

Grace Notes

Every Man's Battle

8.25.10



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.

2 Samuel 11:1

When sermons are preached about David's sexual downfall with Bathsheba, one glaring point is often left out: David wasn't even supposed to be in Jerusalem at the time. (See above: "*In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out....but David remained in Jerusalem.*") David should've been leading his men into war. Instead, he sent Joab. Throughout my years as a Youth Pastor, it was a challenge taking hundreds of students to camps and mission trips away from home. My first rule for every single trip was the same: "*Always be where you're supposed to be, when you're supposed to be there. That, in itself, will do wonders in keeping you out of trouble.*" David knew better. He was the wise king of Israel. But this day, he became a foolish man by being where he never should've been. The tempter couldn't have been happier. Psychologist Rollo May has said, '*Man is the only animal that runs faster when he has lost his way.*' Author/Pastor, Chuck Swindoll comments, "*Isn't it remarkable how when we lose our way, we move quickly in the wrong direction and play into the adversary's hand?*"

The best book I've ever read on the life of David is Swindoll's "*David.*" in his chapter on David's encounter with Bathsheba, Swindoll quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who, executed by Hitler in 1945, gives the following arresting description of a believer's encounter with sexual temptation:

"In our members there is a slumbering inclination toward desire, which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power, desire seizes mastery of the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is a sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money..... At this moment God is quite unreal to us. He loses all reality, and only desire for the creature is real. The only reality is the devil. Satan does not here fill us with hatred for God, but with forgetfulness of God.... The lust thus aroused envelopes the mind and will of man in deepest darkness. The powers of clear discrimination and of decision are taken from us.... It is here that everything within me rises up against the Word of God...."

Bonhoeffer continues: "*Therefore the Bible teaches us in times of temptation in the flesh, there is one command: Flee! Flee youthful lusts. Flee the lust of the world. There is no resistance to Satan in lust other than flight. Every struggle against lust in one's own strength is doomed to failure." Swindoll then he adds this profound fact: disaster didn't happen when things were bad in David's life. It happened when things were good: "*Our most difficult times are not when things are going bad. Survival keeps you humble. Pride happens when everything is swinging in your direction.*"*



Swindoll's book on David is an outstanding narrative commentary about "a man after God's own heart" who was also very humanly flawed. It should be required reading for all Christian men. One final warning from Swindoll regarding sexual temptation: "*If you do not run, you will fall. It's only a matter of time.*"

Soli Deo Gloria, Nick