weekend

resource guide

for the week of 6 May

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*2 Samuel 12:1-13: Then the Lord sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said, “There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor.*

 *2 “The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. 3 “But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb which he bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, and was like a daughter to him.*

 *4 “Now a traveler came to the rich man, and he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, to prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him;*

*Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”*

*5 Then David’s anger burned greatly against the man, and he said to Nathan, “As the Lord lives, surely the man who has done this deserves to die. 6 “And he must make restitution for the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and had no compassion.” 7 Nathan then said to David, “You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel, ‘It is I who anointed you king over Israel and it is I who delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8 ‘I also gave you your master’s house and your master’s wives into your care, and I gave you the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been too little, I would have added to you many more things like these! 9 ‘Why have you despised the word of the Lord by doing evil in His sight? You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword, have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon. 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 from your own household; I will even take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your companion, and he shall lie with your wives in broad daylight. 12 ‘Indeed you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, and under the sun.’” 13 Then David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the Lord.”*

Stormy Daniels is not the first woman to come forward to claim an affair with a President nor is Robert Mueller, special prosecutor, the first public official to investigate the possible secret sin of a national leader. Such was the role of the prophets in biblical times. Perhaps the most notorious example is Nathan’s confrontation of David — Israel’s beloved King. David was a leader’s leader; he was also a Renaissance man. He was deeply spiritual, a soldier, philosopher, poet, musician, songwriter, husband, father, and king. He was courageous, compassionate; and a man of strategic vision. Yet he was clearly in touch with the joys and sorrows that were common to all people regardless of their power, wealth, or status. He was uniquely endowed by God; a man for all seasons; and a charismatic personality. Under his leadership the country flourished and expanded. Israel’s borders were secure and her economy was strong.

Lamentably for David (and for his country) he also was a man who abused the powers of his office to indulge his sexual fantasies.

David’s dalliance with Bathsheba was a personal affair but it was not private. It mattered greatly to God who judges a man for who he is on the inside (see 1Samuel 16.7). It mattered greatly to God who had established his throne and endowed him with the gifts and abilities that had propelled him to national prominence. It mattered greatly to God who knew that David was compounding his sin by making decisions that intentionally put others at risk (especially Uriah) so that he could conceal his personal sin. It mattered to God who realized that David could not govern with moral authority or with public confidence if this breach of faith (before God and people) was not exposed. So God revealed David’s sin to Nathan who was then dispatched to confront David publicly.

Dear ones, it is here that you must understand that the true test of David’s character was not the reality of his sin exposed but David’s response once he was confronted. Would he continue to stonewall his accuser? Would he hide behind the authority of his office? Or would he receive Nathan as God’s chastisement and respond appropriately with repentance? Would he face the consequences of God’s discipline—whatever that may be?

President Trump is not the first national leader to suffer public humiliation by the reporting of his sexual sins. However anyone who has leadership responsibilities (national, corporate, or family) would be well advised to follow David’s example rather than the President’s. David’s heart reflected authentic contrition and personal conviction. He did not hide his sin any longer. He owned it and he recognized that he had sinned against God (2 Sam 12.13). He did not make excuses and try to curry sympathy and understanding. He did not lash out against the messenger who exposed his sin. He did not ask to be let off the hook of public scrutiny by appealing to misplaced notions of privacy. He did not deceive and hide behind the public advocacy of friends, colleagues, or attorneys. David simply, straightforwardly, and immediately accepted complete responsibility as he confessed and threw himself on the mercy of God.

I do not write these words to perpetuate the shaming of our President—which has now become fashionable from all sides of the political spectrum. There is a world of difference between admission and confession; between regret and contrition. Authentic conviction for sin consumes the person affected with shame, profound sorrow, guilt, a recognition of personal defilement, and a hunger for healing mercy that can be found only at the foot of the Cross of Jesus. True conviction has no energy reserve that will allow one to lash out at others nor does it draw solace in pointing out others who may be guilty of the same sin.

The President’s actions and reactions are indicative of a man whose ethical edge has worn dull through compromise and self-indulgence. May it stand, like David’s encounter with Nathan, as a prophetic warning to any of us who are not proactively keeping our ethical edge sharp by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a sure pitfall that awaits anyone who turns a deaf ear to God’s call to live holy and blameless lives. Let us invite the Holy Spirit to bring conviction as we examine our own lives rather than mock and deride the sins of others we may disagree with. We must be on our ethical guard lest we become so casual and comfortable that we too lose our ability to recognize our own temptations and perceive the power of sin still ruling in our own lives.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

Getting to know one another better…

What is your best memory or experience being “part of a team?” (Could be sports, arts, a gang, a working group, a class project, etc.)

Ephesians 4:5-6: A Generation R Community…

*Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

What?(does the Bible say)

What does it mean to “walk in a manner worthy of your calling”? Why does Paul “implore” us to do so?

What does it mean to “show tolerance towards one another in love”? What does this not mean?

What does it mean to be “diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”?

What are the seven elements of Christian unity highlighted in these verses?

Now what? (how will I think based on what this passage says)

If we are already “one” why does Paul have to command us to be “one”?

Why is unity important for the church?

What do you think threatens unity within your LifeGroup? Within Faith Community? Why?

Do you find it easy to get along with other Christians? Why or why not?

So what? (difference will this passage make in how I live)

What can you do to feel like you are "united in the Holy Spirit"?

How can you show humility, gentleness, and patience in your relationships?

What are things you do or don’t do that may undermine the unity of your LifeGroup or the larger community of Faith?

Which qualities presented in this passage help you foster unity with others? Which do you still need to work on?

How can you work to preserve, encourage, promote, and strengthen unity in your LifeGroup? At Faith Community?

How can your LifeGroup labor together to guard and promote Christian unity within your group? FCC? The Church in San Diego?

My prayer requests (write in advance what you want your group to pray for…)

Praying for my group…