

April 11 Su (optional) — Psalm 118:1-16 — Centered on Trust

We read earlier about General Joab's trust in God as he faced the Ammonites and Syrians in battle. He trusted God to do what was right: "...*may the LORD do what seems good to him*" (2 Sam. 10:12). Although he had prepared well with Israel's army, he trusted God for the results. Psalm 118 has some very important teaching about trust. Look for it as you read.

- ¹ *Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
for his steadfast love endures forever!*
- ² *Let Israel say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."*
- ³ *Let the house of Aaron say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."*
- ⁴ *Let those who fear the LORD say,
"His steadfast love endures forever."*
- ⁵ *Out of my distress I called on the LORD;
the LORD answered me and set me free.*
- ⁶ *The LORD is on my side; I will not fear.
What can man do to me?*
- ⁷ *The LORD is on my side as my helper;
I shall look in triumph on those who hate me.*
- ⁸ *It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.*
- ⁹ *It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.*
- ¹⁰ *All nations surrounded me;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!*
- ¹¹ *They surrounded me, surrounded me on every side;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!*
- ¹² *They surrounded me like bees;
they went out like a fire among thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them off!*
- ¹³ *I was pushed hard,^[fn] so that I was falling,
but the LORD helped me.*
- ¹⁴ *The LORD is my strength and my song;
he has become my salvation.*
- ¹⁵ *Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the righteous:
"The right hand of the LORD does valiantly,
¹⁶ the right hand of the LORD exalts,
the right hand of the LORD does valiantly!"*

ESV Footnote

(118:13) Hebrew *You* (that is, the enemy) *pushed me hard*

The Object of Trust — The center verse of the whole Bible is Psalm 118:8 and the focus of it and the following verse, is on trust.

⁸ *It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in man.*

⁹ *It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.*

It first shows where we should *not* place our trust: not “*in man*” and not “*in princes*.” Man in general and princes in particular. We are tempted to look at mankind for human heroes. We are tempted to look at government leaders to make things right. Although they can do some things right, “*It is better to take refuge in the LORD.*” Man is limited; God is unlimited. Taking refuge speaks of safety. The following psalm prays, “*Hold me up, that I may be safe...*” (Ps. 119:117) and the following book instructs us that “... *whoever trusts in the LORD is safe*” (Prov. 29:25).

April 12 M Reading 72 — 2 Sam. 10:15-19; 11:1; 12:26–31; 1 Chron. 19:16-19; 20:1-3 — Syrians and Ammonites defeated

2 Samuel 10

¹⁵ *But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together.* ¹⁶ *And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates.^[fn] They came to Helam, with Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head.* ¹⁷ *And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam. The Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him.*

¹⁸ *And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed of the Syrians the men of 700 chariots, and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there.* ¹⁹ *And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them. So the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore.*

ESV Footnote

(10:16) Hebrew *the River*

1 Chronicles 19

¹⁶ *But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they sent messengers and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates,^[fn] with Shophach the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head.* ¹⁷ *And when it was told to David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to them and drew up his forces against them. And when David set the battle in array against the Syrians, they fought with him.*

¹⁸ *And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed of the Syrians the men of 7,000 chariots and 40,000 foot soldiers, and put to death also Shophach the commander of their army.* ¹⁹ *And when the servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with David and became subject to him. So the Syrians were not willing to save the Ammonites anymore.*

ESV Footnote

(19:16) Hebrew *the River*

2 Samuel 11

¹ *In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.*

2 Samuel 12

²⁶ *Now Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and took the royal city.* ²⁷ *And Joab sent messengers to David and said, "I have fought against Rabbah; moreover, I have taken the city of waters."* ²⁸ *Now then gather the rest of the people together and encamp against the city and take it, lest I take the city and it be called by my name."* ²⁹ *So David gathered all the people together and went to Rabbah and fought against it and took it.* ³⁰ *And he took the crown of their king from his head. The weight of it was a talent^[fn] of gold, and in it was a precious stone, and it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount.* ³¹ *And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor with saws and iron picks and iron axes and made them toil at^[fn] the brick kilns. And thus he did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.*

ESV Footnotes

(12:30) A talent was about 75 pounds or 34 kilograms
(12:31) Hebrew *pass through*

1 Chronicles 20

¹ *In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, Joab led out the army and ravaged the country of the Ammonites and came and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.*

And Joab struck down Rabbah and overthrew it.

