

"Naughty or Nice?"  
[2 Samuel 11:1-12:13](#)  
Small Group Guide

**Icebreaker:** What's your favorite aspect of Christmas?

**OPTIONAL BACKGROUND READING/INTRO:**

We've been in this sermon series called "The Big Story" for about 3 months now. During Advent we've been in a sub-set of this story that we're calling "Kings and Kingdoms." You will recall how God's people have arrived in the land of Canaan, the Promised Land, but instead of letting God rule them and give them the holistic peace and well-being that they long for, they've demanded a king who they can see, just like all the other nations have human kings. Last week Lou showed us, in 1 Samuel 8, how God conceded, and said, "Have it your way," and the first king of Israel was named Saul. He looked like a king should look, big and strong and handsome, and he started off pretty well, but his heart became hard and he turned away from God in horrific ways. He was not the right kind of king to lead God's people.

After it becomes clear that Saul is not the guy, the author's attention turns to David (1 Samuel 1-2). David looks nothing like what a king should look like. He wasn't big and strong like Saul. He was a little shepherd boy. And yet God said, "He's the one to lead my people, because he has a heart like my heart." And by faith David defeats Goliath, refuses to kill Saul, and wants to build a temple to honor God. However, later in David's life he makes a series of very bad decisions.

**READ 2 SAMUEL 11:1-5**

1. Who are the key characters and what are their roles?<sup>1</sup>
2. How did David set himself up for sin? Was Bathsheba an innocent victim?
3. Assuming the temptation and the sin were progressive, note each point that David could have stopped before going further downward.

**READ 2 SAMUEL 11:6-13**

4. Bathsheba is pregnant. How does David try to solve his problem?
5. What contrast do you see between David's actions and Uriah's actions? Describe.

**READ 2 SAMUEL 11:14-27**

6. Uriah does not cooperate. David has another point when he could stop and repent. However, how does David try to solve his problem now?
7. Why do you think a person who used be "a person after God's own heart" could spiral down so badly?<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The book of 2 Samuel tells us elsewhere about a group of the fiercest, most devoted warriors in the land, known as "David's Mighty Men." These 37 men had risked their necks for David when he was running around the wilderness, trying to escape from Saul. David knew Uriah the Hittite, and David owed him his life, for he was one of David's mighty men.

<sup>2</sup> Bonus questions: Notice that Uriah got killed because he was too honorable to sleep with his wife while his men were at war. Does it bother you that God did not reward Uriah's honor? Does this happen sometimes in our current lives?

## READ 2 SAMUEL 12:1-14

8. Note how many times the words “The Lord” appears in this passage. What does this tell you of His involvement in this confrontation?
  9. What do you learn about repentance, God’s forgiveness, and consequences from this passage?
  10. Optional: What do you learn from the Prophet Nathan as a master confronter of the most powerful person of his country?
  11. Optional: Read David’s confession of this Bathsheba sin in Psalm 51. What do you learn about how to give a thorough and heart rending confession from this passage?
  12. Pastor Josh says that 2 Samuel 11 & 12 show that **“the seeds of the worst sins imaginable live in every human heart.”**
    - a. How can we acknowledge our vulnerabilities and seek God’s help before small sins become big ones?
    - b. How should this realization affect our view of ourselves and others? Specifically, how can we have a realistic view of people instead of too high or too low?
    - c. Do you have a Nathan in your life? Do you have a trusted confidante, someone of the same gender as you, to whom you have revealed where you are weak? Have you given someone the right to ask you the hard questions, to confront you with the hard truths?
  13. Tim Keller writes in *Counterfeit Gods*, “God continually works with and gives his grace to people who don’t deserve it, don’t seek it, and don’t appreciate it when they get it.”
    - a. Instead of looking for heroes in Scripture, how can we follow their example to more desperately depend on God’s grace via Jesus Christ? What would that look like in daily life?
  14. According to Sunday’s sermon, “Even the darkness in our hearts cannot deter God’s devotion to us.”
    - a. In light of the Big Story of the Bible, how do we see that in David’s life? Consider Matthew 1:1-6 as you answer.
    - b. Have you experienced this devotion in your own journey? How?
  15. Share requests and pray for each other.
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