

Week 1 - Sin's Progressive Pattern Through the Life of a King

Our first five days will take us to a portion of King David's life that ran right out from under God's protective umbrella straight into a pit of sin. We will dissect some of David's choices for the purpose of seeing how sin can overtake our lives in a matter of moments when it is not halted in its first stages. David was a man after God's own heart. I am so grateful God allowed the drama in David's life to be an example to us. David was not a perfect man and certainly fell deep into sin in one season of his life. Through his testimony, I find peace knowing that although David made several poor choices, his repentant heart led to his full restoration with God. By looking at this portion of his life, we are going to see how sin begins in one's life and how important it is that we recognize it and stop it before it gets out of control. Our study is primarily focusing on how we can protect our God-given sexualities against sexual seduction. I feel our text this week in the life of David will begin to help us see how sin can easily spiral out of control. Open your hearts to the Lord and allow Him to speak personally to you this week. I am humbled you are on this journey to safeguard your sexuality. It is a precious gift from God.

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Day 1 - Thoughts from a King

We are going to begin our study by reading a small portion of King David's life. Hold on to your seats and come along for a ride into history. I think you will find that the issues biblical figures faced back then are not much different than they are now. I am so thankful God recorded such events, aren't you? They allow us to realize God's amazing grace and love for His people. David had many triumphs in his life but what we are about to read records of one of his biggest failures. Failing to control his lustful thoughts, King David finds himself knee deep in sin. I want you to read the entire chapter so you can see the progression of David's sin. We will go back and dissect some of the verses within the chapter throughout the week.

To begin our journey, please read 2 Samuel 11:1-26. There is so much to learn from this story of David and Bathsheba. We could spend several days picking it apart and learning many valuable lessons from it; however, today we are just going to examine one small portion of it. Please read the chapter now if you have not done so.

I wanted you to read the entire chapter so that you could see the big picture before we focus on one set of particular verses. Before we discuss the scriptures, I want to ask you a few personal questions to prepare you for today's lesson.

If I were to say that most sin begins in our thought lives, would you agree? Why?

How do you think our thoughts might be related to the sin in our lives?

I think you will find it interesting how much our thought lives have an impact on our everyday actions. Think about it for a moment. Recall some of the poor choices you have made in your life. Before you made any of those choices, they all probably began with a thought in your head. You probably had thoughts about the sinful action long before you ever acted on it. Whether they were thoughts of bitterness that led to a verbal confrontation, or lustful thoughts that led to sexual sin, any act of sin probably began as a thought. If this sounds a bit strange, hang in there with me. We are going to drive this point home by using the text we read today as an example.

Let's look at verse 1. We know by this verse that it was springtime and the scripture tells us that usually during this time of year kings were usually where?

Where did David remain instead of going off to war?

Scripture tells us most kings were at war during this season. Why do you think King David was not there?

To give you some background, winter in Israel tended to be a rainy season. Crops were usually planted during this season. With the abundance of rain in the spring, there would be plenty of food for the traveling armies. The rainy season would be over by springtime and the roads would now be dry which helped the armies move along them without trouble. This is why wars were usually fought during this time of year. The roads would no longer be wet which made it easier for the troops to travel and there would have been plenty of food for them. A king would normally be with his army during a war. King David obviously abandoned his role and stayed home. According to the scriptures he handed over his responsibilities to Joab and stayed behind. Scripture doesn't tell us why he stayed, but we know that he should have been with his troops. We can assume that since most of his companions were off at war, David was probably bored and lonely with no men around to socialize with. I don't know about you, but without any girlfriends to get pedicures with, talk on the phone with or go to Bible study together I would probably be lonely too! Some of those things I just can't seem to get my hubby interested in. I've tried to convince him that a day at the spa would far outweigh a day of hunting, but he has not fallen for that yet!

Look back to a time when you had a period of loneliness. Can you identify why you were lonely? What did you fill your time with?

How did you respond emotionally and spiritually to this time?

We are wise to fill all of our alone time with the things of God so when these darker seasons come we are already occupied. If not, we are capable of making poor choices. We will see this idea prove true with David. I know as I look back at periods of time right before falling into rebellious sin, I was somewhat bored and out of close fellowship with the Lord.

Simply for background knowledge, let's look at Deuteronomy 17:17. It says, *"He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray."* The scripture here is referring to a king.

What did God command a king not to do?

Now read 2 Samuel 5:13. What did King David do?

