

**The Tree of Life is a weekly teaching summary.  
The Tree of Life for week ending 08/12/01.**

***“The Peace of God Which Surpasses all comprehension shall guard your hearts.” Phi 4:7***

**The searing of the Conscience**

Our corrected translation of Phi 4:7 reads ***“In fact, that spiritual peace or prosperity from the source of the God, which surpasses or rises above and beyond all comprehension, shall garrison your hearts.”***

We have been studying what it means to have the peace of God ***“garrison your hearts”*** by noting the Essence of the heart in the Biblical sense.

Therefore, we are studying some of the components of the heart.

We have noted that the peace of God guards or garrisons our ***Frame of Reference***, which is the entrance to the heart, the first place where metabolized doctrine goes.

We also noted that the peace of God guards our ***Memory Center***, the area for the recall of Bible doctrine.

Next is the ***Conscience***, the place where the norms and standards are kept that are developed from Bible doctrine.

How important is the conscience?

Heb 9:13-14 ***“For if the blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who have been defiled, sanctify for the cleansing of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”***

1Ti 1:19 ***“keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.”***

The conscience either excuses or accuses us.

***Conscience*** is that mental faculty by which one distinguishes between right and wrong.

It also urges the individual to do what he recognizes to be right and to restrain him from doing that which he recognizes to be wrong.

Our conscience needs to be protected from hardness of the heart and scar tissue of the soul. Searing of the conscience is the goal of demonic warfare and often starts out being very subtle, as is the case with the sins of omission. The conscience needs to be kept sensitive to the things of God. The sin of omission, for example, those times that we do not operate in the plan of God when we should. We may not consider it to be an outward form of rebellion but the danger is for the conscience to become insensitive and apathetic towards the thing of God. This can happen to believers at any stage of spiritual growth, even believers who have a lot doctrine can become too familiar with God's calling upon their life. David gives us a good illustration of this.

**2Sa 11:1 “Then it happened in the spring, at the time when kings go out to battle, that David sent Joab and his servants with him and all Israel, and they destroyed the sons of Ammon and besieged Rabbah.”**

The norm and standard was for the king to go out to battle with his soldiers, however, David is beginning to reject the doctrinal norms and standards in his soul. David was not only the commander of the Jewish army but he was the king of Israel. Instead of going out to lead the battle, he sent Joab his chief of staff and his nephews. The next part of the verse reveals David's sin of omission and the beginning of the effect it has on his conscience, 2Sa 11:1 ”...**But David stayed at Jerusalem.**”

The word for “**stayed**” is the Hebrew word “**jashab**” which means that he not only remained, but he had no intention of ever going out on the battlefield again.

**2Sa 11:2 “Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.”**

Apparently he had been sleeping during the day, another indication of David's spiritual status, he was sleeping during the day while his soldiers are out fighting the war he should be leading them in.

Next, David sees Bathsheba and then follows up with an investigation as to her identity. Remember that David was married to numerous beautiful women, but when the conscience begins to become hardened and seared toward the things of God, when it becomes infected by arrogance, “nothing” is sacred, not Doctrine, Property, Privacy or even Loyalty.

**2Sa 11:3 “So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”**

David is about to sell his integrity and character for a woman bathing in a bathtub, he will pay for it as we will see. David is actually about to destroy his integrity, he will still have authority, but authority without integrity is useless and usually becomes abusive. What is about to happen to David and his conscience is because of his neglect of God's calling upon his life.

This passage indicates that there was one place where David should be, God's will for him was to be leading the armies and instead he is staying home. David's real problem began by being in the wrong geographical location. Even though he is a mature believer, as high as you can go, his conscience is about to be hardened. Staying home and not fighting the battle God has called us to, inevitably will affect the conscience, 1Ti 1:18-19.

David's negative decisions from the past and his sin of omission is now about to catch up with him.

David, at this time is married to seven women:

Ahinoam of Jezreel, 1Sa 25:43.

Abigail of Carmel, in 1Sa 25:43-44.

Maacah, the daughter of the king of Geshur, 2Sa 3:3.

Haggith, the mother of Adonijah, 2Sa 3:4.

Abital and Eglah, 2Sa 3:4-5.

Michal, the daughter of king Saul, 1Sa 18:27.

In addition to that he has at least 10 mistresses and then he took even more wives, as 2Sa 5:13 says.

Remember that polygamy was forbidden by the word of God, even in David's day, Deu 17:17 ***“neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly increase silver and gold for himself.”***

Remember also that we are talking about a man described for us in Act 2:25, ***“For David says of Him, I was always beholding the Lord in my presence; for He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken.”***

In Act 13:22, ***“And after He had removed him, [Saul] He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all my will.”***

David made some very serious negative decisions and because he has rejected God's plan, these decisions are beginning to catch up with him and his conscience is about to become hardened.

It is shocking the things a believer will do if his conscience is not cleansed by the word of God.

So David summons her to the palace and then takes her to his bedroom, where David forces himself upon her, even though he has discovered she is the wife of Uriah, a warrior who is fighting for the army of Israel. Uriah was one of David's knights and had been decorated, 2Sa 23:39, and 1Ch 11:41.

2Sa 11:4 ***“And David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.”***

She didn't get there because of her own volition, the Hebrew verb for *took* is ***“laqach”*** (law-kakh') which means to snatch, seize, carry away or to take away, and the word is used in the imperfect tense meaning he did it more than once.

Another imperfect tense is used in the Hebrew word for *sex*, the verb ***“shakab”*** which means to have sex many times. This verb is also used for rape or forcing oneself upon another. It is the same verb used for one of David's sons raping one of David's daughters in 2Sa 13:11-14.

