

Don't Play with Fire

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Preacher: Jeff Rafferty

[0 : 00] Grateful for everybody participating. If you have your Bibles, I ask you to turn with me, if you will, to 2 Samuel. 2 Samuel, we're going to be looking at verses 11, or chapter 11, verses 1 through 15.

One late Saturday evening in November of 2008, so Saturday night, I received a phone call from the former youth pastor at my last church.

And he informed me or shared with me that one of our prominent church members had been arrested that day. And it came as a great shock to me because this particular church member had been a Sunday school teacher.

He had been a deacon. He had even served as the chairman of deacons for a term. And my friend, the former youth pastor, shared with me that J.V. Huffman had been arrested for running a Ponzi scheme.

He had run the largest Ponzi scheme in North Carolina history to the tune of \$25 million. And after he was arrested, I visited him in jail and had an opportunity to talk with him.

[1 : 15] And he shared with me that over the years, the way it happened. When he first began being an investor, he shared with me that he took a loan out of his accounts that he was investing for other people.

And he thought, it won't be any big deal. You know, I'll pay it back. And nobody will even know. And yet one loan turned into a second, to a third, and so on.

He had gotten to the point where he wanted people to respect him. He wanted people to look up to him and think of him as this great investor. And so he spent money like mad.

I mean, he was very generous to the church and to others around him. They would go on vacations every year. College students, you might have wanted to be there for a short time, because he would take the college students on cruises and pay for every bit of it.

He would take the college students out to eat every Sunday night and buy every appetizer on the menu. And he would continue to just flaunt and flourish his money, thinking that it would never be known and it would never come back to haunt him and never, you know, have the repercussions that it did.

[2 : 37] But J.B. Huffman was arrested and he was sentenced to 30 years in prison without any possibility of parole. Now you think back to 2008, he has not even served yet half of his sentence.

And during that time, his wife has died. He had four children. All of them have gotten married. He's had grandchildren born. And he missed every bit of that because he thought he could take out one simple little loan and nobody would know and that he would be able to return that.

But he didn't notice the ripple effect and the impact that one turned into another, to another, to another, to where it grew out of control to the point where he could never pay it back.

And the impact and the effect that he had on not only his own life and not only his family's life, but upon all those who had invested.

He had more than 500 investors stretching from Kansas to Florida. Many retirees had invested their entire retirement with him because he was claiming to pay more out than what you could get anywhere else in investment.

[3 : 57] In 2006, remember, the housing market collapsed. Retirement went down. I mean interest. And he claimed he was still paying 8%, 8.5%, 9% interest.

And so people put all their money with him. But when he was arrested, it was all gone. People who had worked their entire lives to invest money for retirement, it was gone.

It took them five years to collect anything back and they got pennies on the dollar. There is no such thing as a private sin.

And sin will always cost us more than we think. And it affects our relationship with the Lord. Those little sins that we think are private, that we think no one else will know, and it won't hurt anyone, well, God knows.

And it affects our relationship with the Lord. It impacts our relationship because sin severs that relationship, at least for a time, and impacts our intimacy and our closeness with the Lord.

[5 : 06] As Christians today, we emphasize that God is a loving and forgiving God, and he is. But what we fail to also recognize is that God has called us to be holy, to be holy as he is holy.

And what we don't understand or don't emphasize so much is that even those small sins that we label small sins, private, secret sins, they have a big impact in our lives and our relationship with the Lord.

And when they affect us, when they affect our relationship with God, there's a ripple effect that it has around in our families and others around us.

If you're a father or a mother or a grandparent and you've got secret sin in your life that's affecting your relationship with God, that's affecting your spouse, it's affecting your children, it's affecting your grandchildren because you're not walking with the Lord as you should be.

Well, today I want us to take a look at a passage in 2 Samuel that gives us a remarkable account of how sin had a major impact upon David.

[6 : 19] But not only David, we will see the ripple effect that it had throughout his entire family and others around him. David believed that he could commit sins such as adultery and murder and not get caught.

I mean, hey, after all, he was the king. He didn't feel that he would get caught or have the impact that it had upon other people's lives.

But David was very wrong. David was just as wrong as you and I standing here today thinking that we can have secret private sin and it not affect our lives or the others around us.

David was very wrong that he could commit these sins because he involved others around him and it impacted his entire family for years to come. So look with me, if you will, at 2 Samuel.

We're going to begin by looking at chapter 11 and we're just going to read the first five verses to start with. In the spring, at that time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army.

[7 : 26] They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening, David got up from his bed and he 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. The man said, She is 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. Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness. Then she went back home.

The woman conceived and sent word to David saying, I am pregnant. Let's go to the Lord in prayer. Father, we come to your word today.

We ask, Lord, that you would speak to each of us. Open our eyes that we might see. Open our ears that we may hear. And soften our hearts that we may allow your word to penetrate deep within our hearts.

