

## **KEEPING EVIL FROM SPREADING**

Rev. Kenneth J. Alden

*Lesson: 2 Samuel 11*

If your basement were full of angry robbers, would you leave your basement door unlocked and wide open? Would you help them carry everything out of your house before you even thought about getting some help to stop them? Of course you wouldn't. Except, that is just what you do when you listen to the evil spirits, instead of obeying the Lord. The evil spirits are trying to steal your spiritual life, just as if you had robbers in your basement. When you are not on guard against them, it is like leaving your basement door wide opened. And when you do what they say, it is like helping them carry all your valuable things out of your house.

This morning we read a story about a time when King David should have been on guard against the evil spirits around him, but he was not. Very sad to say, he did exactly what the evil spirits wanted him to do, time after time after time. He never told them "No."

The story began with David staying at home at a time when kings usually go out to battle. When people are not being useful, when you are not doing what you are supposed to be doing, whether that is doing a job for someone, getting your homework done, playing a game, reading a good book, working on a hobby or project, or whatever thing it is that is useful work or relaxation--when you are sitting around idle as King David was doing, that is when evil spirits find the door to your mind unlocked and wide open. And that is exactly what happened with King David.

David was at home instead of fighting a war, and from the flat roof of his house he happened to see a very beautiful woman taking a bath. Rather than turn his mind away to think of the wives he already had, he let the evil spirits keep him thinking about taking this woman, too. He coveted her, which is against the Lord's commandment. So David asked who she was and found out that she was Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. Immediately, David must have known that it was adultery to take someone else's wife. The evil spirits love it when people commit adultery, and they do all they can to break up people's marriages. But David, instead of sending the evil spirits away, helped them to break up his own marriage and Bathsheba's marriage by bringing Bathsheba to his house. It was not long before the evil spirits got the better of David and he committed adultery with Bathsheba.

But still, even though David had broken the commandments against coveting and committing adultery, he helped the evil spirits even more. Instead of just being punished for the things he had already done wrong, David tried not to get caught for what he had done. He tried to trick Uriah into thinking that Uriah was the father of the baby Bathsheba was going to have. The evil spirits love it when people break the commandment against bearing false witness against the neighbor by deceiving them. When that didn't work, David devised a plot to have Uriah killed deceitfully, so it would not look like murder. In this way David thought he could avoid getting caught, and could also take another man's wife as his own. So David broke the commandment against murder and against stealing too.

If you think of all the times that David had behaved more wisely than Saul, and had obeyed the Lord, and had done his job well, and had not tried to lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed--if you think of all those good things David had done as spiritual treasures in his mind, you can see how David helped the evil spirits carry away just about every treasure in his mind by the way he listened to them and broke one commandment after another. It would have been much better for David to have been being useful, leading his soldiers in battle, as kings were supposed to be doing at that time of year. It would have been much better to have told the evil spirits to go away as soon as they wanted him to covet Bathsheba. And after David had broken one or two commandments, it would have been better to take his punishment, rather than break two or three more commandments. So, nearly all the spiritual treasures must have been carried away from his David's mind by the evil spirits.

The thing that you can learn from this sad story of David is that it is just as important to keep your mind on the useful things you are supposed to be doing as to lock your doors against angry robbers. It is just as important to tell the evil spirits to go away before you do anything bad, or before you do any more things bad, as it is to call the police when robbers start to break into your house and carry away your valuables. Learning to say "No!" to the evil spirits is one of your most powerful weapons for keeping you safe and happy to eternity.

Amen.