

INTRODUCTION

Someone said, "To err is human and to cover it up is also." Have you ever noticed we get in a lot of trouble by the wrong things we do and then we multiply our troubles by trying to cover it up and hide it? I've been told Winston Churchill was one of the fastest thinkers on his feet—he needed to be, because he made quite a few mistakes. The story goes that Winston Churchill was standing next to a stranger at a gathering one night. Two women were walking down the stairs and Churchill turns to the man who was an absolute stranger and said, "Look. That has got to be the ugliest woman I have ever seen in my life." The man says, "Sir. That woman is my wife." Churchill says, "No, not that one. I'm talking about the other woman." The man said, "Well that is my daughter!" Without even missing a beat Winston Churchill turned to the man and said, "Excuse me, ma'am, have you seen my glasses?"

When we make mistakes, we try to cover them up, when the first thing to do is learn how to *avoid* making mistakes, but once you come under the conviction of the Holy Spirit, you confess it and make it right as soon as you can. The reason I know the Bible was written by God and not man is if the Bible had been written by man, there would have been an attempt to cover up the sins of all the saints and some of these people who we know to be failures would have been covered over. They would have been cosmetically improved to make them look morally and spiritually clean.

Look at 1 Kings 15:5 as the writer of 1 Kings is going back and reviewing the entire life of King David, about whom we have been learning for four previous messages. This is the summary of the life of David.

1 Kings, 15:5 "For David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord's commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah, the Hittite."

When David comes to the end of his life this is the one remarkable failure. Turn to 2 Samuel 11 and let's read about the story of David and Bathsheba. We're going to discover that looks can kill.

2 Samuel 11:1-5. "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. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful and David sent someone to find out about her. [In the Hebrew it says, "she was beautiful," then it says VERY. In other words it is an extreme qualifying adjective.] The man said, 'Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah, the Hittite?' Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David saying, 'I am pregnant.'"

In the life of David and the life of each of us there is a pattern sin follows. There is a cycle and it is always the same—and it's a very dangerous cycle. The best way to overcome and avoid sin is to recognize this cycle and stop it at the very beginning. I want to look at this cycle of sin in the life of David and we can also compare it to our own lives and our own struggles.

STEP 1: THE COMMITTING OF SIN

First of all I want you to see the committing of sin. How is sin committed? How do people fall into sin? It started because David was lazy. He let somebody else do the thing he should have been doing: Leading his men into battle. He began missing out on the self-discipline in his life. He became spiritually and morally lazy. That's a dangerous condition to be in. To think you have everything under control, you have everything whipped, and you never will make a mistake and you never will fall. The Bible says, "Let him that stands take heed lest he fall." About the time you say you're not going to make a mistake you're not going to goof up and you are not going to have a moral failure or an ethical failure that's the time when you are a prime candidate to do so. It didn't happen overnight.

Then he was on his roof walking around. I was in Jerusalem five weeks ago. Our group walked up about five stories to the top of a large building in old Jerusalem. It's called "The Austrian Hospice." I had never been there before, but from the roof of this five-story building you could look down and see all of the houses and the little tiny yards that didn't have grass. You could just picture David walking on the roof of the palace, which without a doubt was the tallest building in Jerusalem, and how easily he could have spied on anybody and everybody. There of course was a beautiful woman.

People have often asked, "Can Satan read your mind?" I'm always saying you had better be careful you never ascribe to Satan those attributes that only belong to God. God is omniscient; Satan is not. God is omnipotent; Satan is not. God is omnipresent; but Satan is not. I'm not sure Satan can read our minds, but I will tell you he is a clever fellow and he is very good at observation. From observing most of us it's very easy to determine what our weaknesses are. Make no mistake about it we all have blind spots. We all have what it says in the book of Hebrews is "the sin" that so easily besets us. I'm sure Satan and his demons have figured out David's weakness was lust, impure sexual thoughts. So I'm sure the devil and his demons have a part in setting up this scenario. Did you know David's first look was absolutely harmless? There was nothing wrong at all about David looking and seeing a beautiful woman. Wow! She's a beautiful woman. If he had simply turned and walked away from that first look, he would have prevented so much personal pain and tragedy in his life and the lives of other people. It's the *second* look that got him in trouble. It was that lingering look, that lustful look; it was the look Jesus was talking about in the Sermon on the Mount when he said Moses said, "You shall not commit adultery." but I say to you if you look at a woman with lust in your heart, you have committed adultery already with her. Do you know what David did? He was lazy, he looked, he lusted and because he was the King—he took. He said, "Send her up here to my room!" And the rest is misery. Not history but misery.

