David, Bathsheba, and the Body That Is Not Our Own

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The Darkest Chapter in David's History

Matthew 1:6 notes quietly in the genealogy of the Lord Jesus: David begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah. The record remains. David was completely forgiven of God for his sin — and yet of her that had been the wife of Uriah. Second Samuel 11 gives the full account: David, the man after God's own heart, the sweet psalmist of Israel, the friend of God, rose one evening, walked on the roof of his house, saw a woman bathing, sent for her, committed adultery, got her pregnant, tried to cover it by recalling her husband from the front, and when that plan failed arranged to have Uriah placed where he would be killed in battle. The darkest chapter in David's history. And the story started with lust.

Nathan the prophet told him plainly: he would pay back fourfold. And he did. Four sons died. This followed David all the rest of his life. He paid from that moment until his deathbed. Do we think that God regards lust as a small matter? We would be very mistaken.

Two Sides — and Bathsheba's Inadvertence

There are two sides to the story, and it is worth being honest about the second one. David's sin was entirely David's sin — he is not to be excused or minimised. But Bathsheba was not without responsibility either. It does not appear from the Scripture that she was deliberately displaying herself to attract the king's attention. She was simply unwise. She did not think. She did not consider: I can be seen from the roof of the king's house if I bathe in my courtyard. And the

result was the same as if she had been deliberately enticing him.

Are there people who dress or conduct themselves in ways that deliberately seek to arouse lust? Yes, and Solomon in Proverbs warns against her that wears the attire of a harlot. But a person can also, through inadvertence, through not having thought carefully enough about what they are doing or where they are doing it, produce the same effect without any such intention. Bathsheba's lesson is not about deliberate enticement. It is about the failure to take forethought about matters that have moral consequences.

> *I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue. — Psalm 39:1*

The Body Is Not Your Own — 1 Corinthians 6 and 7

First Corinthians 6:19–20 states the principle that underlies all of this: do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have from God? And you are not your own — for you have been bought with a price. Glorify God therefore in your body. It is not my body. I am a steward of it, not its owner. Every decision about what I do with my body — where I take it, what I put on it, what I look at through its eyes — ought to begin with the question: what is the Lord's will for me in this?

First Timothy 2:9 gives the Lord's direct instruction for women: that they adorn themselves with modesty and discretion, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but with what becomes women making profession of the fear of God — by good works. One verse. Plain. A woman who fears the Lord does not need to understand the precise nature of how men are constructed to know how she should dress. She simply has to obey the Scripture. The world says: I can dress however I want, just don't look at me. But that violates the principle of Romans 15 — if something I do may cause my brother to stumble, I ought not to do it — and it ignores the responsibility to consider whether I may

be inadvertently producing the effect of a Bathsheba.

The parallel responsibility is on men. Job said: I have made a covenant with my eyes — how shall I fix my regard upon a maid? That is the forethought the Lord requires of a man. Joseph, when Potiphar's wife pressed him, ran. He ran so fast he left his cloak behind. The reaction was immediate, spontaneous, absolute. That is the attitude the Lord would have toward all that excites lust: run from it, not toward it, not lingering to see how far the edge can be approached. The Lord Himself said that if any man looks upon a woman to lust after her, he has already committed adultery in his heart. God knows man's thoughts. The test of lust is not external conduct alone but the secret intention of the look.

The World and What Has Changed — and What Has Not

Man's heart has not changed in all of human history. Before the flood, the description of mankind was that they were full of lust. What has changed is that the world around us increasingly normalises what God has always condemned. Society now tells a young woman through advertising and social media that she should dress in ways that attract male attention, as though that is how she will find a husband. The story of Isaac and Rebekah demonstrates clearly that the Lord's way of bringing a couple together had nothing to do with either of their appearances or with one of them making themselves visually attractive to the other. It was entirely in the purposes of God. Isaac never even saw his bride before she became his wife.

A young man whose occupation is wandering from one young woman to the next, tasting and moving on like a bee flitting from flower to flower, is not walking in the path of Isaac. A young woman who dresses generically to attract whatever men will be attracted is not walking in the path of Rebekah. The Lord has someone in view for each of His own, and His way of bringing them together is not through the advertising logic of the world.

Grieving the Holy Spirit — Ephesians 4

Ephesians 4:17–19 describes the state of those who are darkened in understanding, alienated from the life of God, past feeling, having given themselves over to lasciviousness — working all uncleanness with greediness. Verse 20 says: but ye have not so learned the Christ. The Christ — not merely Christ in the abstract, but the truth of our union with the head in heaven. Has He told us to lust? Has He directed us to any of those things in verses 17 to 19? No — and if we have truly heard Him and been taught by Him, we will know it.

Verse 30 gives the solemn word: grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. There is a holy guest within each of us who indwells, who comes alongside, who cares for all our affairs, who was given to us of God's love and grace. And we can grieve Him. Not quench Him — that is a corporate matter in the assembly — but grieve Him, personally and individually. When lust is entertained, when the covenant with the eyes is broken, when forethought is not taken about how the body is clothed or where it is taken — this holy guest is grieved. He is the Holy Spirit of God, and the character of God is goodness. Let us walk in that goodness, not in the darkness from which we have been delivered.

> *Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. — Ephesians 4:30*

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