

They often say that for each one of us it's not a matter of "if," but of "when." And this is especially true of those in the 16-18 year old category. What are we talking about here – we're talking about a fender bender, a car accident. They range in severity from the oops-bumped into someone's bumper at the stop sign all the way to totaling of the vehicle. Sometimes it is no fault of our own, but there are times where we caused it. And as we play it back in our heads, what happened? We took the power and speed of the vehicle and the rules for granted. We thought we could get somewhere faster, or we took our eyes off the road, or we were distracted, and then the crash happened. Sometimes you paid the damages between to the offended party and your insurance cost rose. Sometimes the police got involved and you got a ticket and your name in the paper. Sometimes nobody knew except for the tree with the mark or the basketball pole with the paint scraped off it. It's not a matter of if, but of when. For David it was a night in the springtime for a terrible horrendous crash.

### **Undeniable Sinners need an Undeniable Savior.**

*"In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant." So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house. David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?" Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah are staying in tents, and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!" Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home. In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die." So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover Uriah the Hittite died...When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD." (2 Samuel 11:1-17,26-27 NIV11).*

What carnage we come upon even if so few knew. But God lets us see the report. This not a "no fault" accident. David is to blame. For David, you can see, humanly speaking, how it happened. He took it all for granted. He got careless with his heart, his faith, his power, and the use of his influence and authority. He coveted the wife of another man even though God said "Do not covet your neighbor's wife" (10<sup>th</sup>). He refused to look away and give her privacy when she was uncovered and bathing, and instead he lusted after her in his heart (6<sup>th</sup>). And when he found out it was his secret service man's wife and he was away at war, he didn't flinch but summoned her to commit adultery with him (6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>). And then he sent her back, pretending as though nothing happened (8<sup>th</sup>). But it did happen. And it was no accident.

And then, even though it was a sinful union God blessed with a baby. But David saw this as a liability and now instead of wanting Uriah, his faithful soldier, away, he summoned him back pretending that he was concerned with the army (8<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>), encouraging him to go home, to deceive him into thinking the baby was his own. But Uriah proved a faithful soldier and committed to the cause. David's only cause was deceit. David broke the second commandment for he was the leader of God's people, and he misrepresented God and was full of lies and deceit (2<sup>nd</sup>). Then David tried hard to get Uriah to betray his honor even making him drunk, breaking the fifth commandment (5<sup>th</sup>) and trying to get Uriah to sin against his conscience – trying to make him break the first commandment (1<sup>st</sup>).

When Uriah proved faithful, David used his power and influence once again for sin – plotting the murder of Uriah (5<sup>th</sup>) and deceiving people into thinking it was a regular casualty of war (2<sup>nd</sup>). He betrayed Joab and others too who unwittingly helped in this sinful plot (8<sup>th</sup>). This hero David, this “man after God’s own heart,” trampled God’s commands and ran away from anything right and good. Then after having Uriah killed, he took Uriah’s wife into his house for his wife. David didn’t just cause a fender bender, but a multicar pile-up and manslaughter. He never stopped the car, but ran over people, consciences, and lives, even his own conscience and faith as though they were nothing, and just kept driving. Nobody seemed to care. David had a gorgeous babe for a wife, and now a son with her, and nobody could stop him. It seemed like it worked out. *“But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.”*

It's not a matter of if, but of when. That holds true with fender benders, but it holds true with sin too. What is your attitude towards sin? You see what you want, and use whatever is at your disposal to get it, no matter how many consciences you run over, least of all your own, and tricking others to believe you did nothing wrong? As long as nobody says anything, or you can block them out, everything is ok? Is that right? Or maybe as long as you don't feel bad about it, or as long as you can get away with it, it's not so bad?

I remember as a kid I did something I knew was wrong and nobody saw it. I looked up at the sky in fear thinking lightning would strike me from heaven, but it never did. Did that mean what I did was ok? No. Is it any different now that I'm old and better at covering up my sin – my pride, my lust, my ego? No. What is the sin you've turned a blind eye toward in your life – scrapping every car on the side of the road, knocking off mirrors, and you just keep driving thinking all is good. The devil and your sinful nature love when you grow careless, when you don't think about God, but only about what you want and how to get it, and keep moving, but *the thing you have done displeased the LORD.*

Many people think David had fallen from faith here. At the very least he was definitely in danger of it as he was walking away from faith and God. How long would the shred of faith last? But God was watching and God cared. He sent the prophet Nathan to him to show him just how vile he was and just how his sin was an offense before God and an offense to any follower of God even today in our world which loves to call sin a right and demands not to be judged. God worked repentance in him. Nathan would say, “You are the man.” David confessed his sin. God forgave him. But how could he believe it? David had said to Nathan that the man who did such things should die. But David didn't. There was no lightning strike, only God's rebuke and then his Word of forgiveness, and a list of consequences for his sin, gracious reminders to repentance for the rest of David's life. How can God forgive a sinner like David, or you and me?

It's because it wasn't a matter of if, but when. God promised a Savior to a young couple who had just crashed their father's perfect car in his garden in Eden and brought death upon the world. They waited. David, the sinner, was told that the Savior would come through his family tree. It wasn't a matter of if, but when. To a virgin pledged to be married to Joseph, descendants of David, descendants of that young couple in the garden, the Savior was born. His name is Jesus Christ.

The Father said of Jesus throughout his life and ministry, *“This is my Son, whom I love, with Him I am well pleased.”* There was never anything Jesus did that ever displeased God. Jesus never became careless or took the power and authority he had for granted or to serve self. He only used that power to help others. His focus in life was not if he could get away with sin, or lust or greed or pride. His focus in life was to follow his Father's will, calling sinners to repentance and winning forgiveness for them. He followed behind our reckless driving and David's bloody mess to pick up the pieces, tow in and load the wrecks upon himself, report the crimes and take the blame, have his name in the paper for each crime, each transgression whether front page or in the Brown County record. He paid each fine and bore our shame on the cross. He died because you sinned and because he didn't want you to suffer eternally, and because he loved you. The one who pleased the Lord took our place, so we are counted as pleasing to the LORD.

That's why God forgives you! Jesus rose from the dead so God declares you “not guilty.” No record. You've been set free. You are forgiven in Jesus Christ. For you it's only a matter of when. Now. Your license is back in your pocket. You sit behind the wheel of a new car built by God's grace. How will you drive? To get away with stuff, to see how fast you can sin when no one's looking? No, by no means, how could we? Drive safely spiritually, loving God and your neighbor according to his commands, never careless, respecting the good laws and guides God gives. Willingly take a safe driver's class each Sunday and take in the fuel of his forgiveness. Make a ten-point inspection of time in his Word each day. Drive to please him. Dodge the detours of lust, rage, and other sins. Drive focused, prayerful, watchful, gracious to others on the roadway of this life. Why? Because he forgave you and made you pleasing in God's sight. Heaven is your destination. And he's given you the gift to get behind the wheel again. **Undeniable Sinners need an Undeniable Savior.** His name is Jesus. Amen.