[8 : 36] Convict us of sin that may be in our lives. And plant a desire in our hearts to be holy as you are holy. And to seek you and to know you.

And we thank you for this, Lord, in Jesus' name. Amen. You know, one evening, David must have had trouble sleeping because he went out and was walking on the roof of the palace.

And it was here that he noticed a beautiful young lady bathing. Now, that may seem really kind of weird. If you've been in church your whole life, you know this story. But if you haven't been, this is not so strange in that day and time.

Their buildings had flat roofs. Their buildings were very hot from the day. And the heat remained with the inside well into the night. So a lot of times, they'd go sit on the roof of the house after the sun had gone down to cool off.

They also placed things on the roof. I guess bathtubs was one of them. And Bathsheba was taking a bath. And her beauty must have been very great because the king noticed her and he had to know her name.

[9 : 48] And so he began asking his servants within the palace to find out about her and to find out what her name was. And they came back and said it was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.

David knew that Uriah was one of the soldiers and he was off to war with the other men in battle. And so he sent a message to have her brought to him.

It was at this time that David took Bathsheba and committed adultery with her. And then he sent her back home as if nothing had even happened.

David must have felt that he could commit such a sin as adultery. Even though he involved others, the servants in the palace, he involved them.

But somehow he must have thought he could commit such a sin, keep it private, and have no effect or no consequences in his life. But he was very wrong.

[10 : 48] He was very wrong. Even if Bathsheba had not become pregnant, there would have been repercussions and an impact upon his spiritual life.

There would have been an impact upon those he involved. David made some very unwise choices. And we're going to see very soon in the scripture that the choices left some very lasting consequences to be paid by David as well as his family, the palace servants, and many others.

You know, David may have felt that he got away with his sin. But if Bathsheba had not become pregnant, his sin still impacted his heart and his life and his walk with the Lord.

It caused, but his sin did become public. It caused Bathsheba's shame. It caused Uriah's death. Now, if you read on in scripture, you'll notice that it was not only Uriah that was killed.

David had Uriah sent to the front line of the fiercest battle. I mean, they went up to the wall of the city and then were to have all the other soldiers withdraw and have Uriah killed.

[12 : 06] But if you keep reading here in 2 Samuel, you'll see that there were other soldiers who were killed as well. I mean, that was just a no-brainer. You don't approach the wall because they had archers.

People could just throw rocks over the side of the wall and hit you and severely injure you. That was a no-brainer. But David gave the orders for them to do that. And it caused not only Uriah, but other soldiers died as well.

Other repercussions were conflict and rebellion in the house of David, which eventually led to his son Absalom's death. And the fact that all this is recorded in the Bible, it has been studied for generations.

It took what David thought was a private, secret sin and it made it very public for generations of people to study and learn from, but to Daniel's embarrassment.

You know, that's one of the reasons we know the Bible's true. If this was a fairy tale or if this was a book that wasn't really God's word, it would oftentimes paint a picture of perfection.

[13 : 16] And the heroes of the Bible would always be painted with that perfection. And we'd never see the flaws of men like David. But the Bible does reveal the ugliness of sin that often lurks within our hearts.

And we need to learn from this passage. We need to learn from passages like this that we are no different than men like David. God had described David as a man after his own heart.

When I was in seminary, I probably heard this from every professor we had. They would tell our classes at least once a semester, if not numerous times, if you think this can't happen to you, then you're who I'm worried about.

If you think you can't be tempted to sin or be pulled into sin, then we're worried about you because we're all vulnerable. We all can be tempted into sin.

That's why the Bible tells us to guard our hearts, protect our hearts, and make sure that we're not lied to and deceived by the enemy to be lured into sin.

[14 : 35] Do you realize the impact that sin has in your life? Do you realize the impact that sin has upon those around you? For some individuals that you have relationships with, you might be the only glimmer of Jesus Christ that they have in their lives.

You may be the only one truly walking with Christ that they see the image of Jesus in you. And when we allow ourselves to be lured into sin, what an impact negatively that has on those individuals.

Too often we play around with small sins only for it to grow until it is out of control. I've shared these statistics before, but I want to share something with you that might blow your mind a little bit.

And men, you can look around or you cannot. But statistics show that one in four men inside the church today is addicted to pornography.

I don't know how many men we have here, but if statistics are right, there's men sitting in here today that are addicted to pornography. I didn't bring my phone, but it is so easily accessible.

[15 : 54] We have it at our fingertips and it's so tempting to people to get into that. And I had a man in my last church who came to me and admitted that he was addicted to pornography and he was trying to take the steps to break that addiction.

And what he found out was pornography is a greater addiction to break than cocaine. that once you get sucked into pornography, you almost can't get out of it.

