

How to Fail Successfully

Chapter 10

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson 36



Objective: To learn from David's mistakes as well as his desire to, confess, repent and be forgiven.



Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

—Psalm 32:5

Obedience is the prerequisite for experiencing the power of the Holy Spirit. For much of his life, David was a shining example of this truth. But David also knew that God's blessings were not given because of his achievements. They were given because of God's grace.

In one season of David's life, he committed the sins of adultery and murder; and for a whole year, he tried to cover up his sin. His sins show us that even godly people may give in to temptation if they are not careful. The guilt David felt afterward actually made him physically ill. Eventually, when confronted with his sin, he turned to the Lord. There is a sense, however, in which the greatness of David is emphasized by the way he responded to his failures and to the consequences of his sin. When we fail, the important thing is what we do about our failure—how we respond to it. It is at this point that David's life, even when he sinned, becomes one of the greatest examples in the Bible for us.



1. **True** or false? Saul is a good example of “anointed disobedience.”
2. True or **false**? “Anointed disobedience” can last indefinitely, even for someone's entire life.
3. **True** or false? David is a good example of “anointed obedience.”

Unless otherwise noted, choose one answer for each question.

4. What did David most want to do for God?
 - a. Conquer more territory
 - b. Build God a house (temple)**
 - c. Become a priest
 - d. Improve the nation's economy

5. How did David respond to God's promise for his descendants?
 - a. He thanked God for giving David what he deserved.
 - b. He refused to accept it.
 - c. He did not have faith to believe it.
 - d. He humbly recognized that it was a gift of grace.**

6. How could someone who loved God as much as David did sin as seriously as David did?
 - a. He thought he was doing what God wanted him to do.
 - b. He forgot God's laws.
 - c. No one is too great to sin. We all have weaknesses.**
 - d. He did not really love God as much as he said he did.

7. When are we usually most vulnerable to temptation?
 - a. When we are at the peak of our spiritual life and think we cannot sin.**
 - b. When we are aware of how sinful we can be.
 - c. When God tempts us more than we can bear.
 - d. When everything in life is going wrong.

8. What sin(s) did David commit? (*choose all that apply*)
 - a. Taking God's name in vain
 - b. Stealing
 - c. Adultery**
 - d. Dishonoring parents
 - e. Murder**
 - f. Breaking the Sabbath

9. What was David's spiritual condition during the year he covered up his sin?
 - a. He was still very fruitful and close to God.
 - b. He was spiritually dry and felt distant from God.**
 - c. He did not notice any difference.
 - d. He grew much closer to God than before and all his prayers were answered.

10. What was David's response when he realized the seriousness of his sin?
 - a. He got mad at Nathan the prophet.
 - b. He paid everyone who knew about his sin to keep quiet.
 - c. He pretended that he had never sinned.
 - d. He confessed his sin and repented.**

11. How can we learn from David?
- a. He is a good example for us.
 - b. He is a strong warning for us.
 - c. He is both an example and a warning.**
 - d. He is neither an example nor a warning.
12. Which of the following did David handle well?
- a. Life
 - b. Death
 - c. Success
 - d. Failure
 - e. All of the above**
13. What happened after David was forgiven?
- a. There were still consequences of his sin.**
 - b. God removed all consequences of his sin.
 - c. He had to abdicate his throne.
 - d. He became insane like Saul had been.



How do you react when you sin? Are there any sins that you have never honestly confessed to God?



Ask God to show you if there are any sins that are hindering His blessing in your life. Confess any sins that God brings to your mind and thank Him for His complete forgiveness. Pray that He would help you stand firm against temptation.



Going Deeper

1. What does the reality that a man as holy and godly as David could sin so grievously teach us about temptation and sin? (Consider 1 Corinthians 10:12, 13) _____

2. According to the way God sees our sins, which was the worst of David's sins, his adultery or his murder of Bathsheba's husband? _____

3. In what ways did David fail successfully? _____

4. In what ways did David not fail successfully? _____

5. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote: "Soon or late every man must sit down to a banquet of consequences." The Scriptures tell us that the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). What were some of the worst consequences of David's sin and why? _____

6. If David had not had that cover-up of his sin for a whole year, might his "banquet of consequences" not have been as severe as it was? In other words, if David had gone to the prophet Nathan instead of Nathan coming to him, could the consequences of his sin have been different? Explain. _____

7. How did the prophet know about the sin of David as he accused David with great courage? What changes might Nathan have seen in David's life during that year of cover-up? _____