You say, "Well that was terrible of Satan to set all that up, wasn't it? That mean ole devil!" You cannot blame Satan. Do you know where our own sin comes from? I printed a verse here for you

from the book of James. I memorized it in the King James Version and I call it "Satan's LSD" Lust, Sin and Death. When tempted no one should say, "God is tempting me!" God cannot be tempted by evil. Nor does he tempt anyone but each one is tempted when by his own evil desire he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire or lust has conceived it gives birth to sin and sin, when it is full-blown, gives birth to death. Desire leads to sin and sin always leads to death—*always!*

STEP 2: THE COVER-UP OF SIN

The second step was the cover-up of sin. When David learned Bathsheba was pregnant, he said, "I have to cover up my mistakes!" He knew her husband, Uriah, one of David's mighty men and a faithful soldier, was at the battlefront, so he sent word through Joab, his general, "Send Uriah home quickly!" Uriah arrived in Jerusalem and David said, "Uriah, you're such a faithful soldier I want you to go home and spend tonight with your wife." He wanted Uriah to sleep with his wife so when he goes back to the battle a few months later, everybody says, "Bathsheba's pregnant! Sure you remember Uriah came home from battle." But Uriah was such an honorable man he wouldn't even go into his house. He slept outside with the other army officers. David sees him outside the next morning and says, "Uriah, why didn't you sleep with your wife last night?" Uriah said, "I couldn't do that! I thought about the other soldiers and I thought about the Ark of the Covenant. Who was I to go in to my wife last night?" He was more faithful to God and God's cause than the King was! David tried again and failed. Finally, you can just hear the wheels turning in David's mind. He said, "I have to take care of this! I have to take care of this!" People may not know whether or not Uriah slept with his wife but Uriah knows. David thought, "If I could just get rid of Uriah, I am safe, I'm covered!"

So David sends word to Joab. "When Uriah comes back to the battle, I want you to put him on the very point! I want him to be in the first wave of soldiers when they attack this city and Joab, in the very heat of the battle I want you to give a sign and at that time I want you and the other soldiers to back away and retreat, but don't tell Uriah you are retreating." Here is Uriah, the Hittite, the very faithful servant of David, and the faithful servant of God with a sword in his hand and his shield in the other hand at the very point of the front line of the soldiers. He is fighting for Israel and for God. Joab gives the sign and the other soldiers back away. Uriah looks around and it's just him and a few other Israelite soldiers. Suddenly, he is out numbered and overpowered and an enemy soldier thrusts a sword through his heart and other swords thrust his body until Uriah dying on the ground. It's as if David himself had taken that sword and killed Uriah. Have you ever thought about the fact that Uriah was probably not the only Israelite soldier that died that day? There were probably several others. That's called "collateral damage." It was as if David had taken the sword himself and thrust it into every one of those soldiers who died.

David had already broken three Commandments. He had coveted his neighbor's wife; he had stolen her, and he had committed adultery. Once you have committed three, it's a short distance to committing two more. He lied and committed murder. Can't you see David back in the palace? I have taken care of it! It's covered up. Some people were thinking, "Something's not right here." But David denies it all and goes along thinking everything is fine.

It sure is easy to talk about David, but the Bible says in Proverbs 28:13? "He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy." We all remember Richard Nixon and Watergate. It wasn't the break-in of the office at the Watergate complex that brought Richard Nixon down; it was the cover-up. Without naming any names see if this sounds familiar. This was printed in the magazine "The American Enterprise" in November 1998. It's a dialogue between a father and son.

The father says, "Son, we need to talk."

"What's up, Dad?"

"There's a scratch down the side of the car. Did you do it, son?"

"I believe if I correctly understand the definition of 'scratch the car' then I didn't do it!"

The father says, "Well, son that scratch was not there yesterday and you drove it last night and no one else has driven it since! How can you explain the scratch?"

"Well as I have said before I have no recollection of scratching the car. While it is true that I did take the car last night, I did not scratch it."

The Dad says, "But your sister, Monica, [I don't know why they use that name] told me. she saw you back the car into the mailbox at the end of the driveway. She heard a loud, scraping sound. She saw you get out to examine the car and then drive away. So I'll ask you once again. Yes or no? Did you scratch the car?"

