

# The God of Second Chances

Have you ever met an odd couple? I did a search on the internet in regard to odd couples.

For instance, there is a married couple in France who some consider quite odd.

The husband is 6' 1" and his wife is 3' 1". He is three feet taller than his wife!

Maybe you've heard about the husband and wife who had the same first AND last name BEFORE they got married: Kelly Hildebrandt.

Unfortunately, they are now divorced but of course she did not have to change her name since that was her name.

Or maybe you've heard about the couple with the greatest age difference.

A man from Somalia who was 112 married a 17-year-old girl...it was his 6th marriage.

Or maybe you heard about the Russian couple who were married for only 3 days before they were separated because of war and found each other 60 years later!

Those are some odd couples, but I find an interesting item

The story of David and Bathsheba is used to illustrate the gracious nature of God's character and the power of His forgiveness.

When my son Camden was a little boy, he was adventurous and had a way pushing the limits.

I tried many approaches in disciplining him, including the "discussion method."

The discussion method is where you resist blowing your top and using all kinds of physical harm in favor of discussing the problem and finding a solution.

One day he was guilty of breaking an important rule, which was riding his bike in a dangerous location after I had specifically told him not to do this very thing.

We sat in his room "reviewing" the events and decided together what should be done.

I said to him, "Well Camden, if you were me here, if you were the dad, what would you do in this situation?"

He answered, "If I were you, I'd give me a second chance!"

This little boy understood something that I, in my anger and frustration, had completely forgotten.

As far as I was concerned, there was only one course to follow and that was punishment.

Our discussion was merely an effort to decide just how much punishment would be administered.

Camden reminded me that there was another choice (one more favorable to him) and that was forgiveness in the form of a "second chance."

This episode taught me not only something about being a dad, it also served as a reminder of my Heavenly Father's character.

When I read about God the Father's dealings with His children, I realize that He is the God of second chances.

With this in mind, I'd like to share with you the stories of people who benefitted from the second chance that our Heavenly Father gave them.

### David's Second Chance

In the Old Testament, there is no clearer example of a person receiving a second chance than David, the king of Israel.

He began as a lowly shepherd and was given the opportunity and strength to defeat Goliath, the enemy of his people.

David received God's anointing as king and after many years of struggle was finally crowned after Saul (the first king of Israel) died.

David then consolidated military victories, established a capital city in Jerusalem, built a great palace, and amassed tremendous wealth and prestige.

In 2 Samuel 11, we read of David's great sin with Bathsheba. To summarize:

The armies were away fighting and David, while in his palace, saw a woman bathing.

He lusted after her and seduced her even while knowing that she was one of his commander's wives.

She became pregnant and to hide his sin David brought the husband, Uriah, home on leave hoping he would sleep with his wife and cover the pregnancy.

The man was loyal to his troops and refused the comfort of his own bed while his men were at war.

His plan upset, David arranged to have the man deliberately killed in battle.

After news of his death came, David took the woman to be his wife and tried to hide his sin and the resulting pregnancy in this way.

In 2 Samuel 11:27 the Bible records God's reaction to all of this:

Slide - "And when her 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 (was evil in the eyes of) the Lord."

Evil indeed, look at what David had done: God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David concerning this evil through a parable

Slide -2 Samuel 12:1 "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.

Slide -And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."

Listen to David's own response after hearing Nathan parable

Slide -2 Samuel 12:5 "So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this shall surely die! And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

David had knowingly seduced another man's wife and committed adultery with her.

On top of that, he cheated on his own wives (you could take several wives, but not another man's wife).

David tried to pass his child off onto another man.

David plotted the murder of a man who loved and served David.

David lied to the nation about the entire affair.

What David did should have been punishable by:

At least losing the crown (his family, his lineage forfeited).

Paying retribution to Uriah's family.

The Law stated that there should have been the death for David and Bathsheba.

Also, God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David to describe the direct results due to his sins:

David would have trouble in his own house and there would be violence in his own home because of what he did.

Violence breeds violence.

His wives would be taken away from him just like he took Uriah's wife.

Slide -2 Samuel 12:11 "Thus says the Lord: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from 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. For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'"

David would be publicly humiliated. This all happened to David through his son Absalom.

Because the child would be illegitimate and the cause of blasphemy by others against the crown and the divinely appointed kings that wore it, God took the child at infancy.

David responded to God by acknowledging his sins and regretting his actions.

He also mourned deeply when the baby was born sick, asking God to spare his life, but the child died as God had said.

But then, we see how the God of second chances dealt with this son of His who had acted in such a cowardly and shameful way.

After the child died and the mourning was over, David was allowed to start anew with Bathsheba.

Slide -2 Samuel 12:24-25 "Then David comforted Bathsheba his wife, and went in to her and lay with her. So she bore a son, and he called his name Solomon. Now the Lord loved him, and He sent word by the hand of Nathan the prophet: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord."

David was allowed to take her as his wife before God - this woman he had committed adultery with.

They were able to have another child together and called him Solomon which comes from the root word, Shalom, meaning "peace."

The name signified that they were at peace with God with the birth of this child.

The prophet Nathan, who had confronted David before, gave the child another inspired name - Jedidiah - which means "beloved of the Lord."

They were reassured that God loved their baby and would not take him away from them like He had done the previous one.

We also know that this child, produced from this union, would eventually become the third and most glorious king of Israel, as well as an inspired writer.

By rights David should have been stripped of the throne and executed.

He should have never been allowed to marry this woman because he was the guilty part in the adultery.