What does scripture say will happen when a man takes too many wives?

Scripture tells us that David had many wives and concubines. It's hard to imagine when he stayed behind during war that he could have been bored with that many women surrounding him! When you have a large amount of women in one place, there is bound to be drama! Surely there were enough drama queens to keep him entertained! We will close the curtain today on our scene and we will pick up where we have left off tomorrow. Today's lesson was a short one. As we get further into our study most of the lessons will require more time. Thank you for joining me on this journey. I love studying God's Word with other sisters. I hope you will be blessed by it as well.

Day 2 - Alone with His Thoughts

As we will draw our curtain open today, we find David all alone in his palace surrounded by many wives. Perhaps some were cooking for him, soaking his feet or giving him a close shave. Maybe it was like being in a nail salon. Perhaps all those women were working on David's feet, hair and skin carrying on their own conversations as if he was not there. Or maybe they were all arguing as to who was going to sleep with him that night! I'm not sure but it is fun to imagine what palace life would have been like with all of those wives around.

David clearly disobeyed God when God told him not to take many wives. The reason God commanded him not to take many wives is found at the end of Deuteronomy 17:17. For memory's sake, what would happen to one's heart if they were to take many wives?

God commanded them not to take many wives for their own protection. So we can see that David was surrounded by many women, which would ultimately lead his heart astray. This background knowledge will help us to see what kind of trouble David's heart was already in before his big stumble into sin.

Has there been a time in your life that your heart has been led astray? What kinds of emotions surrounded you during that time?

Many women are walking around with wounded hearts in search for true love. Because they don't know the one and only true love, God's love, many hearts remain empty. They have substituted the real deal (Jesus) for unholy relationships with men and have been led astray a time or two. The Bible teaches that the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure (Jeremiah 17:9). Knowing that truth means that we cannot always trust our hearts.

David's boredom left him open to temptation. Please read 2 Samuel 11:2. Verse 2 says, *"In the evening David got up from his bed..."* If it was not bedtime, what was David doing in his bed in the early hours of the evening? He must have been so bored he was napping! As he got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of his palace, he saw a woman bathing and his first thought was that she was beautiful.

At this point I don't believe David has sinned. We will always have thoughts such as David's that pop in our heads. We can be innocently walking through a mall, and Brad Pitt walks by and we immediately think, "What a good looking man." That is not sin. It becomes sin when we choose to entertain those thoughts. If Brad Pitt ended up mentally in your bed that night, that would be sin! David could have simply stopped there and redirected himself but he did not.

What do you think David should have done the moment he spotted the attractive woman and thought she was beautiful?

One idea is that David could have left his rooftop. He could have left the scene and focused on something different. The longer he stared at her, the more seduced he became. Seduction was right before him whispering tempting thoughts in his ear. He had the power to resist them, but it is apparent he did not tap into the power. Scripture does not record what kinds of thoughts went through his mind, but we can only imagine. As he entertained himself with eye candy, he should have repented right then and there. He should have fled the scene immediately. This would have halted his sin before it got out of hand.

Think back to a time when you meditated on something that was seducing your mind and you chose not to immediately surrender that thought to God. What happened? How did your thoughts lead from one to another?

My friend, Kelli, posed a great question as she was reading through this study revising it. She said, “I wonder why Bathsheba was bathing in the open where prying eyes could see? I wonder if she was trying to tempt the king.” As I thought about her question, I wondered how many times we have been so desperate for attention we purposely flaunted ourselves trying to tempt, or seduce, another man to get our needs met. If the Holy Spirit brings a memory to mind, take time to repent of that and ask Him for forgiveness.

If you were to entertain an initial thought that a married man at work was good-looking, explain what that thought would look like as it spirals towards more ungodly thoughts.

2 Corinthians 10:5 says, “*We take captive every thought...*” What do you think this means and why do you think God tells us to do this?

I believe He gave us that scripture because He wanted to teach us to be obedient to Him in our thought lives. He wants us to be in continual communication with him and talking to him about our thoughts is one way we can communicate with him. He wants to teach us His ways, so if we go to Him and line up our thoughts with His, we can see what He thinks about the matter. At that point, we can choose to think His thoughts on it rather than our own. He wants us to become aware when an ungodly thought pops in our heads. He wants to train us how to take an ungodly thought and take it captive.

How can you know what His thoughts are about a specific matter?