David has forgotten how to stay cleansed from the defilement of the world, as Psa 119:9 teaches, ***“By keeping it according to Thy word.”***

The point is that David is beginning to have no conscience whatsoever. He doesn't care about God's word or God's will. He doesn't care about his own army or Uriah or even Bathsheba. His conscience is becoming defiled, Tit 1:15 ***“To the pure, all things are***

***pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled.***

In 2Sa 11:5 we read ***“And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, I am pregnant.”***

Bathsheba has become pregnant and to try to cover up her actions David calls Uriah home from the battle, hoping it will be thought that Uriah has gotten his wife pregnant. When this does not work, David gives orders to Joab, the commander of the army, which arranges for Uriah's death in battle. It all looks like the perfect crime, but David's sin is discovered and dealt with by Nathan, the prophet of God. The point here is that we all need to remember that if a man after God's own heart, Act 13:22, can fall so quickly and so far, surely we are all capable of similar failures. If you reject God's calling upon your life, and the many invitations He provides, it's just a matter of time before the conscience begins to become less sensitive and hardened toward the plan of God for your life. With David, his real problem was his arrogance.

God has been with David in all of his military encounters and given him victory over all his enemies and God has given David a great name. But like so many believers, David has become stagnant, idle, dull, passive and bored. It's easy for the flesh to get bored and familiar with the plan of God and many believers do.

The slow battles that we face many times are not a very exciting kind of war to wage. David has also gotten used to an easier life, he has now moved up in the world, from the wilderness, his accommodations are better.

He no longer lives in a tent but in a palace. The prosperity and the blessings are now beginning to influence his dedication and devotion to God.

Pro 19:15 ***“Laziness casts into a deep sleep, And an idle man will suffer hunger.”***

David is starting to become like Saul, in that he is willing to let others go out and fight his battles for him, remember Saul let David fight Goliath. Many believers are willing to let others go out and fight the battles rather than become part of the team that God has placed them on. They just sit back and let others use their time, talent, treasure, and spiritual gift. Their conscience too becomes hardened to the things of God.

Now notice in 2Sa 11:4 ***“and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.”***

As a believer in The Lord Jesus Christ, Bathsheba followed a principle of doctrine found in codex number 3 of the Mosaic law in Lev 15:18 ***“if a man copulates with a woman, so that there is seminal emission, they shall both bathe in water and be unclean until evening.”***

After she cleansed herself she left the palace, she would not return to her home in a state of impurity.

Uriah had been out to war and was not at home, therefore the source of her pregnancy could only be David. A very dangerous situation because both David and Bathsheba knew Lev 20:10 ***“If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, the one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall both be put to death.”***

In verses 6-15, we have David's arrogance and what happens when the conscience begins to become hardened and seared toward the things of God.

It's interesting that there's a passage taught by David to his son Solomon in Pro 6:16-19 ***“There are six things which the Lord hates, yes, seven which are an abomination to Him: Arrogant eyes [David's mental attitude], a lying tongue [David flattering Uriah], and hands that shed innocent blood, [the murder of Uriah] a heart that devises wicked plans [David's conscience devising conspiracy], feet that run rapidly to evil, [David on the rooftop] a false witness who utters lies [David's lies to cover his tracks] and one who spreads strife among brothers [David ordering joab to put Uriah on the front line].”***

In 2Sa 11:6, David brings a commander away from his unit and from a combat situation. Uriah the Hittite is a hero and a knight in the Jewish army, a professional soldier. But David's conscience has been defiled and seared, therefore he doesn't care about others, he only cares about himself.

This was the beginning of one of David's greatest failures, the abuse of his authority. What he did sexually was sinful but what he does now is evil, he abuses and misuses his authority. 1Ki 15:5 ***“because David did what was right in the sight of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.”***

This is why it is so important to have the peace of God which surpasses all comprehension guarding an garrisoning your conscience, if not evil will get to you and evil is much more devastating to the soul than sin.

David has turned on Uriah and Uriah the Hittite was such a great man that he is even mentioned in the genealogy of The Lord Jesus Christ, Mat 1:6 ***“And to Jesse was born David the king. And to David was born Solomon by her {who had been the wife} of Uriah;”***

David sinned against the Lord in operation “Bathsheba,” but it isn't the adultery that is mentioned, it is the evil that is related to Uriah the Hittite, who was both a great believer in Christ and a great professional soldier.

Remember, David is not in apostasy, David is involved in evil. The conscience that has been defiled and seared can still hear the word of God, it just doesn't respond.

Pro 5:14 ***“I was almost in all evil in the midst of the assembly and congregation.”***

You can have positive toward doctrine and still develop a conscience that has been defiled and seared by not responding to it.

Jam 1:22 ***“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”***

David knew doctrine and he knew what was right, however, he just chose to do what he wanted. As a mature believer, David has developed a conscience that has been defiled and seared and is using and flattering a soldier who has been very faithful in serving David and the nation of Israel.

A conscience that has been defiled and seared uses others.

Now in 2Sa 11:5-6 ***“And the woman conceived; and she sent and told David, and said, I am pregnant. Then David sent to Joab, saying, send me Uriah the Hittite. So Joab sent Uriah to David.”***

This was authority arrogance, David was using his authority to command Uriah to come back to Jerusalem. Remember this principle, “arrogance ruins good people.”

David was a man of great moral courage, great battle courage and the greatest integrity, however, his conscience that has been so defiled and seared that it has now turned him to immoral evil lying and he has ended up as a criminal and a murderer.

These passages were not written by God the Holy Spirit to give license to commit David's sins. This passage was written to warn us about the devastating effects of a conscience that has been defiled and seared.

David is one of the three greatest believers in the Old Testament, and we are to emulate David's greatness related to doctrine not David's sin related to his seared conscience.