

Discovering ways to live with integrity, being the same person on the inside and outside.



Living with integrity

## REVIEW

Recap on your experience of the challenge. Ask the following questions:

### How did it go? Was it helpful?

If you weren't able to try the challenge, explore the question:

### Where and how did you experience God last week?

## REAL LYFE HOOKED

Temptation may not seem that much of an issue – but it affects us all in different ways and undergirds a host of social issues – divorce, drug abuse, obesity, pornography, debt, cravings and addictions. Temptation, according to Dallas Willard, “is driven by dissatisfaction with life and what you’ve got.”

## READ



### 2 Samuel 11.

## 1-17 David and Bathsheba

<sup>1</sup> It was now spring, the time when kings go to war.

David sent out the whole Israelite army under the command of Joab and his officers. They destroyed the Ammonite army and surrounded the capital city of Rabbah, but David stayed in Jerusalem.

<sup>2-4</sup> Late one afternoon, David got up from a nap and was walking around on the flat roof of his palace. A beautiful young woman was down below in her courtyard, bathing as her religion required. David

happened to see her, and he sent one of his servants to find out who she was. The servant came back and told David, “Her name is Bathsheba. She is the daughter of Eliam, and she is the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”

David sent some messengers to bring her to his palace. She came to him, and he slept with her. Then she returned home. <sup>5</sup> But later, when she found out that she was going to have a baby, she sent someone to David with this message: “I’m pregnant!” <sup>6</sup> David sent a message to Joab: “Send Uriah the Hittite to me.” Joab sent Uriah <sup>7</sup> to David’s palace, and David asked him, “Is Joab well? How is the army doing? And how about the war?” <sup>8</sup> Then David told Uriah, “Go home

and clean up.” Uriah left the king’s palace, and David had dinner sent to Uriah’s house. <sup>9</sup> But Uriah didn’t go home. Instead, he slept outside the entrance to the royal palace, where the king’s guards slept. <sup>10</sup> Someone told David that Uriah had not gone home. So the next morning David asked him, “Why didn’t you go home? Haven’t you been away for a long time?”

<sup>11</sup> Uriah answered, “The sacred chest and the armies of Israel and Judah are camping out somewhere in the fields with our commander Joab and his officers and troops. Do you really think I would go home to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? I swear by your life that I would not!”

<sup>12</sup> Then David said, "Stay here in Jerusalem today, and I will send you back tomorrow." Uriah stayed in Jerusalem that day. Then the next day, <sup>13</sup> David invited him for dinner. Uriah ate with David and drank so much that he got drunk, but he still did not go home. He went out and slept on his mat near the

palace guards. <sup>14</sup> Early the next morning, David wrote a letter and told Uriah to deliver it to Joab. <sup>15</sup> The letter said: "Put Uriah on the front line where the fighting is the worst. Then pull the troops back from him, so that he will be wounded and die."

<sup>16</sup> Joab had been carefully watching the city of Rabbah, and he put Uriah in a place where he knew there were some of the enemy's best soldiers. <sup>17</sup> When the men of the city came out, they fought and killed some of David's soldiers—Uriah the Hittite was one of them.

Contemporary English Verse - CEV

## REFLECT

Setting the scene:

- ▶ David's character is the focus of this account. As King he should have been at war with his army after hostilities resumed in the more bearable spring weather – but he remains in Jerusalem.
- ▶ While the army kills, David is 'killing time'. After a siesta, from his rooftop vantage point, the King sights Bathsheba. The glance becomes the gaze. Her husband is with the army and David's desire overrides her personal feelings as she is taken to the palace.

- ▶ The pregnancy begins a cover up. The gift of food sent to Uriah's home is to entice Uriah to relax and enjoy a romantic evening with his wife. However Uriah's loyalty was to the army still fighting. A drunken evening and a final attempt to weaken Uriah and get him to go home fail. Perhaps Uriah suspects. He is also (in contrast to David) keeping to the abstinence requirements of those in combat.
- ▶ David's desperate bid to cover up results in handing Uriah over to the frontline of the battle where he dies. David thinks it's all over – until Nathan

the prophet arrives (Ch 12) and the whole sordid episode is exposed. This sin also has a knock-on effect within David's family and the stability of the royal line. You can read of David's confession before God in Psalm 51.

- ▶ What are the 'shockers' and 'blockers' for you in this passage?
- ▶ What has been 'tempting' for you lately? What 'dissatisfactions' in life are you currently experiencing?
- ▶ How do you resist temptations?

*'The requirements for a loving, committed relationship, run counter to our instant gratification, disposable society. We are bombarded by messages of ease and convenience but come home to relationships that require a commitment to making it work.'* Author unknown

## I RESPOND

Hooked challenge: This session leads us to explore the issues associated with temptation. As a group, try to create a challenge to help you to overcome temptations and stop you focussing on dissatisfactions.

**Challenge ideas:**  
If you struggle to come up with your own challenge then why not try one of the following...

### 01 Celebration

Celebration is a key event throughout the Bible. Joy is strength. Its absence creates weakness and open us up to temptations. When we've had a bad day – the temptation is to shop, we seek retail therapy to cheer us up. We buy stuff we don't really need to make us feel better. Set aside some time this week to celebrate, to give thanks to

God – enjoy a great movie, dance, sing, feast. True celebration is the inverse of hedonism – which is the demand for more and more pleasure. Celebration is gratitude even for small things and enables us to 'rejoice in the Lord always.'

### 02 Fasting

Fasting is not about being holy or hungry – it's about controlling desire and impulse. You may want to fast from food, alcohol or chocolate but could equally be from TV, your iPod or Facebook. You may want to fast from shopping, your credit card or trashy magazines. Use the time to focus on prayer or serving others.

\* Health Warning – please consult your GP if under medication or medical supervision before fasting.

### 03 Thankfulness

If temptation is driven by 'dissatisfaction with life and what you've got' – then according to Dallas Willard, the antidote is to 'find a way to be grateful and thankful, and dwell on it'. Take some time to write a list of all the things you are grateful and thankful for. Keep adding to it each day and share it with the group next time you meet. Colossians 3.15-17, especially verse 17 maybe a helpful scripture to focus on.

### GROUP PRAYER:

You might like to commit to praying for each person in the group this week as you explore ways to overcome temptations and satisfy unhelpful desires.

## Don't Forget

1. To record your experience of the challenge so that you can accurately share it with your lyfe group when you next meet. You might like to text/tweet each other throughout the experience!
2. Consider posting your created challenge on the lyfe facebook site for others to view.

## More resources on 'Real Lyfe'

- Listen to video interview with James Catford
- Read article by Antony Billington on Holiness
- Read 'lyfe story' biographies on Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Desmond Tutu
- Recommended reading – *The Rest of God: Restoring Your Soul* by Restoring Sabbath by Mark Buchanan