The boy says, "I don't agree with your contention that you have evidence to prove that I scratched the car. You see I understand you to mean 'did I scratch the car?' I stand by my earlier statement that I did not scratch the car!"

"Are you trying to tell me that you didn't back the car into the mailbox?"

"Well I was trying to back the car into the street I might have mishandled the steering and it resulted in direct contact with the mailbox though that was clearly not my original intent!"

"So you did hit the mailbox?"

"No sir. That's not what I am saying; I'll refer you back to my original statement. I did not scratch the car!"

"But the car *did* hit the mailbox and the car *did* get scratched as a result!"

"Well yes I suppose you could look at it that way."

The Dad says, "Son so you lied to me when you said you did not scratch the car."

"No, that's not correct your question was did I scratch the car. From a strict legal definition as I understand the meaning of that question I did not scratch the car the mailbox did! I was merely present when the scratching occurred. So my answer of 'No' when you asked did I scratch the car it was legally correct although I did not volunteer that information willingly!"

What's happened in America the last few months is a symptom of the great American pastime called "passing the buck" and "covering your posterior." It is human nature to sin and it is human nature to try to cover it up. David did.

STEP 3: THE CONVICTION OF SIN

Here's the third part of the pattern of sin the conviction of sin. There's one thing you can be sure about sin: Sin NEVER remains totally secret! God woke up the prophet Nathan one night and

said, "Nathan, we have a problem here. My servant, David, has been denying the fact he's guilty of adultery and murder and lying and covetousness and stealing. I need you to go talk to him about it!" So, Nathan the prophet goes to see David and says, "David, I have a story I want to share with you. It's a legal problem I need advice on. One day there was a man who owned many sheep. He was very wealthy. He had a lot of livestock and sheep. He didn't need anything. Right across the road from this wealthy farmer there was a little family and they only had one little lamb and that little lamb was so precious, it was like a pet. The lamb ate at their table and right out of their hand. One day, the wealthy family had some surprise guests come in from out of town and they decided they wanted lamb chops for supper. Instead of killing one of his many sheep, this very wealthy shepherd sneaked across the street and took the one precious pet and slaughters it, cooks it, and eats it! Now, David, what do you think the legal punishment for that man who stole that sheep should be? David's anger rises to the surface! He is seething and boiling with righteous indignation. He says, "I say to you, Nathan, that man shall repay fourfold for what he has taken."

"David, did I hear you say 'fourfold'?"

"*Fourfold!*"

"David *you* are that man! You had everything you wanted, everything you ever needed but instead of taking one of your many wives, you took Uriah's wife and then you killed him! Now, David, God has forgiven you. He has washed away your sin, but you have pronounced your own judgement on yourself!"

Back in Old Testament times, God sent prophets to bring people under the conviction of sin. Today the Lord Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, to live within each one of us. Jesus said when the Holy Spirit comes to live in us he shall "convict of sin." If you have committed some sin and you are still covering it up and denying it and you are still lying about it, if you are a Christian, there is someone inside of you and that someone is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is pointing a finger at you constantly saying, "You are guilty! You need to do something about this! You need to make it right with God! When are you going to make it right with God?"

STEP 4: THE CONFESSION OF SIN

So there's the conviction that leads to the next step in this process, the confession of sin. David said, "I have sinned!" That's easy to say once you have been caught red-handed. "I am guilty. I have sinned!"

STEP 5: THE CLEANSING OF SIN

Not only do we see the confession of sin, we also see the cleansing of sin. One of the most beautiful psalms in the Bible is Psalm 51 and everyone who studies it believes this is what David prayed when he came under the conviction of the prophet, Nathan, about his sin with Bathsheba. He is a broken man and in Psalm 51 he prays, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

David is saying, "Lord, the whole time that I was trying to cover up this sin, I just felt dirty. I felt filthy. I felt like I needed a bath." Have you ever known what it is to deny sin and wickedness in your life? You feel like you need a bath all the time. That's what David felt. He says, "Let me hear joy and gladness; let the bones you have crushed rejoice." In other words, he says he was so burdened down with this it was like his bones were breaking. In verses 9-11 he says, "Hide your face from my sins and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me."