² *And David took the crown of their king from his head. He found that it weighed a talent^[fn] of gold, and in it was a precious stone. And it was placed on David's head. And he brought out the spoil of the city, a very great amount.* ³ *And he brought out the people who were in it and set them to labor^[fn] with saws and iron picks and axes.^[fn] And thus David did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then David and all the people returned to Jerusalem.*

ESV Footnotes

(20:2) A *talent* was about 75 pounds or 34 kilograms
(20:3) Compare 2 Samuel 12:31; Hebrew *he sawed*
(20:3) Compare 2 Samuel 12:31; Hebrew *saws*

From Savior to Subject — The fall of the Syrians to Israel completed quite a transition from being called upon as a savior to ending up being a subject under the control of others. The Ammonites started it all with their new king shaming David's messengers (2 Sam. 10:5). Knowing that act would bring a reaction from David, the Ammonites hired the armies of many northern Syrian cities to protect them—to be their saviors. These protectors turned out to be cowards, however, and fled from the armies of Joab and Abishai (v. 14). Now embarrassed, instead of swallowing their pride and staying at home, they decided to return with even more people to attack northern Israel (v. 16). This time, they didn't flee but were soundly defeated and surrendered to Israel, becoming their subjects. Syria was far north of the God-assigned territory for Israel's Promised Land but that area fell into Israel's hands because of Syria's stubborn aggression against God's people. This reminds me of the proverb that "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*" (Prov. 16:18). It is good to try to help other people but it is not good to fight against God. It is humbling to be defeated but we need to learn from our failures, not make them worse by digging deeper. When we willingly become subject to our Savior, Jesus, we live the abundant life—eternal life—the life God intended for us to live.

² *It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful.*
³ *And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"* ⁴ *So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house.* ⁵ *And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."*

⁶ *So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David.* ⁷ *When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going.* ⁸ *Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king.* ⁹ *But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house.* ¹⁰ *When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?"* ¹¹ *Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing."* ¹² *Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next.* ¹³ *And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.*

¹⁴ *In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah.* ¹⁵ *In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."* ¹⁶ *And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men.* ¹⁷ *And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died.* ¹⁸ *Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting.* ¹⁹ *And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, ²⁰ then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall?' ²¹ Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"*

²² *So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell.* ²³ *The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate." ²⁴ Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also."*
²⁵ *David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter displease you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him."*

²⁶ *When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband.*
²⁷ *And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD.*

Cover Up — David grievously sinned in this story, which concludes with God's verdict: "*But the thing that David had done displeased the LORD*" (v. 27). The literal translation sounds even worse: "... *was evil in the sight of the LORD*" (NASB). David actually sinned multiple times here. Perhaps he had accidentally seen Bathsheba from his flat roof but everything after that was intentionally sinful: He

lusted, sent for her, lay with her, schemed to cover it up with an uncooperative husband, and ordered him to be killed. At first, it was a simple sin of lust but that developed into a more serious sin and then an increasingly complicated cover-up plan that involved further sin. We see that in our own lives, too. Sin leads to more sin like a single lie requires more lies to cover it up. Why don't we just do what is right so we don't get into deeper sin and try to cover it up? This incident remained an ugly stain on the reputation of an otherwise very good king. It was apparently so ugly that 1 Chronicles, a more priestly-oriented book that was written much later and relied heavily on the content of the books of Samuel, participated in a different kind of cover-up by refusing to include this story. Sin is ugly and it leaves an ugly stain on our lives. God's solution for us regarding sin is not to cover it up but to admit that we sinned, which we will see in our next reading.

April 14 W Reading 74 — 2 Samuel 12:1-25 — Nathan's challenge

¹ And the LORD sent Nathan to David. He came to him and said to him, "There were two men in a certain city, the one rich and the other poor. ² The rich man had very many flocks and herds, ³ but the poor man had nothing but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought. And he brought it up, and it grew up with him and with his children. It used to eat of his morsel and drink from his cup and lie in his arms,^[fn] and it was like a daughter to him. ⁴ Now there came a traveler to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take one of his own flock or herd to prepare for the guest who had come to him, but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him." ⁵ Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die, ⁶ and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity."

⁷ Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you out of the hand of Saul. ⁸ And I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your arms and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah. And if this were too little, I would add to you as much more. ⁹ Why have you despised the word of the LORD, to do what is evil in his sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and have taken his wife to be your wife and have killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. ¹⁰ Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' ¹¹ Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.'" ¹³ David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, because by this deed you have utterly scorned the LORD,^[fn] the child who is born to you shall die." ¹⁵ Then Nathan went to his house.

