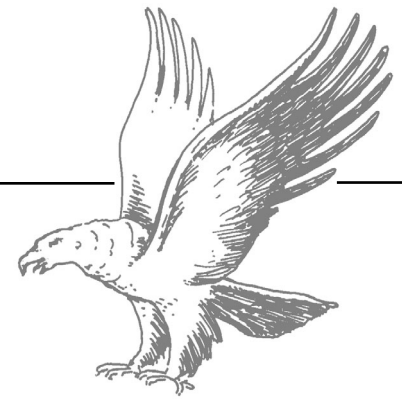


Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



October 24, 2010

The Path to Adultery

Nothing devastates a marriage more than the infidelity of a partner. But adultery doesn't suddenly come from nowhere; it is the culmination of a predictable sequence of events.

“Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, ‘Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?’ Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her . . .” (2 Sam. 11:2-4).

For pure shock value, no Bible story can match the affair between David and Bathsheba. The downfall of this great king has all the ingredients of a modern tabloid scandal: sex, intrigue, murder.

What makes this story so sordid is not the sins involved — many kings and politicians have done worse — but the character of the man who committed them. David was a deeply spiritual man who, until this point in his life, had displayed a rare combination of qualities that made him “a man after God's own heart.” But on this occasion, something snapped that caused him to go badly off course. What was it?

This is not merely an academic question. We can relate far too many modern examples of equally good men who got caught up in equally scandalous affairs. There is obviously a pattern here that we would do well to study.

First, notice that David “saw” this beautiful woman from the roof of his house. He should have turned around immediately and gone back downstairs, but he didn't. Instead, he stared . . . and watched . . . and lusted. Adultery always begins with a *heart* that has feasted on the forbidden fruit. For David, it was a naked woman on a nearby rooftop. For men today, it is naked (or nearly naked) women in television shows, movies, the internet, or at the beach. Prolonged exposure to sexualized images of female beauty can weaken the hearts of even the strongest of men.

Next, the erotic thoughts that David cultivated in his heart led him to “inquire” about the woman. He wanted to put a name to that exquisite body. It was an unhealthy curiosity that served to further inflame his lust. When a married man actively seeks familiarity with a

woman who has captured his attention, he is playing with fire.

David's mind was now consumed with passion for this beautiful creature. He already had six wives, but none of them could compete with the woman he did not have. He now knew that she was married, too, but that barrier meant nothing in a heart that was saturated with carnal desire. So David “sent and took her . . . and lay with her.”

David did not set out to seduce his neighbor's wife. Early on, he probably rationalized his careless thoughts as an innocent pastime. After all, what's the harm? Nobody's getting hurt. But in short order David's “innocent” pleasure got out of control, and turned a good man into a monster—and a lot of people ending up getting hurt. David finally did the unthinkable, because for too long he had allowed his mind to think it.

Adultery in the bedroom begins with adultery in the heart. That's why Jesus warns men not to “look at a woman to lust after her” (Matt. 5:28). Conquer the problem at the source, and adultery will never become an issue.

– David King