You can know His thoughts by knowing Him. The best way to know Him is to read His word. I like to look in my Bible concordance for a specific word that describes an issue I'm dealing with at that time. Then, I research the scriptures until I find one that speaks to me about the matter. I choose to think that particular scripture over the thought rather than my own. You see, it's a choice to think His thoughts on the matter. I once heard somewhere that God is a gentleman. He will not force himself or His ways on us. We have to make a choice to follow His ways and believe His thoughts over our own. We can halt our ungodly thoughts right away when we choose to do so. We can even begin to think His thoughts about a matter when we know what those are. Tomorrow we will see how David's lack of repentance in his thought life led to speaking out his lustful desires.

Let's close today by praying Psalm 19:14 together.

Father God,

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. May you help us to become keenly aware of the thoughts that come to our minds and help us to confess them when they are not pleasing to you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 - Out of the Mouth...

In the last two lessons, we talked about the first stage in the progression of sin: Thoughts not halted. Today we will discuss the second stage, our words. The second stage occurs when our thoughts are not stopped. Reread 2 Samuel 11:1-3.

After David had thought about Bathsheba, what was the next thing he did according to verse 3?

David chose to speak those thoughts out by inquiring about the woman. He wanted to know more about this beautiful woman so he took his thoughts one step further and asked about her. The thoughts in his mind turned into conversation. Had David been meditating on God's Word, he would have been speaking God's Word against his lustful thoughts. We have the privilege of living on the New Testament side of the cross. We have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, unlike the Old Testament believers. The Bible teaches that we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. Once we learn how, we have the ability to tap into that power when we face strong temptations. You see, we have everything we need to overcome these kinds of tempting thoughts. It's just a matter of learning how to do so.

Joshua 1:8 says, *"Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful."*

Right there is the prescription to prosper and have success! We are wise to think upon His Word day and night. What are some ways that we could meditate on His Word "day and night" in our busy world today?

I like to write specific scriptures that speak to me on index cards and tape them around my house. Another is to sing praise songs that have scripture. You could listen to CD sermons or taped teachings that speak God's truth into our lives. Each time we speak out the Word of God, we are sowing a seed. If we believe what God's Word says about sowing and reaping, we can be sure that we will reap the good harvest from our spoken words.

Okay, let's get back to the story. We were just getting to the point where David spoke his thoughts into existence. He inquired about Bathsheba. There is something very powerful with spoken words. For instance, God did not think the world into existence; He spoke it into existence (See Genesis 1:3-29). I have found that as women, we tend to use our own words against ourselves. We say negative things against our bodies instead of using our words to speak life over our bodies. We speak out negative words over our marriages, planting a negative seed to take root. We need to begin to use words that speak life over ourselves and not death. The Bible teaches that every word that comes out of our mouths can either sow life or death. Whatever kind of seed we sow, we will reap a harvest. I don't know about you, but I want to reap a good harvest not a bad one! We need to begin sowing seeds of life over ourselves and reaping a harvest of life.

Getting back to David, do you believe God would still have helped David stop his sinful ways at this point even if he had spoken lustful thoughts into existence? Why or why not?

If we know 1 Corinthians 10:13 then we know the answer

1 Corinthians 10:13 says, *“No temptation has seized you except what is coming to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”*

How faithful is our God that he tells us He will always provide a way out when we are under temptation?! Write about a time when you were under temptation, you called upon the Lord and He provided a way out.

Oh, how I wish I had called upon Him so many times that I chose not to. I would not have to live with the pain of my own sinful choices in my adult life had I just called on Him to provide a way out. Unfortunately I cared more about my own lusts of the flesh than considering the consequences.

What are some ways you think God provides a way out when we are tempted? There is no right or wrong answer.

What are some things that may keep us from choosing God’s “exit?”

Like David, we are likely to progress to the next stage of sin if we are unwilling to call upon our God. You have the Holy Spirit within you. He is not at some faraway planet. We can call upon Him and He is faithful to speak to us.

Our words can get us into so much trouble. Virtually all words spoken come from thoughts in our minds. Our words have tremendous power. Read what James 3:8 has to say about our tongues. *“But no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.”*

How does this scripture speak to you?

What are some ways your words have proven to be deadly poison?

David's tongue proved this to be true. We will see why tomorrow. Let's pray.