And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David, and he became sick. ¹⁶ David therefore sought God on behalf of the child. And David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. ¹⁷ And the elders of his house stood beside him, to raise him from the ground, but he would not, nor did he eat food with them. ¹⁸ On the seventh day the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they said, "Behold, while the child was yet alive, we spoke to him, and he did not listen to us. How then can we say to him the child is dead? He may do himself some harm." ¹⁹ But when David saw that his servants were whispering together, David understood that the child was dead. And David said to his servants, "Is the child dead?" They said, "He is dead." ²⁰ Then David arose from the earth and washed and anointed himself and changed his clothes. And he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. He then went to his own house. And when he asked, they set food before him, and he ate. ²¹ Then his servants said to him, "What is this thing that you have done? You fasted and wept for the child while he was alive; but when the

child died, you arose and ate food.”²² He said, “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, ‘Who knows whether the LORD will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’²³ But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”

²⁴ *Then David comforted his wife, Bathsheba, and went in to her and lay with her, and she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. And the LORD loved him²⁵ and sent a message by Nathan the prophet. So he called his name Jedidiah,^[fn] because of the LORD.*

ESV Footnotes

(12:3) Hebrew *bosom*; also verse 8

(12:14) Masoretic Text *the enemies of the LORD*; Dead Sea Scroll *the word of the LORD*

(12:25) Jedidiah means *beloved of the LORD*

Despising God’s Word — David had broken three of the ten commandments: coveting, adultery, and murder (Ex. 20:13-17). He knew those commandments but he willingly committed the sins anyway. In so doing, Nathan said that David had “*despised the word of the LORD*” (2 Sam. 12:9). David didn’t just neglect to obey God’s law; he “*despised*” it. The same word was used to describe Michal’s feeling when she saw David dancing before the ark as it was brought into Jerusalem: “...*she despised him in her heart*” (6:16). The same word is also used in Proverbs: “*Whoever walks in uprightness fears the LORD, but he who is devious in his ways despises him*” (14:2). Being “*devious in his ways*” exactly describes what David did. Why do we “despise” God’s Word in our disobedience? It is because it conflicts with our fleshly desires and with our wanting to control our own lives. We “despise” not being able to do what we want to do. So, when we want to do something that we know is against God’s written will, we try to excuse it by concluding, “It is not that bad!” or “I’ll only do it this once!” or “Lots of Christians do it!” or “God will forgive me!” When we do that, we are not only excusing our sin; we are despising God’s Word. Nathan forced David to face his sin: “*You are the man!*” (v. 7). Eventually, David agreed and admitted, “*I have sinned against the LORD*” (v. 13). We must develop an attitude toward the Word of God that treats it as holy and its commands as mandatory.

Meditation: Did you catch the many God-caused consequences of David’s sin in this story? It starts with, “*Now therefore...*” in v. 10 and lists four looming results: 1) “*the sword shall never depart from your house, because...*” of his sin (v. 10). Three of David’s sons would die a violent death: Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah. 2) “*I will raise up evil against you out of your own house*” (v. 11). We will soon read of Absalom’s rebellion against his father. 3) “*I will take your wives ... and give them to your neighbor*” (v. 11). As a part of Absalom’s rebellion, he publicly had sex with some of David’s concubines. 4) “*the child who is born to you shall die*” (v. 14). Notice that this result was stated after Nathan said that “*The LORD has put away your sin*” (v. 13). That was a statement of forgiveness but God did not remove the punishment. The lesson here is about the seriousness of sin and the possibility that God will cause painful consequences to result in order to help us remember, through that pain, the importance of obedience.

April 15 Th Reading 75 — Psalm 51:1-19 — David reflects on his sin with Bathsheba

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet went to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

¹ *Have mercy on me,^[fn] O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.*

- ² *Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin!*
- ³ *For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is ever before me.*
- ⁴ *Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight,
so that you may be justified in your words
and blameless in your judgment.*
- ⁵ *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
and in sin did my mother conceive me.*
- ⁶ *Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being,
and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.*
- ⁷ *Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*
- ⁸ *Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have broken rejoice.*
- ⁹ *Hide your face from my sins,
and blot out all my iniquities.*
- ¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and renew a right^[fn] spirit within me.*
- ¹¹ *Cast me not away from your presence,
and take not your Holy Spirit from me.*
- ¹² *Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and uphold me with a willing spirit.*
- ¹³ *Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
and sinners will return to you.*
- ¹⁴ *Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God,
O God of my salvation,
and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness.*
- ¹⁵ *O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.*
- ¹⁶ *For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it;
you will not be pleased with a burnt offering.*
- ¹⁷ *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*
- ¹⁸ *Do good to Zion in your good pleasure;
build up the walls of Jerusalem;*
- ¹⁹ *then will you delight in right sacrifices,
in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.*

