [what God has given to us] – and looks only at what we don't have

Another element of the temptation – and where we need to be vigilant

We need to see thru Satan's lies

If sin had knocked on David's door – and said – I am here to destroy your career / cripple your kingdom / bring about all kinds of chaos in your family - - - he likely would have turned away

But sin does not present itself in its true colors

Satan never tells those he is tempting of the consequences they will encounter – he points out only the plus side of the equation – the fun / etc.

Satan says – this is wonderful – jump in

Joel Beeke: 'Satan knows by experience when the best time is to shoot his arrows. He knows what bait to use whenever he fishes. He tempts young people with beauty, the thrifty with money, the ambitious with power. William Jenkyn says, "He has an apple for every Eve, a grape for Noah, a change of raiment for Gehazi, and a bag for Judas.'" [Fighting Satan, p. 72]

He doesn't tell the drunk – he might wreck his car or accidentally kill someone - - - have to live with the guilt

He does not tell the drug user – they might die

He doesn't tell the sexually immoral they might get a disease - - - or find the lifestyle empty and vain in the end

*** One of the great tragedies and tremendous truths of our world is that a whole lot of damage can be done by brief moments of stupidity and/ or wickedness

F. B. Meyer: 'One brief spell of passionate indulgence, and his character blasted irretrievably; his peace vanished; the foundations of his kingdom imperiled; the Lord displeased; and great occasion given to his enemies to blaspheme.'

David never intended this one night affair to spill over into the consequences he suffered in his family and kingdom

*** Sin always takes you further than you want to go . . . and unleashes consequences you never ever intended

That's why the vigilant pray:

Matthew 6:13 - 'and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.'

David does not see the fallout that is coming his way - - - he just wants the pleasure

And that is how sin operates

One woman named Jenny – shares a cautionary tale

"I'm twenty-eight years old, and I had my abortion about six years ago. I think about it all the time. I always thought that I'd move past it eventually, but it's only gotten worse. Every time a TV show or program discusses abortions, miscarriages, or sad pregnancy stories, I cry uncontrollably.'

She talks about how she was in college and with a boyfriend she knew she was not going to marry – but was lonely and he was there.

She got pregnant - - - they decided on an abortion

She cried so hard on the day it was scheduled – that they told her to come back a week later.

Jenny: 'If I had realized how much I would regret my decision, I wouldn't have gone through with it. I think about whether it was a boy or girl, what he or she would have looked like, and whether or not he or she would have had my eyes . . . even though the baby doesn't exist anymore, its brief existence in my womb changed my life forever. I wish I could go back in time and change my own mind. I would hold my newborn child in my arms and never let go.'

Of course – that is not the story Satan or the pro-abortion lobby wants us to hear

In fact – they tell you – that you hate women - - - if you oppose abortion – they couldn't be more wrong

Allie Beth Stuckey: 'Jenny's story is gut wrenching. This is exactly what Satan does: He lies, he steals, he destroys. He promises relief from our anxieties and burdens while delivering only pain and sadness . . . Satan loves to trick us into making hasty decisions that lead to lifelong hurt.'

That is what is happening with David here

Was Satan involved with David's temptation

We are not told that

What we do see is David making very wrong choices with a very beautiful woman

Thomas Brooks: 'He may tempt us, but without ourselves he cannot conquer us; he may entice us, but without ourselves he cannot hurt us. Our hearts carry the greatest stroke in every sin. Satan can never undo a man without himself; but a man may easily undo himself without Satan.'

III. Sexual Impurity - vv. 3-5

David inquires about the woman – the servant points out that she is Bathsheba – **the wife of Uriah**

I.e. – She's married David

That should have ended the matter – but it didn't

Of course – many ask the question: 'Was this consensual?' / or did David abuse his power

Was Bathsheba a willing partner - - - did she offer any resistance?

The narrative says: 'He took her / she came to him / he lay with her'

In our culture - - - consent is the difference between legal and criminal behavior

I don't know that we can definitively answer the question of rape

The focus of Scripture is entirely on the sin of David - - - and never seems to implicate Bathsheba of any high degree of blame - - - in the matter

But – even what is legal in our world – does not make something moral in God's eyes

The only kind of sex that God says is sanctioned by God is between a man and a woman in a committed marriage relation

The only safe sex – is to get married / be faithful in a monogamous relationship

This was a moral crash and burn for David – and the story is far from over

Tim Keller: 'Today virtually half of all people live together before getting married - in 1960 that number was virtually negligible.'

In the church – we continue to preach God's standards

Heb. 13:4 - 'let marriage be held in honor among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.'

We believe that modern society has not found a better way to do relationships and that there are always consequences when we ignore God's standards

At this point in the story – they merely parted and went on with life as usual

No mention of guilt or conscience

In fact – we are given every reason to believe that had Bathsheba not gotten pregnant - - David might have thought that it was ok – blinded by his own desire

Part of sin is oftentimes telling ourselves that the behavior in question isn't sin

To call good evil / evil good

*** David – by his sin was 'despising God' – 12:10

Sproul: 'Sin is cosmic treason. Sin is treason against a perfectly pure Sovereign. It is an act of supreme ingratitude toward the One to whom we owe everything, to the One who has given us life itself. Have you ever considered the deeper implications of the slightest sin . . . We are saying, "God - your law is not good. My judgment is better than yours . . . I have the right to do what I want to do, not what you command me to do.'" [The Holiness of God, p. 116]

Richard Phillips: 'Because of a single sin in David's private life, one of the best eras of good things came to an end not only for David but for his nation as well.'

David can choose the sin - - - he's got all kinds of power as a king - - - but not even he gets to choose the consequences

It's the same for you and I

You and I have all kinds of freedom - - - no one can make us obey God - - - we can choose to sin - - - but we can't choose our consequences

Randy Alcorn: 'The roads of life are sometimes hazardous. But God loves us enough to place warning signs . . . we don't have to obey. We do have to live with the consequences.'

David's sin won't end here - - he moves on to a cover-up

It will take a confrontation with a prophet - - - for him to finally deal with his sin

Conclusion

William Gurnall 'The bible gives a history of the most remarkable battles between the great soldiers of Christ and their adversary Satan. You can read how Satan has foiled them, and how they recovered lost ground. There is not a lust of which you are in danger, but you have it disclosed; there is not a temptation which the Word of God does not arm you against. It is reported that a certain man planned to poison Martin Luther, but Luther was forewarned by a faithful friend who sent him a picture of the would-be murderer. The Bible shows you Christian - the faces of those lusts which Satan hires to destroy your precious soul. 'By them is thy servant warned.'

We have been warned – and by God's grace - - - we will be vigilant in 2025 – trusting in our Savior