

2 Samuel 11:26–12:13a

God confronts who we are

Following the death of Uriah, which he orchestrated, David takes the pregnant Bathsheba as his wife. God sends the prophet Nathan to confront David with the reality of his evil acts. Nathan tells an apt story of a rich man who sacrifices the lamb of a poor man rather than one of his own vast flock. David is outraged, not yet realising that he is the rich man in the story. When the penny drops, he acknowledges his wrongs.



Bible notes



God's silence is broken. The death of Uriah did not solicit mourning or regret from King David; nor did Uriah receive any military honours. However, it was a time of lament and despair for Bathsheba and possibly Uriah's family (v.26). Fasting might typically accompany the mourning period (2 Samuel 1:11-12), but a pregnant Bathsheba would risk herself and her baby to honour her husband this way. The king, still with control over events, made Bathsheba his wife.

God, from whom no sin is hidden, now challenges the king's sense of justice and righteousness. Through the prophet Nathan, God's displeasure is pronounced. The shepherd king has strong convictions about the actions of the rich man. He was once the poor shepherd in a rich man's household (that of King Saul). The profound injustice and perverse hospitality that cost the host nothing, and the poor man everything, rightly kindled deep anger in David. Using his royal prerogative, he pronounced restitution and death to the offender, which is consistent with Israelite laws (Exodus 22:1; 21:12-14).

It was self-condemnation! David was the unreasonable, rich and perverse man who showed no pity (v.7). A generous God testifies to his faithfulness (vv.7-8) and willingness to have doubled his gifts if David wanted more. To despise God is to be dissatisfied with his provision and to use unscrupulous ways to gain more (vv.9-10). Therefore, God considered David's indiscretions evil, which must always be rejected. Further, they must not be trivialised with 'but for the grace of God go I'. In verse 9, there are two mentions of Uriah's murder that bookend David's marriage to Bathsheba. The 'word of the Lord' here indicates the Law of God. When the king breaks God's laws, it sets a precedent for the nation to do the same. Yet God's confrontation with David dispenses both justice and mercy (vv.11-13).

ACT

It's great to get people together. Invite friends or family around for food – it could be buns, takeaway, a BBQ or a picnic. Could you invite someone who isn't often included?



Privilege is often beyond our control – we are 'lucky' or 'unlucky' to be dealt certain circumstances in life. In some ways, it's a bit like a game of Snakes and Ladders. Use the template provided to develop your own game of snakes and ladders, adding extra symbols with special instructions, e.g. a car: 'your car has broken down so you need to pay to fix it. Move back 2 spaces'; or some money: 'a family member gives you £100. Move forwards 3 spaces'. What other factors could contribute to social inequality?



Ask a friend (or two) to consider meeting up regularly to challenge and encourage each other in the way you each live your life. Give each other permission to be truthful and support each other in changing for the better.

First impressions

- Who is allowed to see the real you?
- Are there aspects of your life and personality you try to hide from God?
- What helps us to accept ourselves as we are?



A sending out prayer

Holy Lord, you are just and true. We receive your forgiveness and carry it with us this week. Give us courage to confront those in power who do not act with your love and care. Inspire us to speak in a way that will help them to hear your voice and live according to your love. Amen.

Read

Look up Psalm 139 verses 23-24. Quietly sit in God's presence and ask God to show you areas of your life where you are not living as Jesus asks us to. Ask for strength to change this.

Snakes and Ladders grid for: 

30	31	32	33	34	FINISH
24	25	26	27	28	29
23	22	21	20	19	18
12	13	14	15	16	17
11	10	9	8	7	6
START	1	2	3	4	5