

Life of David, How to Trainwreck Your Life, 2 Samuel 11, 8/3/25

PG Message Today. Pray

On June 3, 1998, a high-speed passenger train traveling from Munich to Hamburg was cruising at 125mph when a single metal wheel cracked and failed. As the train passed through the village of Eschede (ESH-uh-duh), the broken wheel dislodged and struck the undercarriage, derailing the train. Unable to stop due to the speed and enormous mass of the train, one of the cars slammed into a bridge pillar, which caused the bridge to collapse directly onto the train, crushing several cars beneath thousands of tons of concrete and steel. The wreckage was brutal. [Picture] 101 people died, and many more were injured. And what is particularly tragic, is this horrific accident was preventable. There had been previous warning signs- there was metal fatigue in the wheels that were known to engineers, but inspections failed to act decisively. The conductor heard unusual sounds and detected destabilization but, wanting to make his destination on time, he continued at full speed disregarding the warning signs. When the derailment began, the train was moving too fast, and it took over a mile to fully stop—by then it was too late, the damage was done.

The Eschede Train Disaster is a sobering metaphor of King David and his sin here in 2 Samuel 11. Probably no sin in history has had more press than the story of David and Bathsheba. So today we are going to learn how NOT to trainwreck our lives by observing how David trainwrecked his. David is almost 50 now, 20 years as king. He's the most powerful ruler in the ancient near east and God's favor is upon him.

11:1 *In 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. There is some foreshadowing from the narrator that something is off in David's life. David, as king, was expected to lead his army in battle—especially during the spring campaign season when the weather allowed it. Instead, he stays behind, delegating his responsibility to Joab. Maybe he thinks, "I've worked hard, I've been diligent, I deserve some time off." Whatever his rationale, we see that David taking his foot off the pedal physically parallels him taking his foot off the pedal spiritually. And what begins as a seemingly small omission—"he stayed home"—becomes the spiritual conditions of a great disaster.

2 *One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace.* Just like momma always said, "Idle hands are the Devil's playground."

From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful. Now two things to note here. #1 It's often thought that Bathsheba was bathing on her roof. That's not what the Bible says, she was likely in a private courtyard. So this wasn't Bathsheba putting herself in a place to be seen inappropriately, she isn't to blame here. #2 Notice two words in that verse. It says "He saw a woman." And then the next sentence translates from the Hebrew "she was very beautiful to behold." Two different words. "Saw" is a glance-- maybe he couldn't help that, it's what we

are all bombarded with on a daily basis in the world in which we live. The second word “behold” is a gaze-- he could help that. But he indulged, he lingered in lust. And so the cracked wheel on the train of David’s life goes unheeded, the signs that he’s headed for trouble go unchecked... and down the track David begins to speed up to 125mph.

3 and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” What a great answer! I believe this was a respectful way of this servant saying... “King, this isn’t an object for your desires, this is a person with a name. And she’s someone’s daughter, and she’s someone’s wife...by the way, not yours!” Just a side lesson for us, especially men, young and old, when you are tempted to watch porn, or objectify a woman at the beach, or talk inappropriately to a woman you meet, understand that is a woman who has a name, given by her father or mother, she’s someone’s daughter and wife or future wife, ultimately, she’s made in the image of God, not an object for your desires.

And for David, Bathsheba wasn’t just anyone’s daughter and wife- it’s the daughter and wife of two of his most trusted warriors- Eliam and Uriah. Men that had bled for David, protected David in the wilderness from Saul, had been loyal to David. And this should have been a cold shower for our man David here. He should have said, “What am I about to do?! Repent, flee!” But the train of desire and fantasy was moving at full speed at this point and he wasn’t about to slow anything down. **4** Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. He’s off the rails. Full Blown Sin, adultery.

But this one night of escape and pleasure, comes at a great cost. Bathsheba, sends him a note... “ummm...I’m pregnant.” Uh oh! What will he do? David has an opportunity here to repent, to own it. But he doesn’t, the train is off the tracks. Have you heard the phrase- Sin begets sin? That’s what we see here.

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 David was told, “Uriah did not go home.” So he asked Uriah, “Haven’t you just come from a military campaign? Why didn’t you go home?”

11 Uriah said to David, “The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents,

and my commander Joab and my lord’s men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house

to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

Wow, Uriah, what a man of great integrity and loyalty. This dude is a hard core Navy Seal type. He's everything that David should have been. So David makes one more attempt, he gets him drunk the next night, hoping he will go home to sleep with his wife, but he camps in the same place for the night. Even a drunk Uriah is better than a sober David at this moment.

Sirens and warning signs should have been going off for David. He's headed for the bridge, he's crashing the train head on into a pillar. God is shouting in his circumstances, "Let me have the controls!" But David hardens his heart even further... **14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.**

15 In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

How cold. Uriah unsuspectingly carries a letter containing his own death sentence. And this is exactly what happens on the battlefield. A messenger sends the news back to David of Uriah's death, and **25 David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another.'** Instead of grieving, instead of sorrow, David is callous, even justifying it... "war is war." This is what the Bible calls a seared conscience. Hardness of heart, where sin ultimately leads.

After Bathsheba grieves, David sends for her, they get married and the baby is born. And David thinks he got away with everything. But the chapter ends with an intentionally understated final sentence- **But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.** He may have fooled everyone else, but God sees everything, and as you will see next week, David wasn't getting away with anything. And while there will eventually be repentance and he will receive grace and forgiveness from God, it cost him far more than he could have ever imagined.

