

CREATING A LEGACY

Creating a Legacy of Moral Purity

2 Samuel 11:1–5



LET'S BEGIN HERE

There was no one mightier than David. As a lad David had faithfully protected his family's sheep from both the lion and the bear; then he astounded the nation of Israel when he felled the giant Goliath. He proved himself a valiant warrior, and, with David as commander-in-chief, no army was more feared than Israel's. He was a national symbol for truth, righteousness, justice, and compassion. He was a musician, songwriter, and visionary. That was the mighty David, the anointed one, a man after God's own heart. *What a legacy!*

And yet, at the height of his success, with a palace filled with faithful servants and luxuries immeasurable, King David fell in the midst of battle. But his lost battle wasn't against the lion, the bear, the giant, or the Philistines. *David lost the battle against himself.*

Before we examine the tragic episode in David's life that would forever mar his legacy, it's important that we understand that this is not simply an objective autopsy of one man's failure. It's a warning to all of us. Everything that's discovered about David—his mistakes and his weaknesses—apply to everyone. We need to remind ourselves of that daily, or after our autopsy of David's fall we could end up on the coroner's table ourselves.

What kind of legacy for tomorrow are you creating today?

When the next generation looks back on your life, how will they remember you?

Will your children and friends remember you for having mentored them by etching your affirmations in stone and writing your criticisms in dust?

Such mentoring represents a fabulous legacy to leave behind.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. King David: Autopsy of a Moral Fall

Through the years, David had allowed things into his life that weakened him—or at least stirred carnal desire and gave rise to precarious opportunities for temptation. Although we could probably make a long list of contributing



Quotable

Few things destroy legacies like a moral compromise.

Whatever it takes, don't go there.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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factors, let's focus on three areas of weakness that set up David for the fall. First, *polygamy weakened David*. Second, *success weakened David*. Third, *indulgence weakened David*.

2. How the Mighty Have Fallen in the Midst of Battle

David pushed back the silk sheets, yawned, stretched, rubbed his eyes, and threw his legs to the side of the bed. The warm breeze billowed the drapes in the upstairs bedchamber and brought with it restlessness—an itch that needed scratching. We all know the feeling. If David were alive today, he would have sat back on the couch with the remote control in hand and started flipping through channels, or he would have stared at his computer screen and started surfing the net aimlessly. Too tired to be productive, too alert to go to bed, David crossed over into the twilight zone of temptation. He got out of bed and took a stroll, looking for something—he didn't know what—anything to settle his restless spirit.

Hearing the sounds of splashing in the distance, David stepped onto the patio roof, a place where he could go to gather his wits, pray to God, or write and sing psalms. This time, though, he had neither harp nor pen, and his gaze was not toward heaven. “From the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance” (2 Samuel 11:2). At that moment, he lost cognizance of everything else as a glance became a stare. Lust sprang forth and hijacked his reason. At that point, he forgot the people he loved, the nation that looked to him for moral guidance, the little children that night who were praying for their king. He even forgot God.

Temptation had brought sin to David's door. After David indulged his sinful impulse, we can't help but wonder if the words of his lament over Jonathan's death several years earlier came back to haunt him that night: “How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!” (1:25).



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LET'S LIVE IT

Few things destroy legacies like a moral fall. Moral falls become the great “exceptions” in otherwise exemplary lives. Healing can come, forgiveness can occur, but the effects will always linger. Some of you reading this have been there and know firsthand the pain of trying to recover from the effects of a failure. Others may feel like you’re at the brink of a fall and will plummet over the edge if the right opportunity presents itself. Some of you may have secret sins that you don’t take seriously—an occasional longing glance, “harmless” fantasies, perhaps even a couple minutes a day playing “what if.” You’ve convinced yourself that things are under control and fooled yourself into thinking it’s just a harmless snack to tide over the urges of your flesh. Then there are a few of you who are so busy with life that cheating never crosses your minds. In fact, you’re part of accountability groups, enjoy happy and healthy marriages, and you’re convinced that you wouldn’t trade in any of it for anything.

The truth is that every one of us is at risk. Some may have more opportunity, but each of us has the same human weakness and susceptibility to temptation and moral failure. Therefore, we must heed the warning of David and do what we can to preserve our legacy and protect our moral purity.

So how can we preserve our legacy of moral purity? There are two parts to the process.

- First, *we need to keep from thinking we’re safe*. Therefore, we need to acknowledge our weakness and guard our leisure.
- Second, *we need to keep from falling into sin*. Therefore, we need to remain accountable and rehearse the consequences before the fact.

What practical steps will you take to preserve your own moral purity?



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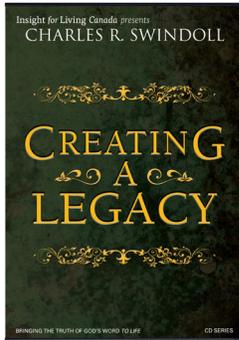
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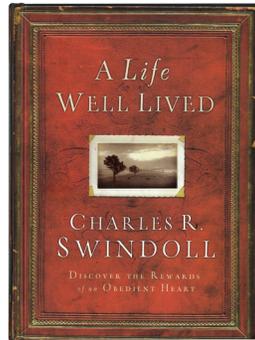
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2 Samuel 11:1–5



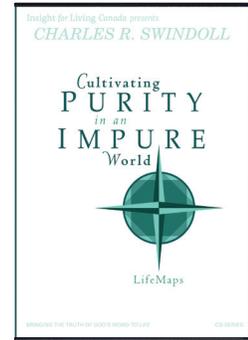
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