**OH WHAT A TANGLED WEB WE WEAVE***If I Committed Adultery*

Sir Walter Scott wrote an epic poem back in 1808 he titled *Marmion*. From it came a famous quote as he told the tale of how a lie, once spoken, begins to grow and grow until it entraps you in a shameful mess. His quote, “Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.”

The best Biblical example of such a sin that spiraled out of control was that of the adultery committed by David and Bathsheba. One sin, once exposed, led to another, and to another. You know the infamy that came from David’s dishonesty when he tried to cover up his sexual affair after it was revealed Bathsheba was pregnant. What he thought would be a simple fling, a tryst, a one-night stand, turned into a downward vortex that haunted him (them) for the rest of his (their) life.

The story is in 2 Samuel 11-12. It would profit you greatly to read it. It might save your marriage (or future marriage), not to mention your soul(s).

Our world, like that of David’s, thought “What harm could there be in simply giving in to adultery one time?” Let me count the ways. After studying this story and giving thought to all the consequences that resulted from this infamous affair, I want to share with you what I learned. I read the account several times, then I read of the inward turmoil in his heart in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51. Then, I read of the long-term ramifications that trailed his life into old age. Then, I put myself in his place, thinking through all the aftereffects of this “*pleasures of sin for a season*” (“*the fleeting pleasures of sin*” -ESV; “*for a short time to have a taste of the pleasures of sin*” -BBE – Heb. 11:25). See what I learned.

First: Nathan said the sword would never depart from David’s house (2 Samuel 12:10). This was fulfilled in the successive violent deaths of at least three sons—Amnon (2 Sam. 13:29), Absalom (2 Sam. 18:14), and Adonijah (1 Kgs. 2:25).

Second: Nathan also prophesied to David that his own wives would be humiliated before all Israel (2 Sam. 12:11). This was fulfilled when Absalom “*lay with his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel*” (2 Sam. 16:22).

Third: Nathan pronounced the death of the son conceived by David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:14). This was fulfilled [seven](https://bibleask.org/number-seven-significant-bible/) days after Nathan’s sentence (2 Sam. 12:18).

The Lord in His mercy allows men to see that the results of sin are not increased prosperity and happiness, but misery, woe, and [death](https://bibleask.org/how-does-the-bible-refer-to-death/). His protecting hand was withdrawn from David, and the king was permitted to taste the bitter fruits of his sin. And David realized that the pathway to true happiness could not be found in disobedience. Bathsheba learned the same lessons.

That led me to think it would be helpful for men (and their wives) to see at least a few of the many consequences that result from a “moment of weakness” that leads to a life-time of sadness. Reading David’s penitent response to his sins in Psalm 32 and Psalm 51 I discover this – **If I committed adultery...**

* I would need to seek mercy and forgiveness from my Lord.  
  ​ Psa. 51: 1 Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of   
   Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions.   
   2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.   
   3 For I acknowledge my transgressions, And my sin is always before me.  
   Psa. 32: 5 I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my   
   transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.
* I would suffer from the emotional consequences of guilt.  
   Psa. 32: 3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long.   
   4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

Psa. 51: 8 Make me hear joy and gladness, That the bones You have broken may rejoice.

* My wife (children & grandchildren) would suffer the scars of this sin for life.

Psalm 32: 10 Many sorrows shall be to the wicked…  
 12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation…  
 11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, Do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

I can think of so many other ways that I would “reap what I sow” – like:  
 \* A break in trust and intimacy in my marriage (possibly divorce).  
 \* My influence as a Christian would be severely damaged.  
 \* Satan would take great joy in my suffering and shame.  
 \* The reputation of my family would be compromised.  
 \* My friendships and fellowship would be scarred for years.  
 \* The pain and shame brought to the other woman would stay with her for life.

I have sat with men (and women) who wept bitterly over the transgression of adultery. Yes, like David, God is gracious and merciful and will forgive the sin. But, like David, God does not take away all the bitter fruit of sin. Therefore, I write these words to all men (and women) who have been brought up in a world that acts like adultery is just an indiscretion – a harmless tryst – an inconsequential act. The wages of sin is very high (Rom. 6:23). Sin always takes you further than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and costs more than you want to pay.

Like Scott said, “Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.” Take Job’s advice: “*I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman*” (Job 31:1). If David had done that upon his rooftop it would have saved him a lifetime of regret. Let us all make that covenant with Job. It just might save a soul(s) from death and cover a multitude of sins (Jam. 5:19-20).

I love you. – Rick