

Guardrails for Your Relationship

Introduction. An early, notable precursor of modern guardrails was patented in 1893. The first modern W-shaped beam that we're all familiar with was patented by Samuel R. Garner in 1933. They became the standard for preventing vehicles from leaving the roadway.

There are many challenges that arise in the lives of married couples: Illness, trauma, life changes, money, communication, anger, bad habits, employment, raising children, and misplaced priorities can put stress and strain on a marriage. However, one of the greatest challenges that married couples can face is the temptation to commit sexual sin.

When God makes something good, the devil comes along and wants to ruin it. This is what happened to David and Bathsheba. In both testaments of the Bible, sexual sin is condemned by God (Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 20:10; Malachi 3:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 2:22; cp. Proverbs 2:16-22; 5:1-23; 7:1-27; 9:13-18).

We're going to look at the account of David and Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11-12 so we can identify five "guardrails" couples can use to steer clear from sexual sin.

I. The Guardrail of Inward Thoughts (2 Samuel 11:2-5)

- A. If a spouse will guard his or her thoughts about another, it's less likely that sexual sin will be committed. David fell prey to the devil's age-old tactic of the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). He "saw a woman ... and the woman was very beautiful to look upon." Next, he "took her." Lastly, he "lay with her" and she became pregnant.
- B. Consider the progression: looking, lingering, lusting, taking, and sinning. This same progression of thought and action is found in the sin of Eve (Genesis 3:6) and the sin of Achan (Joshua 7:20-21) [Note #4].

II. The Guardrail of Neighborly Respect (2 Samuel 11:6-27)

- A. If a spouse will guard his or her respect for self and others, then sexual sin is unlikely to occur. David didn't respect himself and the vow of marriage that he had made so many times with so many women. He had so many wives at this time that it was easy for him to commit adultery with this woman.
 - 1. David was first married to Michal (1 Samuel 18:27). Then, the six wives of David that he had in Hebron are listed in 2 Samuel 3:2-5.
 - 2. Later, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:13-16; cp. 1 Chronicles 3:1-9). The taking of many wives may have led David to be desensitized in his respect of women. In other words, what was Bathsheba to David, married or not, but just another woman with whom to have sex?
- B. Bathsheba also didn't respect herself or Uriah, her husband. Both David and Bathsheba didn't respect each other or God and His law. Later, when the king tried to cover up his sin, he didn't respect Uriah, one of his loyal soldiers. "Plan B," delivered by the victim himself, was to put Bathsheba's husband in a

position to be killed in battle and it worked. Paul said, “Love does no harm to a neighbor ...” (Romans 13:10).

III. The Guardrail of Godly Conscience (2 Samuel 12:1-13)

- A. If a spouse will guard his or her conscience regarding sin, one can be forgiven of sexual sin. The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to preach to David and expose his sin. Nathan said to David, “You are the man” (2 Samuel 12:7). After David was rebuked by Nathan for his sin, and given the consequences of his sin, he said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13).
- B. Upon this confession, the Lord put away David’s sin. We must guard against hardening our hearts or dulling our consciences to sexual sin or any other sin (Psalm 32:5). David also shows a humble attitude toward his sin in Psalm 51. This psalm is attributed to David, and it speaks of his confession, contrition, and cleansing after his sin with Bathsheba.

IV. The Guardrail of Outward Reputation (2 Samuel 12:14)

- A. If a spouse will guard his or her reputation and character and do nothing to ruin it, then sexual sin will less likely be committed. David damaged his reputation and that of his people. He gave “great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (2 Samuel 12:14). A single moment of lust led to disastrous consequences.
- B. A spouse has to think about this before committing sexual sin. Just one act will damage your reputation and give the world an opportunity to blaspheme God. Those yet in the world might think, “If this is the way a ‘Christian’ acts, then I don’t want to have anything to do with Christianity” (Proverbs 6:32; Romans 2:22-24).

V. The Guardrail of Collateral Damage (2 Samuel 12:14-23)

- A. If a spouse will consider the future consequences of his or her actions and guard what could happen, then sexual sin will less likely be committed. David had to suffer the unhappy consequences of his one act of lust. This pleasure for a moment brought tragedy for a lifetime. The immediate consequence would be the death of his son. The Lord struck him with illness and he died. The delayed consequence would be troubles and death (“the sword shall never depart”) within David’s own family members (2 Samuel 12:10-11). This weakened David’s house and the leadership of the nation as a whole (2 Samuel 13-20). The Lord punished David for his sexual sin.
- B. Today, infidelity brings chaos. What follows are feelings like guilt, regret, pain, sorrow, anxiety, suspicion, distrust, anger, resentment, and maybe even divorce. There’s also problems (both immediate and long-term) that children can experience if they’re part of the equation.

Conclusion. The adultery that David committed with Bathsheba was a violation of the seventh and the tenth commandment and it was a sin (2 Samuel 11:27). Christians know the life of King David. They know the many great acts he did from slaying Goliath in his youth to his grand address about the temple in his old age.

Nevertheless, David's sin of adultery stands out and overshadows all the rest. It's what people remember about David (1 Kings 15:4-5).

Never forget that the devil can use your years together against you. He can get you to feel "tired and bored" with your marriage so that you'll go out find something "new and thrilling" with someone else, or identify your spouse as "emotionally unavailable" so that finding someone else is far more palatable.

Learn from David and Bathsheba to resist these urges and continue to work to make yourself lovable and admirable, and your marriage fresh and exciting. Guard yourself against sexual sin and maintain a pure and blessed marriage. However, the beauty of God's plan of salvation is that any sin can be forgiven with humble confession of wrong and seeking forgiveness.

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