



## [2 Samuel 12:15](#)

(15) Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and it became ill.

*New King James Version*

This is the story of David, Bathsheba, and Uriah the Hittite. Should [God](#) have struck David down as soon as he committed [adultery](#)? It could have started even earlier, when David looked at her while she was naked in the rooftop bathtub. Or was it after he planned with Joab to kill Uriah on the frontline? Or was it after the dirty deed was done, when Uriah was actually dead? God did not step in at any of those times. Do we realize how long He waited?

[II Samuel 12:15](#) says that Nathan departed to his house, and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bore. The whole period of gestation went by before Nathan came and said to David, "You've sinned." How far had David fallen from grace during this nine-month period since he had committed adultery? He had conspired to kill. He had actually not done the dirty deed himself, but it was attributed to him. Then he had taken Bathsheba as his wife.

Notice in [II Samuel 11:27](#) that God had already imputed the evil to him; He had judged the matter. "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord." This is a terrible translation. The margin has it more correctly: "But the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord." God calls a spade a spade, but He forbore to inflict the penalty for an important reason, which is found in Psalm 51. What did God's forbearance produce in David?

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Your loving [kindness](#); according to the multitude of Your tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my [sin](#). For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be

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found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge. ([Psalm 51:1-4](#))

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your [Holy Spirit](#) from me. Restore to me the [joy](#) of Your salvation, and uphold me with Your generous Spirit. Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You. ([Psalm 51:10-13](#))

What did this episode produce in David? [Repentance](#) for sure, and tremendous growth in character. It produced Psalm 51 itself, which is a major piece of writing in all the history of [the world](#). How many countless people has it taught repentance and the building of character? God had greater purposes here than merely punishing transgression. Remember, David did not get away with this, because when Nathan came to him, he said, "From this time on your house is going to have problems, buddy. You're not getting away with this sin. It's going to follow you for the rest of your days, and your childrens' and your grandchildrens'." If the throne of England is any witness to this, the punishment is still falling on David's house. There are problems in the family of David that frequently show up in sexual problems and war. They have terrible dynastic squabbles.

If God blasted everyone at the first sign of sin, we would never have the chance to build character. No one would ever make it into God's Kingdom. We would all be just oil spots on the road. We would never have the chance to repent and say, "God, I was wrong. Lead me in the right way. Please don't take your Holy Spirit from me. If you allow me to live, I'll teach sinners not to do as I have done."

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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