

Teaching Plan
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 8, 2018
Lesson Title: "Accountable"
Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 12:1-14

ABOUT THIS LESSON

This week's lesson is based on the aftermath of David's sinful tryst with Bathsheba, when the prophet Nathan confronts the king with a parable that symbolically recounts David's sins against Uriah, Bathsheba's husband. At first, David fails to recognize the relevance of Nathan's parable to his own shameful conduct, and he angrily condemns the fictitious wrongdoer in the parable. Nathan responds with the familiar words of condemnation, "Thou art the man." Then he elaborates on the Lord's judgment against David and his household.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Describe what the lesson passage teaches us about the consequences of sin. (2) Tell how the result of David's sin directly affected his family.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

To review the reason for Nathan's God-inspired visit to David read 2 Samuel 11:2-5,14-17,26-27. Then comment on the political context of such a visit: David, as king, was also the "high court judge" in Israel. Therefore, it would have been natural for him to be consulted about a case like this, since it would have been within his jurisdiction.

TEACHING PROCEDURES

1. *Review Nathan's parable by reading 2 Sam. 12:1-4:* Let class members comment on the unfairness of the situation in which the poor man, who has so little, loses his one pet lamb to the wealthy owner of large flocks and herds. APPLICATION: In real life as well as in parables, poor men are especially vulnerable to abuse by the more affluent elements of society. (Example: Lenders who renew payday loans at exorbitant interest rates, when borrowers are too poor to pay off loans.)

2. *Comment on David's reaction to Nathan's parable in 2 Sam. 12:5-6:* (1) The KJV translates 12:5b, "the man that hath done this thing shall surely die." (Literally, the Hebrew reads, "the man who has done this is a son of death.") This does not mean that David would pass a death sentence on him in a court of law. (Most English translations have "the man who has done this deserves to die.") David was characterizing the man's behavior, not condemning him to death. His judicial decision in such a case would be that the lamb is to be restored fourfold (see v. 6). (2) A serious indictment of the man is that "he had no pity" (v. 6b). That is, he did not consider the poverty of his victim. Whereas he took pity on his own animals (v. 4) he had absolutely no compassion for the poor man, but took his only possession.

3. Call attention to the turning point in the conversation when Nathan makes the direct statement, "You are the man" (v. 7): (1) He is saying that the king is guilty of a crime that he himself has judged totally unacceptable. (One version says, "You are that rich man, the one I have been talking about!") (2) "Thus says the Lord" (v. 7) was a common prophetic formula that introduced a solemn God-inspired declaration. FOR DISCUSSION: We are inclined to blame King David for failing to see himself in Nathan's parable. But, actually, failing to see our own sins is a very common human tendency. The Scottish bard Robert Burns put his finger on this trait in the well-known line, "*O wad some power the giftie gie us To see ourselves as others see us.*" Perhaps, as we look at David's sin, we should recall Ps. 14:3, "There is none that does good, no, not one."

4. In 2 Sam. 12:9, the Lord accuses David of disobeying His commandments. Then point out that, in his affair with Bathsheba, David has violated three of the Ten Commandments, those forbidding (1) **murder** ("you have smitten Uriah with the sword,") (2) **lying** (deceiving Uriah [vv. 8, 13] and (3) attributing Uriah's death merely to the "fortunes of war" [v. 25], and (3) **adultery** (v. 4).

5. Comment on the fulfillment of the prophecies in 2 Sam. 12:10-11: (1) "The sword shall never depart from your house" (v. 10). Four of David's sons would die: Bathsheba's first-born (2 Sam. 12:15,18); Amnon (2 Sam. 13:28-29); Absalom (2 Sam. 18:14-15); and Adonijah, David's old-est son, whose death was ordered by Solomon (1 Kings 2:23-25). (2) David's wives will be violated "before all Israel" (2 Sam. 16:21-22). (This constituted a challenge to his royal authority.)

6. Discuss what this episode teaches us about the consequences of sin: (1) David's repentance produced a reprieve for him (v. 13). (Read 1 John 1:9.) (2) But, even when sin is forgiven, the effect of sin remains, and, like a contagious disease is often borne by others, even innocent victims (2 Sam. 12:14).

CLOSING THE LESSON

To close the lesson, read 2 Samuel 12:1-4 again, and recall David's reaction to the parable (v. 5): "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man." Then pose this question: Why do you suppose Nathan's parable made David angry? Encourage discussion, then comment: Before he realized that the rich man's abuse of the poor man symbolized his own conduct toward Bathsheba's husband, David was angry at the fictitious rich man. But when he learned that the rich man's behavior reflected his own conduct, he was shocked. Then make this point: We readily understand, and condemn, the rich man's reprehensible abuse of the poor man in the parable; but perhaps we give less thought to the passive neglect of the poor in our own day. In 1 John 3:17, we read, "*But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?*" This raises the question, "Do I know of anyone in need? If so, how am I responding?" The question is very relevant to us, if we claim to be motivated by the love of God.