It's almost hard to believe that the same man who wrote Psalm 40:8 *I delight to do thy law, your law is written on my heart* and really meant it, is the same man who broke half of the 10 commandments in one chapter! The fact that someone like David, a believer who had the Spirit of God dwelling in him, was capable of such horrible sin should be sobering for each of us. Because it means we are capable of train wrecking our lives as well. The same seeds of sin, the same tendencies are in every single one of us, regardless of how spiritually mature, how put together our lives are. Woe to us if we think we are above sin making a mess of our lives. So what can we learn?

David's trainwreck follows a common pattern of how sin works in all of our lives if we allow it to go unchecked. In the New Testament- **James 1:14-15 Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.**

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. This is exactly what we see in David's life. 5 Movements that create the trainwreck in David's life.

1. Complacency- David is disengaged from his God-given role as king and protector. His comfort and complacency are the conditions that open the door to temptation.

-Physical complacency- We slowly start to break our healthy habits- eating, sleeping, exercising...

-Relational- Husband and wife slowly stop having date nights. They allow conflicts to go unresolved. They begin to pull away into their own little worlds.

-What I've seen in my life is that other areas of complacency, just like for David, always start with Spiritual complacency- The enemy whispers- "You've worked hard for God, you have been a great Christian, you deserve some time off..." We begin taking our foot off the pedal of our daily quiet time with the Lord. We stop coming to church and our small group as often. We get distracted with hobbies. Complacency weakens your sin radar as you experience...

2. Temptation- David sees something desirable, and then lingers and indulges in the fantasy.

-Your boredom leads to an Instagram scroll, which turns into a prolonged scroll of inappropriate content.

-A friendly conversation with a coworker goes unchecked and becomes emotionally charged and you begin to feed a fantasy.

-Online shopping to fill idle time becomes an escape.

-The pattern of a drink to take the edge off after a stressful day at work starts to become a desire for more. Complacency leads to letting our guard down to indulge a temptation which opens the door for...

3. Acting on Sinful Desires- David takes what doesn't belong to him, abuses his power, and commits adultery.

-The inappropriate scroll lands on pornography and acting out sexually.

-Flirting with a co-worker becomes an emotional affair and then a physical affair.

-But this isn't just sexual desire- it plays out in all temptations...The shopping becomes habitual leading to materialism and debt.

-The drinking becomes drunkenness and addiction.

-Unchecked anger becomes dangerous rage. And when sinful acts continue it inevitably leads to...

4. Hiding sin with more sin- David attempts a series of cover-ups that ultimately result in manipulation, lying, and murder.

-Deleting browser history and text messages, having a hidden phone or ipad that your spouse doesn't know about.

-Blaming our spouse for your marriage problems, making up lies about where you are in the evening.

-Getting another credit card no one knows about to hide purchases.

-Secretly drinking when no one is watching, hiding bottles, denying you have a problem. And all of this leads to a sad and dangerous spiritual condition...

5. Spiritual Callousness. David's conscience is seared. He doesn't feel what he should about his sin, he is emotionally detached from the people he loves, he even justifies his actions.

-No longer feel conviction for our porn habit, or the affair, or sex with your boyfriend. You justify it in your mind, "Everyone does it." "My wife doesn't meet my needs." "My boyfriend and I love each other so it's OK."

- "I'm not an addict, I'm a better version of myself with alcohol, I can stop whenever I want. I need this and deserve it for my hard work."

Put all **five on Screen**...

Here's a question to ask yourself. **Where might temptation and sin be building momentum in your life?**

So you say, "OK Nate, I don't want to trainwreck my life like David so what do I do about this?" Well God does not leave us in this life helpless. And if you feel like you are helpless and can't change, that is a lie from the pit of Hell to enslave you. **1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. 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 endure it." Let me get really practical with you on how to resist with God's strategy in the Bible.

1. Set boundaries.

Proverbs 14:6 A wise person fears the Lord and stays far away from evil.

- If you are tempted by alcohol abuse- don't have a drink, Don't have it in your house. Don't go to the bar after work with your co-workers, go home!
- If you are tempted by pornography- block certain apps, set passwords for your household, get accountability software.
- If you and your boyfriend are tempted to go too far- it's a bad idea to watch a movie alone at night in the dark on the couch.
- If you are tempted by shopping too much, set a budget, set limits for purchases from Amazon.

2. Look for the Escape.

Just like the train inspectors could have addressed the cracks, just like the conductor could have heeded the warning signs, at each of these stages David could have stopped before the sin was committed, before there was further damage but he didn't. Friends, there are escape hatches that God provides us. But just like David, we can overestimate our ability to manage temptation. "I can do this and that... play with fire and not get burned." **1 Corinthians 6:18 Flee sexual immorality.** Don't dabble. Get out of there.

- Bounce your eyes at the woman or man that's attractive at the beach. Don't linger, keep your head in your book.
- Delete his or her number in your phone and block them on social media.
- Stop making out on your parents couch watching the movie. Turn on the lights. Stand up and go home.
- Close your computer. Turn off the TV.

-Cut up credit cards and go to a cash system for a while.

3. Seek the Spirit's Help. Not once do we see David seek the Lord's help. He tuned out the frequency and conviction of the Holy Spirit. But *Romans 8:26 The Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us.*

-Pray in the moment, send a prayer bomb to the Spirit.

-Get your fighter verses!

4. Repent and Confess!

At any moment the train of David's life was moving toward disaster he could have repented. But he didn't until the damage was already done. Friends, wherever you are- however fast the train of your life is speeding off the tracks, you can repent. You can confess! *Proverbs 28:13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."*

David finally did as we will see in the weeks to come. And he wrote about it. *Psalm 32:5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity.*

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. How could he say that? How could God forgive him? Because of what this table represents.

Invite Deacons to prepare for Communion.