

Read: 2 Samuel 12:11-25

God Comforts Us with His Pardon

2 Samuel 12:13-14

Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for the LORD, the son born to you will die."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Do you know that feeling you get in your stomach when you've done something wrong? It feels like a bad stomachache but food or a nap don't help. You feel badly and often wish that you could go back and do things differently. How can you fix this and make it better? You are concerned if Mom or Dad will find out or how they will respond. You don't want them disappointed in you. You also don't want the consequence that will likely follow. You wish it would all just go away.

Today's Bible reading begins with a very sad story. Nathan was sent to David by God. Nathan was there to do a hard thing—tell King David that he had sinned terribly. David knew he had done wrong by taking someone else's wife. He tried to cover up his sin, but the guilt was still there. Nathan came to David to stop the cover up and to tell David the hard truth—David had sinned against God and the result of David's sin had consequences, including the death of his son.

David did wrong. Nathan helped him recognize his terrible mistake. Like you, David may have felt better when he finally admitted his sin. David didn't make excuses or try to pass the blame. He simply said, "I have sinned against the LORD." Nathan immediately reminded him that God had taken care of David's sin, had forgiven David. Can you imagine how David felt? What a relief! God had shown him mercy in that forgiveness.

I would imagine that sometimes when you go to Mom or Dad and tell them when you've done something wrong, they may respond the same way. Their first words might be, "I forgive you." This can take us by surprise. They also might take the time to talk through the situation with you, and it's also likely that there will be a consequence to help you learn to avoid that mistake in the future. Regardless, their love for you is still there.

It's even more so with God. His forgiveness is yours. The verse above says that God will "have mercy" and will "freely pardon." God isn't indicating that there will be no consequences. God isn't looking for you to do something to make up for your sin. Jesus already did that on the

cross. You are forgiven. You are precious in God's eyes. You can pray just as David did in Psalm 51, "Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Think of a time when you did something wrong and you were afraid to tell someone. Why were you afraid?
- Think of a consequence given to you the last time you did something wrong. Discuss with your family how consequences are meant to help you.

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- In the Bible reading today, it says that David admitted he had "sinned against the LORD." Think of a time when you've sinned. How was that a sin against the LORD?
- Give one reason why it's so important not to hide our sins.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- The consequences of David's sin were severe. People turned against him and his son died. These happened even after he was told that God forgave him. How might the consequences of David's sin have helped him in the future?
- When someone forgives you, and even more, when you know God forgives you, how does can this make a difference when someone sins against you?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, it sometimes makes no sense to me that you forgive me freely each and every day. Even though I don't always understand it, thank you. Help me to show your love and forgiveness in all I do, reflecting you to others. Amen.

Hymn: CW 446:1,2,4 – I Am Trusting You, Lord Jesus

I am trusting you, Lord Jesus,
Trusting only you,
Trusting you for full salvation,
Free and true.

I am trusting you to guide me;
You alone shall lead,
Every day and hour supplying
All my need.

I am trusting you for pardon;
At your feet I bow,
For your grace and tender mercy
Trusting now.