

Temptation

discussion guide

based on **2 Samuel 11** (Linked to sermon of 4/12/16)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This was part of our series on David from the OT – looking at his characteristics that made God describe him as “a man after God’s own heart” (Acts 13.22). The aim of this series is to see how we can be people after God’s own heart as well.

Intro: Name some of the spectacular failures that some of the ‘heroes’ of Scripture make. Why do you think these failures are included in the Bible?

Dan identified several steps David took down the slippery slope to adultery: ignoring God’s warning (Dt 17.17), neglecting his responsibilities (2 Sam 11.1), entertaining sin in his mind (v2), playing with fire (v3-4). Hindsight is a wonderful thing! Can you think of times when you’ve taken those steps on a slippery slope from temptation to sin, where in hindsight you wish you’d turned back?

Sin spreads (eg lies and murder to cover up the adultery – v6-17). How have you seen sin spread?

Sin spoils relationships. It’s easy to see how adultery spoils relationships. How can other sins spoil relationships, too?

Sin separates us from God - see v27. Read Psalm 66.18 and 1 John 1.8-10. Can you think of times when you have felt the spiritual effects of sin?

Up: read Psalm 51.1-12 together (the Psalm of repentance David wrote when God confronted him with the truth of what he’d done).

Temptations change at different times of year and in different seasons of life. Dan suggested four things to help us resist temptation:

- Watch – know your weak points. See Mt 26.41 and 1 Pet 5.8.
- Pray – ‘Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one’ (Mt 6.13) – and listen to God about he wants you to provide you with a way out from temptation (1 Cor 10.13).
- Flee – see 1 Cor 6.18, 10.14; 1 Tim 6.11.
- Be accountable – see James 5.20.

In: Split into your prayer partnerships / triplets (if you have them), or into small single sex groups. Be honest about the temptations you face, and when you are most vulnerable. Chat about what would help you flee different temptations. Pray for each other. Be accountable – check up on each other in the coming weeks. (But don’t fall into pride or judgmentalism if you don’t struggle with the issues they do – there will be issues you struggle with which they don’t!).

Out: what relevance does this story have to your non-Christian friends and colleagues? (eg sin, guilt, remorse, the painful effects of sin on others) How might you use this story to encourage others or speak into their lives in a non-preachy way?