But the God of second chances allowed him another opportunity to be king, to be husband, and to be father.

### **The Woman Caught in Adultery**

Another example of this aspect of God's character is seen in John 8:3 where Jesus comes face to face with a woman accused of adultery.

Slide -John 8:3-5 "Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned. But what do You say?"

Some say that this was a trap and the woman who was having an affair was set up so she could be caught in the act with witnesses so there would be no doubt as to her guilt.

The Law (Lev. 20:10) did specify that the punishment for this kind of offense was death by stoning.

Slide -John 8:6 "This they said, testing Him, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear."

The scribes and Pharisees were not interested in the woman, they were interested in finding some way to attack Jesus.

If Jesus said that they should go ahead and stone her they would have accused Him to the Roman governor as a lawbreaker because only the Roman officials could order an execution.

If Jesus opted for mercy then they would have accused Him of breaking the Law of Moses which said such people should be stoned.

Slide -John 8:7 "So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first."

The Law said that there had to be two or three eyewitnesses to prove the accusation and that if convicted, these witnesses were to be the ones to cast the first stones.

Jesus does not demand an execution, nor does He plead for mercy - He merely asks them to compare themselves to the woman.

**To the eyewitnesses He says, "If you are morally superior, you then have a right to do this."**

They could not legally do it without the permission of the Romans and they all knew this.

Jesus simply asks them, aside from the legal right (which the Law of Moses and the Law of the Romans could provide), did anyone have the moral right to do this (especially when they may have been plotting against Him in the first place)?

Slide -John 8:8-9 "And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst."

His writing on the ground has been a mystery to many because the Bible does not say what He wrote or why.

Some think it was simply to buy time.

The Bible says that the witnesses and the crowd all left, beginning with the oldest to the youngest.

Everyone was silent, including Jesus.

No witnesses spoke, including the witness who had a right to accuse and punish - the Lord Himself.

Slide -John 8:10-11 "When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, "Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said to her, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more."

Her accusers are gone, the danger is past, and she is left with the Lord alone.

Jesus, who knows the truth about her, knows her life, her secrets and her failures, gives her a second chance.

This sin was known, this sin came crashing down on her with all the humiliation, life destroying, ego crushing force that sin can cause.

She was caught, she was going to pay - and what does God do?

He saves her from the mob.

He tells her that He too (for different reasons) does not condemn her.

He tells her that she is free to go.

He tells her not to do this anymore. **Do you really think she did not do this sin anymore?**

The Pharisees and the religious leaders were there to see about the physical punishment for the sinner.

Jesus, on the other hand, opened up another option for the guilty - forgiveness and grace.

We may not have sinned as seriously as David with his adultery and murder and cover up;

we may not have had to suffer public humiliation for our sins like the woman.

But I ask, who among us here has not needed at one time or another - a second chance from God?

A second chance to do right for our parents.

A second chance at marriage.

A second chance after having wasted our youth, our money, our talent, our promise, or our opportunities.

**But is that really what you truly want?**

Sure, it is definitely great to have time that God grants us to have second chances to undo past failures.

**But again, is that really what you are looking for?**

You know, I have heard it said the Hebrews 11 which is the hall of faith chapter

Those same people can be in the hall of shame.

Noah was found drunk by his sons; Abraham trafficked his wife, Sarah; Moses murdered an Egyptian; Rahab committed prostitution; and David hired someone for murder and committed adultery, Sampson and Judah were fornicators, and Peter, who denied Christ three times.

Yet, in spite of their illegal and immoral behavior, God gave them a second chance.

They were repentant and went on to be faithful servants of God.

But is it really God giving them a second chance to make good choices, and if they mess up again, God is done with them?

Or is it God's grace being poured out in an attempt to restore their relationship with God and others?

Isn't grace what differentiates the Christian faith from other religions which focus on moral behavior or good works?

Christ's grace is not just a second chance.

Christ's grace is NOT one more chance to redeem yourself.

It is not one more chance to be a good moral person.

Jesus Christ came and died to pay the penalty of our failures and if we receive Him, His record becomes our record.

He doesn't say one more chance to do good deeds, oh no, instead, he says, don't you see, your doing will never get you there looking at me in heaven.

Jesus Christ says I have done all the good deeds for you. I have lived the perfect life, I have died the perfect death.

Jesus Christ says put myself in your place,

Jesus Christ says I took your penalty so that if you trust in me, and you lay you're doing down, and you trust wholly in me,

the Father will welcome you as complete in me.

Lay your deadly doing down at his feet, stand in him alone, gloriously complete.

For all the chances God give us in this life is not for you and me, it is to glorify God and that is the bottom line.

What about the thief on the cross?

Why didn't help him down of the cross and now go lead a good moral life this times, so you can make it to heaven.

Why do you think we have these recorded in the Bible?

Everyone who comes to Him can receive another chance at a better, eternal life, by believing in His Son Jesus Christ and washing away their sins through repentance and baptism in His name (Acts 2:38).

As Christians, therefore, let us be thankful that God is a God of second chances because we all need a second chance at one time or another in our lives.

As a matter of fact, God is not only the God of second chances, but the God of third and fourth and unlimited chances for His children who confess their faults and weaknesses, and come to Him for help

Slide -1 John1:8-9 "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God does everything possible to draw us to repentance, offering forgiveness and second chances;

Peter warns us

Slide -2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance."

But if we continue to reject Him, the offer is withdrawn and, at death, there are no more chances

Slide -Hebrews 9:27 "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"

God's grace is our model. Glorify God with all the chances He gives you

We can offer second chances to others to glorify God

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