Father, I thank you for stories like David's in your Word. They teach us so many truths. Father, I ask you to help us begin to become aware of our thoughts that lead to spoken words that are not in line with your thoughts. May we become keenly aware of it when we are not in line with you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 - Sticks and Stones

Today we will see how David spoke his thoughts into existence. Knowing now that our tongues can be compared to deadly poison, David just spewed poison right out of his mouth when he inquired about Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:3. I always consider viewing thoughts and words on a balance I used in science. One side brings the abundant life and the other side brings death. I try to think about which side my thoughts fall on. If they are on the side that brings death, I ask God to help me get my thoughts in line with His. Unfortunately, David's words will sow seeds of sin which give birth to death into his life.

Read 2 Samuel 11:4. David's words led him on a path of terrible destruction. He did not call upon God to provide a way out on his path towards destruction and he fell into the enemy's trap and committed adultery. He slept with Bathsheba. Our words can lead us down paths of sin as well. Our words set fires, kill relationships, and cause wounds. Let's begin to believe that our words can be extremely poisonous like God's Word says and pray that He will help us to recognize when our thoughts have spiraled downward before we speak them out. Later on in the study we will see how our own thoughts not halted come out of our mouths and open the door to stumbling in our sexual lives.

Read Proverbs 18:21. *"The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat of its fruit."* What do you think this means to us in our lives today?

I believe this scripture teaches that the power of our words is more than figurative. It teaches that our words have the power to destroy or bring life. We have a choice. We can either choose to speak truth into our lives and reap the benefits or speak curses over our lives and open the door to the work of the enemy. We will look further at the real life battle that wages around you but for now let me give you some examples of how speaking death and curses over your life or the lives of others is destructive.

As you look at these examples think about the balance you used in science. Picture that balance in your head. One side of it is labeled "kill, steal, and destroy" and the other side is labeled "the abundant life". You will be able to see which side these words belong in. When you have a thought come through your mind that you plan to speak out loud, you have a choice to make. Which side of the balance does it belong? When mine fall on the destroying side, I just renounce it and then speak truth over it. Look at some examples of spoken words that sow negative seeds. Then take a look at how you can turn those negative thoughts and words into positive ones below.

1. "I am never going to get out of debt. It's just impossible." The flip side, "Thank you father that you came to set me free from debt. I believe you are going to set me free from it."
2. "I'm never going to find a loving man who will treat me kindly. I guess that is what I deserve based on the things I have done in my past." Instead think, "Father thank you that you love me and have blessings for me. Thank you that you have the perfect mate for me here on earth. I thank you that you are bringing me someone who loves you."
3. "I am just such a horrible person. How could I have done such a thing? I don't deserve anything good in this life." Flip side, "Father, I am so grateful that you came to save me. I know that nothing good lives

within me, that is in my sinful nature. But because you sent your Son to die for me, when I confess my sins, you are faithful to forgive me and remember my sins no more. I thank you that I am no longer held under the curse of sin.”

4. “I will never have it all together. Susan seems to carry the weight of the world on her shoulders. Why can’t I be more like her?” Instead of that say, “Lord, I thank you that I don’t have to have it all together. Thank you that you came to be my helper. I know that I can do all things through you.”

Let’s practice a few. I’m going to give you destructive words and I want you to replace them with words that bring the abundant life.

A. “It is impossible to lose weight. I may as well give up trying because I’m too far gone.” Now it’s your turn. Replace that with positive words:

B. “My marriage is so dead. There is no passion and our sex life is boring. I can’t see it ever being like it was in the beginning.” Your turn:

C. “I think I married the wrong person. We just don’t connect anymore and I am just not in love with him anymore.” Your turn:

The power of our words will either bring life or death to our lives. We need to be aware of what we are saying. Later in our study we will apply this lesson in our lives where sexual temptations are concerned. Let’s pray and ask the Holy Spirit to make us aware of any deadly thoughts or words we are speaking over our lives and how to replace them with words that bring life.

Dearest Lord,

As your word says, set a guard over our mouths, Father. Keep watch over the doors of our lips for we know that they are capable of so much destruction without your help. Help us to know when hurtful words are at the tip of our tongues and give us your words instead. Make us aware when we are breathing out words that do not bring the abundant life. Help us to learn your word so we may replace those thoughts and words with yours. In your Son’s name we pray, Amen.

