

# Wings

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*"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;  
they shall mount up with wings like eagles."*  
Isaiah 40:31



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## Why Good People Go Bad

When a model Christian falls into scandalous sin, everyone is shocked.

But we shouldn't be. If it could happen to King David, it can happen to any one of us.

"Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon" (2 Sam. 12:9).

Few Bible characters occupy the role of epic hero as fully as David. He was a fearless warrior, a leader of men, yet possessed of a gentle heart that composed some of the world's greatest poetry. David displayed a remarkable ability to look past the flaws of individuals and see the potential within. He could shrug off personal attacks from his enemies with a grace that few today can match.

Yet this mythic figure also provides one of the darkest chapters in the biblical record. He committed adultery with his neighbor's wife, killed the neighbor to cover up the deed, then married the widow. It was a despicable crime that in most societies would result in a death sentence.

Nathan's rebuke of King David was sharp and angry. But we are interested

here in the question that Nathan posed to David: *Why?* How could a man with so much talent and such a sterling character commit such an outrageous crime?

Nathan's question has been repeated countless times throughout history by those who have witnessed the moral collapse of other great individuals. A gospel preacher with a rock-solid reputation for soundness gets involved in an affair and leaves his family for the other woman. A sweet and godly lady who teaches Bible classes and cooks meals for shut-ins is discovered to have been also cooking the books at her accounting job, embezzling thousands of dollars from her employer. You can probably provide your own stories of scandal involving people who were considered above reproach. In every case, the same question is first in everyone's mind: *Why?*

The stories of David and all those who have followed in his footsteps are a sobering reminder of how very fragile the boundary is between a life of godliness and one of debauchery. Everyone of us is perfectly capable of crossing that line. If David, "a man after God's own

heart," could do it, who are we to think it could never happen to us? The failures need not be of the hypocritical variety, either. We can go completely off-track in the conviction that we are doing God's work (witness Saul of Tarsus, who killed Christians in the name of God).

The grim truth is, anyone of us can experience a spectacular fall from grace, and the more smug we are in our self-righteousness, the more susceptible we are to a stealth temptation. That's why the writings of the apostles are filled with militaristic jargon that convey the desperate nature of our struggle against sin (fight, war, weapons, armor, etc.). We are engaged in a life-long conflict against a cunning adversary. Slip up for one careless moment, and we can become the next juicy tabloid headline.

The life of the Christian is not for the lazy or faint of heart. It is a life of constant warfare against the wiles of one who is determined to bring us down. And the greatest battles are not "out there," but the ones we must fight in our own hearts; for it is on that field that the war will be won or lost.

— David King