ESV Footnotes

(51:1) Or *Be gracious to me*

(51:10) Or *steadfast*

Pleading for Mercy — David used 19 imperative statements in this psalm to plead for God's forgiveness and help. He admitted his guilt, recognized God's right to judge, but begged for mercy. He said, "*my sin is ever before me*" (v. 3). That not only recognized sin but pictured the burden of sin.

Sin is destructive in so many ways. It disrupts our fellowship with God and it weighs upon our hearts. Since confession and repentance lift that burden and refreshes our relationship with God, David prayed, *"Restore to me the joy of your salvation"* (v. 12). Another thing that forgiveness can bring to us is a restored ministry, as David concluded in the next verse: *"Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you"* (v. 13). As ugly as that sinful blot was on David's record, God used him to continue to lead Israel as its greatest king and to bless us with his many psalms. This experience humbled him but didn't destroy him. Have you "blown it" sometime in the past through an embarrassing sin that became known? Have you given up on ever being used by God again? Remember David! Confess your sin and forsake it. Receive God's cleansing and empowerment for ministry to others. It might have to be a different kind of ministry but God excels in using broken people. Sinners will be able to identify with you.

April 16 F Reading 76 — 2 Samuel 13:1-22 — Amnon rapes Tamar

¹ Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. ² And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very crafty man. ⁴ And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." ⁵ Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.'" ⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

⁷ Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him." ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. ⁹ And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. ¹¹ But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." ¹² She answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate^[fn] me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. ¹³ As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." ¹⁴ But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up! Go!" ¹⁶ But she said to him, "No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me."^[fn] But he would not listen to her. ¹⁷ He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸ Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves,^[fn] for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. ¹⁹ And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

²⁰ And her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house. ²¹ When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry.^[fn]

²² *But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar.*

ESV Footnotes

(13:12) Or *humiliate*; also verses 14, 22, 32

(13:16) Compare Septuagint, Vulgate; the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain

(13:18) Or *a robe of many colors* (compare Genesis 37:3); compare *long robe*, verse 19

(13:21) Dead Sea Scroll, Septuagint add *But he would not punish his son Amnon, because he loved him, since he was his firstborn*

Driven by Lust — Amnon grew up as a privileged boy. He had the birthright of a first-born son and he was the son of the king. He had honor, prestige, and wealth. What more could he want?! He had so much but he was not satisfied. From the Apostle Paul's personal experience, he wrote, "*I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content*" (Phil. 4:11). The writer of Hebrews said to all of us, "...*be content with what you have*" (Heb. 13:5). But sin is never content; sin is never satisfied. Amnon was driven by lust and he wanted to have sex with Tamar at any cost. We will see later that it would cost him his life. ("*The wages of sin is death*" — Rom. 6:23). Tamar tried to warn him that it would make him "*one of the outrageous fools in Israel ... But he would not listen to her*" (2 Sam. 13:13-14). He was blinded by lust and he grabbed what he wanted. Lust for anything blinds us to truth and to sin's consequences. What is it that you want? Ask yourself these questions: Is it right? (Amnon knew what he wanted to do was wrong.) Is it necessary? (Amnon could have married just about anyone he wanted.) Can I get along without it? (Am I willing to be content with what I have?) What should drive us is our love for God and our desire to please Him.

April 17 Sa (optional) — 1 John 1:5-10 — Admitting our sin

We read in David's humble prayer in the Penitent Psalm 51 after being confronted about his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. Think about that today as we read this teaching from the Apostle John about sin and how Christians are to deal with it.

⁵ *This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.* ⁶ *If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.* ⁷ *But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.* ⁸ *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* ⁹ *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* ¹⁰ *If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*

- Sometimes we try to talk ourselves into the idea that sin does not affect our walk with the Lord but that is saying that "*we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness*," which John calls a lie (v. 6).
- There are two things we need to learn to do here: 1) "*walk in the light*" (v. 7), which brings us cleansing, and 2) "*confess our sins*," which also "*cleanses us from all unrighteousness*" (v. 9).