Day 5 - Power of Words

We have seen from the last few lessons that if our thoughts are not surrendered to God, it usually leads to spoken words. If you believe what God has to say about the power of our words, then you will begin to see that there is a third stage where our spoken words can manifest itself into existence. Stage 3 ends in action. I have learned that temptations rarely go from our minds directly to us acting on them. Usually we are talking about them before we act on them; even if we are just talking to ourselves (come on... you know you do this)!

Please read over 2 Samuel 11:4. We see that after sending messengers to get Bathsheba, it ends in devastating sin. Once Bathsheba arrived, David's flesh had led him so far downward he did not turn away. He acted upon his sinful thoughts and words. Because they were not halted, his words gave way to open the door for physical sin. Remember, David still could have repented at this point but the lusts of his flesh took over. David and Bathsheba ended up sleeping together. David's lustful thoughts spun out of control because they were not brought under the God's authority. His thoughts gave way to spoken words which sowed seeds into existence.

When we choose to entertain sexually tempting thoughts, it can influence us to the point of acting on them. If we are entertaining these thoughts and talking about them to ourselves or others and are at the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong person, we are left extremely vulnerable to act on those thoughts and words. Here are two things we need to begin doing when we catch ourselves entertaining tempting thoughts:

1. We need to begin to resist entertaining tempting thoughts.
2. We need to redirect our thoughts.

What are some ways that we can redirect our thoughts back to God?

We have a choice to resist entertaining what comes in our minds. When we need to redirect our thoughts we can do several things. We can pray for the person we are thinking about, we can pray scriptures that pertain to temptations, or if we are being bombarded, we may have to get up and change our environment. Whether that is going for a walk to clear our minds or driving in the car listening to praise music, we need to do whatever it takes to direct our thoughts to a godly path.

There is much more to the story of David and Bathsheba that I encourage you to read the rest of 2 Samuel. It is better than anything you could watch on television! But in order to stay on course we will stop there at verse 4.

Let's examine the three stages of how sin progresses one more time.

1. It begins in our minds with thoughts we entertain.

2. When our thoughts are not halted, they become spoken words.
3. Not repenting from spoken words, we are likely to act upon them given the right tempting situation. Acting upon them is the final stage of sin.

Take a look at David's sin progression plugged into the three stages:

1. David's lustful thoughts about Bathsheba were sinful. He obviously chose not to talk to God about what he was thinking and did not ask God what he thought about the matter. He chose to entertain his thoughts and not redirect them.
2. David's thoughts progressed to spoken words when he asked his servant to go and bring her to him.
3. David did not repent of his thoughts and words. He did nothing to change the tempting scenario. His spoken words came to pass and led to action by which he committed adultery.

Ladies, we have got to learn to stop sin and the progression of it where it begins; our thought lives! Letting thoughts plant seeds through our words is just like the law of sowing and reaping with fruit. When we plant seeds with our words they will eventually take root and sprout. Then they will bear fruit in the end. We have a choice to plant good seeds or bad seeds and reap from their harvest. Let's begin to plant good seeds so we may reap a good harvest.

Let's review what we need to do when we first have an ungodly thought pop in our mind. Write an action plan:

Should you find yourself blurting out your thoughts, what can you do to stop the spoken words from coming to pass? Any ideas?

I hope you stated that first you need to choose to stop what you are thinking. You then need to examine God's thoughts on the matter and speak those out loud until the other thoughts are replaced. You can redirect your thoughts and think about things that bring life. What are we to do if we have already sown ungodly seeds with our words? Scripture teaches in Proverbs 28:13 that we are to renounce sin in our lives so we can receive mercy. One thing I do is I might say, *"Lord, I renounce those unholy words I spoke into existence. Your word tells me to renounce any sin in my life and I stand in agreement with you that my words were not godly. I receive your mercy right now. Thank you Jesus."*

As we go through this study, notice how your thoughts give way to sin and works of the enemy if you do not bring them under the authority of Christ. Not one of us is beyond the sin that David and Bathsheba

committed. I pray for those of you that think you are not capable of such things. A thought life out of control can spiral downward so fast you can hardly come up for a breath if we are not careful, especially when dealing with sexual temptations.

As we conclude today's study, please read Romans 7:18 and pray this scripture out loud.

Jesus,

According to your word, I know that there is nothing good that lives within me that is in our sinful nature. For, I have the desire to do what is good, but cannot carry it out without your help. Thank you Father, that you are renewing my mind in the name of Jesus. Thank you that your life changing power lives within me. I am so grateful for that. I love you Lord, and I lift up your name on high. Amen