You can't get those images out of your mind. And so we need to make sure that we are guarding our hearts, guarding our minds, guarding our lives to make sure that we don't ever even look at something just out of curiosity.

Also, studies indicate that the morality inside the church in America today lags behind in society by only 20 years.

That means that the morality within our churches in America today is the morality of society about 2003. I don't know about you, but that doesn't say a lot, does it?

[17 : 04] You know, because the morality in 2003 wasn't that great. I remember when it turned 1980 and everybody's like, hey, it's the 80s, you know, let's lighten up, loosen up.

Is that the morality that we have in our churches today? You know, not long ago, there was a new TV show that came out. It was the hottest, the best TV show everybody had to watch it, Yellowstone.

And that was the type of thing I thought, I liked Kevin Costner and I thought, I could watch, get into that, out in Montana, beautiful scenery. I started watching it and it didn't take very long that I was appalled.

The cussing, sexual content, violence that's in that, no Christian should watch. And if you're hooked on Yellowstone, I'm sorry. But TV shows like that and others, we should not entertain our minds with these shows because the more we entertain, the more we accept sin.

We compromise our morality that God has told us in the Word of God. And as we compromise, we accept, we normalize sin to the point where it begins to come out in our lives.

[18 : 32] There's not much on television you can watch today. Maybe go back and watch Annie Griffin, Little House on the Prairie. But we need to be careful.

We need to guard our minds and our hearts and not allow sin into our mind, not into our heart, because before long we'll have those secret, private sins lurking within us and it will come out.

You know, if Satan can get you to think about something long enough, he can get you to act upon it. If you entertain thoughts that are sinful, Satan will, he will get you to act upon it.

David made a mistake here in that he should have done exactly what Joseph did. He should have run. He should have fled. He should have not entertained his ideas of being with Bathsheba.

He was a married man. He should have not committed that sin. Sin is to be taken very seriously because it will always take us further away from God than we intended to go.

[19 : 46] Today, if there is sin in your life, unrepentant sin that is lurking in your heart, the only thing you can do is to confess that sin to the Lord, repent of that sin, turn away from that sin, and turn to Christ.

We have to not only just turn away from sin, but you have to pursue Christ and run, run to God, seek God.

And I want to tell you one of the ways of doing that. You'll notice at the doors there's a bookmark. Every quarter there's a new one.

Pastor Daniel has put these out for us as a church to stay in the Word of God. If you don't have that, it's on the back of your bulletin.

Every week, the scriptures that we should be reading. If we're not in the Word and we're not studying the Word, Satan will twist whatever we think is in our mind and he'll make us believe that it's truth and he'll get us to follow his deceptions and lies and we'll be in predicaments like David or J.B. Huffman or others that fall to sin.

[21 : 03] We've got to stay in the Word of God. But we need to confess sin. 1 John 1.9, I didn't put this in the PowerPoint, but 1 John 1.9 says, if we will confess our sin, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sin.

But repentance is turning away from it. It's not just saying, oh, forgive me, Lord, and then we go on and keep doing it. Repentance is turning away from that sin and not doing it anymore and asking God to fill our hearts with the Holy Spirit and empower us to break the chains that bind us and free us from sin.

We must turn away from that. Which, by the way, men, I'm leading a Bible study on Wednesday nights at 6 o'clock. If you're not with the youth or in the choir already, a great way.

And we follow, we have a Bible study based on a passage that's being read on the bookmarks throughout the week. if you're interested in getting in a men's group that we hold each other accountable, we uplift one another, we pray for one another, and we help study the Word, we wrestle with the Word together, come in the back entrance by the overhang.

That's the only door I unlock. I think Brian will have the front doors unlocked for choir, but you'll have to wander through the building. Come to the back of the building, come in the overhang, and we have a great time at 6 o'clock on Wednesday nights.

[22 : 36] Well, let's look at what happens next in David's life because he gave in to sin and left the sin unconfessed. Let's look at verses 6 through 15. So David sent this word to Joab, send me Uriah the Hittite.

And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were, and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, go down to your house and wash your feet.

So Uriah left the palace and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all of his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

David was told Uriah did not go home. So he asked Uriah, haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home? Uriah said to David, the ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country.

How can I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live I will not do such a thing. Then David said to him, stay here one more day and tomorrow I will send you back.

[23 : 53] So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation he ate and drank with him and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep among his master's servants.

He did not go home. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die.

These verses do not show a very common composed response from David. No, it appears that David realizes he is going to get caught and he begins to panic and so he immediately sends for Uriah under false pretenses.

When Uriah arrived David tempted him with the privilege of going home to wash his feet and to rest. You know David was actually trying to get Uriah to spend the night with his wife so that it would not look as if this child that was conceived was his but would be Uriah's.

