

Faith that Breaks the Power of Sin — November 19 & 20, 2016
Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: 2 Samuel 12:1-14

- Summarize the story that Nathan told David (1-4). What was David's response (5-6)? How did Nathan turn the tables on David (7)? What do you think of Nathan's approach to confronting David? How might the exchange have gone differently if Nathan had skipped straight to telling David he knew what he did?
- Describe all of David's privileges (7-8). How did Nathan describe David's sins (9)? Summarize the consequences of them (11-14). What was David's confession (13)?
- Hindsight usually tells us that sin isn't self-contained. But what about in the moments leading up to committing a sin? Why doesn't the truth that our sins will harm other people stop us in our tracks? Going forward, ask God to make this a flashing warning sign for you. And if you're troubled about past sins wounding others or igniting generational sin in your family, ask the Lord to bring wholeness, freedom, and restoration to your loved ones.

Day Two: Matthew 6:25-34

- What are some of the specific things Jesus tells us not to worry about (25)? What rhetorical questions does he ask (25, 27-28)? How do people compare to birds (26)? What about flowers (28-30)? At this point, what does Jesus say about our faith (30)?
- Almost any sin traced to its root is really just a lack of faith. When have you personally found this to be true? What helped you find freedom and more faith? Ask God to keep you on this path.
- When we worry, what questions do we ask (31)? Ultimately, why should we *not* worry (32)? What should we do instead (33)? What is Jesus' advice for being present in the moment (34)?
- Identify a few verses from this passage that are helpful to you in overcoming sin and growing in faith. This week, memorize them and begin reciting them aloud whenever you sense sin looming.

Day Three: Mark 15:1-15

- Set the scene of this text (1). What question did Pilate ask Jesus (2)? What was Jesus' answer (2)? In response, describe Pilate's thoughts and actions (3-5). At this point in the story, what are your thoughts on Pilate? What exactly do you think amazed him?
- Describe the festival custom and how it played out this time (6-11). What did Pilate ask the crowd (12)? How did they respond (13)? How did Pilate try to reason with them (14)? How did the crowd end up getting their way (14-15)?
- Consider the beginning of verse 15: "Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them." People pleasing, and perhaps self-preservation, drove Pilate to make the wrong decision about Jesus. In what ways can you relate to this? Confess this to the Lord and ask him to free you from these tendencies.

Day Four: John 3:1-21

- Describe Nicodemus (1). When did he come to Jesus, and what did he say to him (2)? How did Jesus reply (3)? Describe Nicodemus' confused response (4)? Summarize Jesus' explanation of what it means to be born again (5-8). What did he make of Nicodemus' continued lack of understanding (10-12)?

- Note that, likely due to the cowardice of weak faith, Nicodemus came to Jesus under the cover of night. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any ways you similarly engage the Lord. What is he speaking, and how do you think you should respond?
- Also note that despite Nicodemus' wavering faith, Jesus still engages and communicates some important truths. Ask that God would be similarly gracious to you in your moments of little faith.
- How does Jesus possess heavenly knowledge (13)? What does he say about his own death (14-15)? Summarize John's elaboration on Jesus' proclamation (16-18). What word picture does he paint of light and darkness and people's interactions with these agents (19-21)?

Day Five: Romans 7:14-25

- What makes us unspiritual (14)? What confuses Paul about himself (15)? But what truth does this teach him about the law (16-17)? What does not dwell within us (18)? What evidence points to this (18-19)? What is the origin of all this wrongdoing (20)?
- Which of Paul's words or phrases in this paragraph really highlight the role sin plays in the human condition? Which of his phrases really hit home for you? Why?
- What does Paul observe about the law's work in his own life (21, 25)? What does this feel like (22-23)? What one word would you use to describe this struggle? What does all of this lead Paul to proclaim about himself (24)? From what does he want to be rescued (24)? What reason does he have to be grateful (25)?
- Meditate on verses 24-25. Consider how deep awareness of your sin is extremely revelatory and ultimately grows your faith. No one but Jesus can get us out of this mess. Take a moment to praise God in writing or out loud for his ability to rescue and deliver you.