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit of God would come on someone and then leave that person. That was a prayer from his heart. God don't leave me! Don't take your Holy Spirit away! For those of us who are born-again Christians, it is impossible for us to be taken out of the presence of the Lord. It is impossible for God to take his Holy Spirit from us but it IS possible because of unconfessed sin in our life for God to seem a million miles away. Look what David prayed in verse 12: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me." David said, "Lord, I just lost the joy. I'm still in a relationship with you; I'm still your king; I'm still a man people say that to your heart but God, there is no joy!" One thing I'll guarantee you about unconfessed sin in your life is as a Christian it will rob you of the joy of your salvation. As a Christian, you cannot lose your salvation, but you can absolutely lose the joy of your salvation. Ask yourself, "Is the joy of my salvation what it ought to be? Or is there sin in my life that has robbed me of the joy? In Psalm 51:17 David says, "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise." I can imagine with bitter tears a broken, humbled David said, "God, I have sinned against you. Forgive me!" He confessed his sin and God cleansed him of this unrighteousness this iniquity.

STEP 6: THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

THE END. Everyone lived happily ever after! I wish I could say that but that's not what happened. There is one other thing we need to notice about sin and that's the consequences of sin. Nathan said, "God's not going to hold this sin against you, but this child you and Bathsheba conceived is going to die!" Do you remember David said to Nathan this man who has violated that neighbor of his will repay four times? Take a moment and look what happened in the life of David in the years to come. Number one the infant dies. Second, David had lots of children by several wives. He had a son named Amnon. Amnon lusted after his half-sister, Tamar. Tamar raped his half-sister. You talk about a dysfunctional family! When Absalom hears what his half-brother did to his sister, Absalom kills his brother, Amnon—that's death number two. Number three we've already studied, where Absalom rebelled against his father and set himself up as King, publicly violating David's wives. Absalom is killed and breaks David's heart. "Oh, Absalom, oh, Absalom would that I had died instead of you." Then son number four you don't know much about, but David had a son named Adonijah, who was the heir to the throne because of his age. Adonijah was violently killed. "David, what should happen to that man who violated his neighbor?" "He shall repay fourfold!" One reason you ought to hate and despise sin is because sin always carries consequences with it. Not only do you bear the consequences but sometimes those you love must suffer the consequences of your sin. Sometimes those of us who believe in the security of the believer—that you can't lose your salvation—are lured into a terrible thought, "Well, God's going to forgive anything I do. There's nothing I can do to lose my salvation! I can do anything I want to and say, 'God, forgive me!' and he'll forgive me, won't

he?" Yes, he'll forgive you but the consequences of your sin are still there.

This past December, the Katy High School football team was boarding the bus to drive to Texas Stadium in Irving to play in the 5A State Championship football game. The parking lot was full of parents, the band, and the cheerleaders. Everybody was whooping and hollering, "Good luck!" The coach received a telephone call and onto the bus and said to all the players, "Unload. We're not going to the state championship game!" One senior reserve player had counterfeited his name on one of his progress reports and turned it in to the athletic office and had been discovered. All he did was sign a teacher's name in his own handwriting. A couple of weeks later he went in and played three plays at the end of a game when the team was already leading 40 to nothing. His one act of counterfeiting his name on a progress report at school disqualified the entire team. Sin is like a rock dropped into a pond. Plop! And the ripples spread out, touching a lot of different people.

That's why we ought to hate sin. That's why we ought to be pure. That's why we ought to despise what is wicked and love what is good. That's why we need to learn from David. God can write Romans 8:28 over anything. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." So what good can come out of this message about sin? A man named Solomon came out of it later. Solomon was later born to David and Bathsheba. He was the wisest man who ever lived outside of the Lord Jesus Christ and Solomon is in the lineage of Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Isn't it interesting how God can take a mess and turn it into a message? Take the time to read Matthew 2 about the genealogy of Jesus. It says, "David, who was the father of Solomon, whose mother was Uriah's wife..." Not David's wife, not even Bathsheba. "Solomon whose mother was the wife of Uriah." A thousand years later when they wrote it down, God *still* did not recognize the validity of that marriage, because of the way it began. Even in spite of that God made something beautiful out of a mess. That's the business God is in. Look at our lives! God is in the business of taking mistakes and using us for his glory!

OUTLINE

Steps in the Sin Cycle:

1. The Commitment
2. The Cover-up
3. The Conviction
4. The Confession
5. The Cleansing
6. The Consequences



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For the Joy...
Pastor David Dykes