

Wings

*“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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The Wages of Sin

God's forgiveness is a wonderful gift, but forgiveness has its limits.

We learn that lesson the hard way, as we see the fruits of our sin unfold.

“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. Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife” (2 Sam. 12:9-10).

When Nathan the prophet confronted King David, he condemned two sins David had committed: he had killed Uriah the Hittite, and had taken Uriah's wife to be his own wife. Oddly, he never mentioned the adultery with Bathsheba that started the whole sorry affair. But he really didn't have to. By marrying Bathsheba following Uriah's death, David was merely following through on a criminal intent that had been building since he first laid eyes on his neighbor's wife. Taking this woman as his wife was the culmination of a series of sins, a final act of defiance against God.

So what did David have to do to make this sin right? Conventional wis-

dom would argue that repentance required David to put away his ill-gotten wife. But that's not what happened. David uttered a simple confession, “I have sinned against the Lord,” and his sin was blotted out (v. 13). He got to keep his wife.

So David profited from his sin, right? Wrong! Keep reading 2 Samuel and you'll see a man whose guilt haunted him for the rest of his life. The bold, courageous leader of earlier years became a shadow of his former self, indecisive and uncertain. His own children tormented him with their crimes and misdeeds — some of which were reflections of his own misconduct with Bathsheba. Nathan's prediction that “the sword shall never depart from your house” became a nightmare without end, as one child after another met a gruesome end. The nightmare reached its climax when David received word of the death of Absalom in battle. He collapsed in inconsolable grief, haunted by the knowledge that his own sins had indirectly played a role in setting up his son for this awful fate (18:33ff).

Yes, David got to keep his wife; but the couple did *not* live happily ever after. Whatever carnal pleasure he may have found in his new wife's embrace was more than overshadowed by the immense pain he suffered, witnessing the ripple effects of his sin in the lives of others. David got what he wanted, but ended up getting a lot more that he did not bargain for.

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23), but those wages are not held in escrow for payoff in the next life. We start collecting them now, in ways we never anticipated. Even if we sincerely repent of our sins and receive God's forgiveness, the natural consequences of our misdeeds will continue to bear their destructive fruit. All our bitter regrets will not make them go away.

Even in the midst of his suffering, David lived the remainder of his life as a man of faith, clinging to God for the strength and comfort he desperately needed. We, too, can find a measure of solace in our relationship with God, despite our mistakes. But the far better path is to avoid sin in the first place.

– David King