

How You Can Restore Your Stolen Praise

Have you ever had one of those seasons when you are in the wrong place, doing the wrong thing and finding your praise stolen? The demonic powers have an ongoing assignment to steal or redirect our praise. They go to great lengths to undermine our testimony. If you are anything like me, you need “but God” moments in your life.

In the Bible, King David intrigues me. Travel with me as we do “Ruth’s CliffsNotes version” of 2 Samuel 11-12.

King David was only human. He had opportunities to make the right decisions and the wrong decisions, just as we do. As we journey with David, we learn that it was during the spring that kings went off to war. For whatever reason, David chooses not to join this military campaign and sends his men off to fight the battle without their leader.

David’s First Mistake:

–David was not in the right place for the season.

Lesson No. 1:

–We must be increasingly sensitive to the times and seasons of God. The only safe place is being where God has called us to be.

Since David’s schedule has been cleared for war, we can assume he has too much time on his hands. David takes a nice little nap and then goes to wander on the roof. However, his eyes do too much wandering, his mind gets tempted and he comes into agreement with that temptation. Remember, at that moment, he sees something he should have looked away from: Bathsheba, a beautiful woman, bathing. He should have averted his eyes, but

instead, he begins to ask questions, sends for her and sleeps with her. Now, who is going to say no to the king? By culture, you cannot say no to the king; it could result in death. Scripture does not tell us what Bathsheba's response was.

David's Second Mistake:

—David followed through on the temptation.

Lesson No. 2:

—God always provides a way out. We need to be determined to take it.

Of course, Bathsheba finds herself pregnant. Imagine David's dilemma. As the king, he can do whatever he wants. However, he is not just a king, but he is God's chosen king. David cannot afford to do what the other kings are doing; his kingdom is different. However, David does exactly what most of us would do and begins scheming. He starts to position more people in difficult situations.

—Joab, the army commander, is instructed to send Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, home. David's logic is that Uriah will sleep with Bathsheba, and everyone will assume the child is his.

—Unlike David, Uriah understands that this is the season for war; he is dedicated and focused on successfully navigating the season. He does not go home to sleep with his wife, but instead sleeps at the palace entrance.

—Joab receives an order to place Uriah on the front lines, where he will surely be killed in battle. Little does Uriah know that by indirect means, King David is murdering him. Uriah indeed becomes a casualty of war and by all accounts, it appears the coverup by the king has been successful. We could say that Uriah's fight has really taken place on the home front.

I do not believe that Bathsheba is foolish or unaware that

something is going on. She has a front-row seat to the manipulation and deception happening around her.

David is moving deeper and deeper into sin. He moves from adultery to deception to murder. The darkness in his life is taking a stronger hold.

David's Third Mistake:

–Covering up the sin.

Lesson No. 3:

–Our sins will be revealed, so we may as well admit it and repent sooner rather than later.

–Uriah was so devoted to King David that he kept his focus and slept at the palace rather than in the comfort of his home. We need to be dedicated to Jesus and willing to keep ourselves pure.

David does marry Bathsheba as soon as her time of mourning is over. Was David trying to be the hero? By our standards, we may say, “He was trying to do the right thing.”

I must wonder how I would feel if I had to marry the man who had my husband killed. Would I be able to extend forgiveness and choose to love this person?

David and Bathsheba had a son. David may have thought he had gotten away with his sin. But in the quiet moments, did he wonder what God thought? Was there any regret? We don't know, but we do learn that God was not going to ignore what had happened.

God is so creative! He sends a prophet named Nathan to tell David a story. David does not even catch that this story is about him. He is clueless! David gives out a verdict and declares the death penalty. At this point, Nathan tells David that this story is about him.

We immediately see David come face to face with his heart. He does not try to hide anymore. David also does not try to blame anyone else. David explicitly states that he has sinned. What is so profound is that even though God sent Nathan, God had already forgiven David (2 Sam. 12:13). There is such a difference between Adam, Eve and David. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. But David took responsibility. All of them paid a consequence for their sin, but David immediately “owned” his sin.

Lesson No. 4:

—We need to own our sins.

Consequences? Yes, David’s precious baby died. David begs God to save the child; he goes without food and lies on the bare ground. However, when the baby dies and David is told about the little guy’s death, he “arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his garments. Then he entered the house of the Lord and worshipped” (2 Sam. 12:20).

At this moment, I suspect David worshipped with tears streaming down his face.

In His wisdom, when God takes away something or someone dear to us, how do we respond? Do we get angry with God? Do we pout, complain and throw a temper tantrum? Or do we get up and wash, eat and worship?

Lesson No. 5:

—We must choose to praise God in every season of life, which means even when walking out the pain of life and the consequences of our sin. It is OK to worship with tears of pain and grief running down our faces. We still worship because of who He is.

As we read on, we find that David comforted his wife, and eventually, she became pregnant again and gave birth to

Solomon. Solomon was the one who would later build the temple for the Lord.

God took an ugly situation and walked David through it. David had a teachable spirit, and he was honest before God. His repentance was from the heart, and God healed that heart. It was from that place that David worshipped.

Satan's plan would have been to keep David buried in his shame and deception. God had chosen David to be king because He had sought a man after His own heart. God's heart is for openness and honesty. God's heart is for us to have an intimate relationship with Him. It is from this place of intimacy that we can truly worship God no matter what our circumstances.

Quick Questions to Ask:

–Can I worship God just because of who He is?

–Can I worship God because I love Him so much?

–Can I worship God because He is worthy of all praise, no matter what my circumstances are?

Absolutely! We can choose to worship God just because of who He is, because we love Him so much and because He is worthy of all praise. As we make that choice, it will eventually become a habit as we fall in love with Him and learn to trust Him more. Do not allow the demonic to steal your praise, because you are created to worship the one true God!

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