However, Uriah refused to go home and he slept at the entrance of the palace with the other servants. David then tried to get him drunk and send him home.

[25 : 12] However, even intoxicated Uriah would not go home. He showed greater righteousness than David even drunk and he would not go because the Ark of the Covenant as well as the armies of Israel were in the field of battle.

So out of desperation David became more aggressive to try to cover up his sin. By writing a letter to Joab who was the commander of the armies he planned a strategy to have Uriah sent to the front line of battle and ultimately killed.

And as I said a minute ago it wasn't just Uriah that was killed because of this. There were several other soldiers that were killed as well. But David's actions could never be covered could cover up his sin.

These actions only made it worse and he got deeper and deeper into sin. This act of adultery with Bathsheba just continued to grow to now not only an adulterer he is a murderer.

It's hard to imagine a man like David who God had described as a man of God's own heart. A man who had gone through the things he had gone through as he knew God won the battle to defeat Goliath.

[26 : 28] He knew God had protected him and spared him when King Saul was chasing him and trying to kill him. It's hard to imagine a man like this has sunk and fallen so deep into sin.

However the story continues to unfold as you get into the next chapter of 2 Samuel we won't read it this morning. But God sends a prophet because David did these things and then just went on about life as if nothing even happened.

And so God sent the prophet Nathan to confront him. And once David realized that he had been caught and that God knew his sin and that Nathan had pointed it out, David breaks down and acknowledges his guilt.

He confessed his sin and pleaded with God for forgiveness. And yes, God forgave him.

God is a forgiving God. But there are often consequences to be paid for our actions and our sin even though we've been forgiven. For one, the son that was conceived died that was born to Bathsheba.

[27 : 47] Also because David was guilty of having Uriah killed, Nathan told him that God would never remove the sword from his own household. This meant that David would have to endure constant conflict and rebellion within his household.

If this could happen to David, it could happen to any one of us today. You know, this story should serve as a strong warning for us to take sin seriously.

There's no such thing as a small sin or a private sin. We need to not play around with what we think is a small sin or a secret sin.

If we allow it to remain in our lives, it will lead us further and further away from a relationship with Jesus Christ. It will lead us to where we do not have that intimate, personal love relationship with Jesus.

And the further we get away from Christ, the more we allow these things to get us off track, the easier a target you are for Satan to just wreak habit in your life.

[29 : 02] Jesus said that Satan is a thief and a liar and he came to kill, steal, and destroy. And he wants to do that in your life.

And he will do it with lies of deception, of luring you into small, private, secret sin. And he'll lead you from there to take another step, to take another step, to take another step.

And before long you're so far away from the Lord you don't know how to get back. But Jesus said I have come to give you life and to give you life more abundantly.

The commandments that God gives us is not to try to take us away from the Lord or keep us, you know, squash our fun in life. It's to give us a life more abundantly, to have an abundant life.

If we follow the truths of God and his commands, he created us and he knows that this is what we need to have the joy-filled life of peace that he came to give us.

[30 : 11] You know, 1 John 1.6 says, if we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

We cannot walk in fellowship with both God and a lifestyle of sin. Therefore, if we as a believer have unconfessed sin in our life and we refuse to confess that to him, to repent of that sin and turn to him, then we're in danger of being disciplined by the Father.

If you're a true child of God, the Bible tells us that he will discipline us. And 1 Corinthians 11.30 indicates that at times this could even mean death.

You know, Paul warned the believers in Corinth because of the way they were mistreating the Lord's Supper that some of them had become weak, some of them were sick, and others of them had even died.

And if God fails to discipline you, that's a whole other story. If you're a child of God or you believe you're a child of God and you can sin and never feel convicted by the Holy Spirit or you don't sense God's discipline in your life to bring you back, like Paul felt a thorn in the flesh to humble him and bring him to his knees.

[31 : 38] If you can sin and not feel conviction or discipline in your life, then you need to reevaluate your relationship with God. Because the Bible clearly tells us that if we are children of God, he will discipline us.

And he disciplines out of love. Out of love. Not anger, but out of love to bring us back into an intimate relationship with him, walking in his ways that will bring, you know, that abundant life that he desires for us to have.

This morning, do you have unconfessed sin in your life that seems to have dominion over you? Do you have unconfessed sin or have you complacency of just being complacent and not seeking God?

We're going to have a time of invitation in just a moment. And this time, I don't want the congregation to sing. Brian, if you'll just sing, I want you to have a time of meditation and reflection and allow the Holy Spirit to speak to your heart.

Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal truth into you and you respond as the Lord is leading. you loves DANK to have a story about building and clearly being ■ Friday.

[33 : 02] For those, the rest, if you were in the Chat room, take me to appear. If I would just a crow invite you back to come to Psalm 1 and Eli with your partner.

All right. Is that what I want you to charge for again? Yes.