

# Courageous Repentance



2 Samuel 7:1-17; 11:1-27; 12:1-13; Psalm 51



In this session we explore God's covenant with David and what it reveals about repentance and grace. God promises David an enduring kingdom rooted in steadfast love, not perfect obedience. Yet David's story also shows how trust can break down when power is misused and truth is hidden. As David is confronted with his sin, we see that repentance is not about excusing wrongdoing or avoiding consequences, but about choosing honesty before God. Courageous repentance begins when self-defence is laid down and the truth is faced, trusting that God's grace makes restoration possible.

**You will need:**

- 'Courageous Repentance' handout
- Pens or pencils

**Ask:**

- What are some of the excuses people use when they don't want to take responsibility for something?
- What's the most ridiculous excuse you've ever heard someone use to dodge getting the blame (please don't say their name)?

**Say:**

From an early age we often learn that it's easier to defend ourselves or justify our actions when we have made a mistake. As we explore the theme of courageous repentance, we're going to look at a story where someone is given a choice: to keep defending themselves or to face the truth.

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Why do you think it's often easier to defend ourselves than to admit we've done something wrong?

 **Amplify****Say:**

So far in this series we've explored God's covenant with Noah and Abraham. In each story we've seen that God takes the initiative. He commits himself to people and works through them to bring blessing, even when the world is broken and human faithfulness is fragile. Today we're going to explore God's covenant with David. Timings are given to stop the clip and discuss the questions.

**Watch:**

David the Priestly King – Bible Project (4:39)

[youtu.be/JCP2zWaJlGc?si=Kr8lOGhD1S2tt9P5](https://youtu.be/JCP2zWaJlGc?si=Kr8lOGhD1S2tt9P5)

**Watch: 0:00-0:56**

**Say:**

The story begins in Eden, with humans created to live in God's presence and represent him in the world. When that calling is broken, God doesn't walk away. Instead he makes a promise to restore what was lost.

**Ask:**

Where have we already seen God respond like this in the stories we've looked at so far?

**Say:**

In both Noah's and Abraham's stories we saw the same pattern. Even when people struggled or fell short, God kept his promises.

**Watch: 0:57-2:28**

**Say:**

This is where David enters the story. He is being raised up as king and acting like a priest as well as a ruler. God makes a covenant with David.

**Read:**

**<sup>8</sup> Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup> I**

have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup> And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people shall not oppress them any more, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

'The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: <sup>12</sup> when your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup> He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. <sup>14</sup> I will be his father, and he shall be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. <sup>15</sup> But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. <sup>16</sup> Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.'

<sup>17</sup> Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

— (2 Samuel 7:8-16)

**Ask:**

If you had to explain God's covenant with David to someone else, what would you say it was?

**Say:**

God chose David, committing himself to his future, and promised that his love would not be taken away. That promise shaped everything that followed in David's story. It also raises an important question. What happens to a covenant like this when the king fails?

**Watch: 2:29-3:30****Ask:**

- From what you have just seen, what seems to stop David from fully embracing the role of a royal priest king?
- The clip names a few moments where David's trust breaks down. What kinds of choices does David start making when that happens?
- Who is impacted by David's choices?

**Say:**

What's important to notice here is that something has changed in David's relationship with God, but God's covenant with David has not been removed. David's trust falters and his use of power becomes distorted, yet God's promise to him remains. The covenant is still standing even when the relationship is strained.

**Watch 3:31-4:10**

**Say:**

The clip also shows that David's story doesn't end with failure. Later in his life, David realises he has stopped trusting God and has relied on his own strength. When he recognises what he has done, he is confronted by the prophet Gad.

**Read:**

<sup>10</sup> **David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, Lord, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.'**

– (2 Samuel 24:10)

**Ask:**

What do you notice about the way David responds here?

**Say:**

David names what he has done honestly and takes responsibility, even when the consequences affect others. This moment shows us that repentance is not about defending ourselves, but about returning to God when trust has broken down.

**Ask:**

What does this tell us about what courageous repentance actually looks like?

 **Bridge****Ask:**

Why do you think moments of success or security can sometimes be more of a threat to our faith than moments of struggle?

 **Sound Check****Say:**

In the Bible Project clip, we heard about one of the darkest moments in David's life. From a position of power and security, David abuses that power and causes serious harm. What begins in secrecy leads to injustice and violence. It is Nathan, David's close friend and God's prophet, who is given the responsibility of confronting the king and naming what he has done wrong.

**Leader's notes:**

Give everyone a copy of the '**Courageous Repentance**' handout.

In small groups, ask them to imagine they are David as Nathan asks for a quiet word.

They should fill in the thought bubbles **before and after David realises the truth.**

The Scripture references are already on the handout. You may choose to read 2 Samuel 12:1-6 together or show the clip to set the scene.

**Watch:**

The Prophet Nathan Reveals King David's Sin (2:56)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_3mgjJiuN7o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3mgjJiuN7o)

Give the group time to complete the handout and then bring them back together to discuss the following questions.

**Ask:**

Why do you think David is so confident in judging the man in the story?

**Read:**

**7 Then Nathan said to David, 'You are the man!'**

– (2 Samuel 12:7)

**Ask:**

What changes for David when he realises the story is about him?

**Read:**

**13 Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the Lord.'**

– (2 Samuel 12:13)

**Say:**

David could have tried to defend himself. He could have justified his actions or used his power to shut down the conversation. Instead, he faced the truth and named his sin.

**Ask:**

What does David teach us about courageous repentance?

**Say:**

What do you notice about what has to happen before repentance can begin?



 **Selah****Say:**

David's actions in this story are serious and extreme. Most of us would never dream of doing what David did. It can be hard for us to relate to behaviour like this, but the Bible doesn't invite us to excuse David. It invites us to listen to how he responds when faced with the truth.

In Psalm 51 David opens his heart honestly before God. This psalm doesn't rush past what has happened or pretend it doesn't matter. It gives us words for what repentance sounds like when someone stops defending themselves and brings the truth before God. As you listen, jot down any words or phrases that stand out to you and reflect David's response to his sin.

**Leader's notes:**

Either read Psalm 51 aloud or play the audio clip.

Share the groups reflections together.

**Watch:**

David Suchet NIV Bible O529 Psalm 51 (2:28)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMCIE1ERKnM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JMCIE1ERKnM)

**Say:**

Across this session we've seen that God's covenant with David did not disappear when David failed. We've also seen that repentance does not excuse sin or ignore harm, but that our relationship with God can be restored through courageous repentance.

Most of our lives won't look like David's, but the struggle to defend ourselves or avoid the truth is familiar. Courageous repentance means choosing honesty and trusting that God meets us with grace when we tell the truth.

**Optional Closing Prayer:**

God of truth and mercy,

Thank you that you meet us with grace when we are honest.

Help us to stop defending ourselves and to bring what is real before you.

Give us the courage to turn back to you, trusting that you are faithful and kind.

Amen.



 **Coda****Say:**

In a piece of music, the coda brings the different aspects of the melody, harmonies and bassline to a conclusion. It pulls together the different themes and often, but not always, brings resolution to a piece of music.

**Ask:**

As you reflect on everything you have learned today, what is your coda?

What is the one thing you will take away from this session about the importance of courageous repentance?

**Leader's notes:**

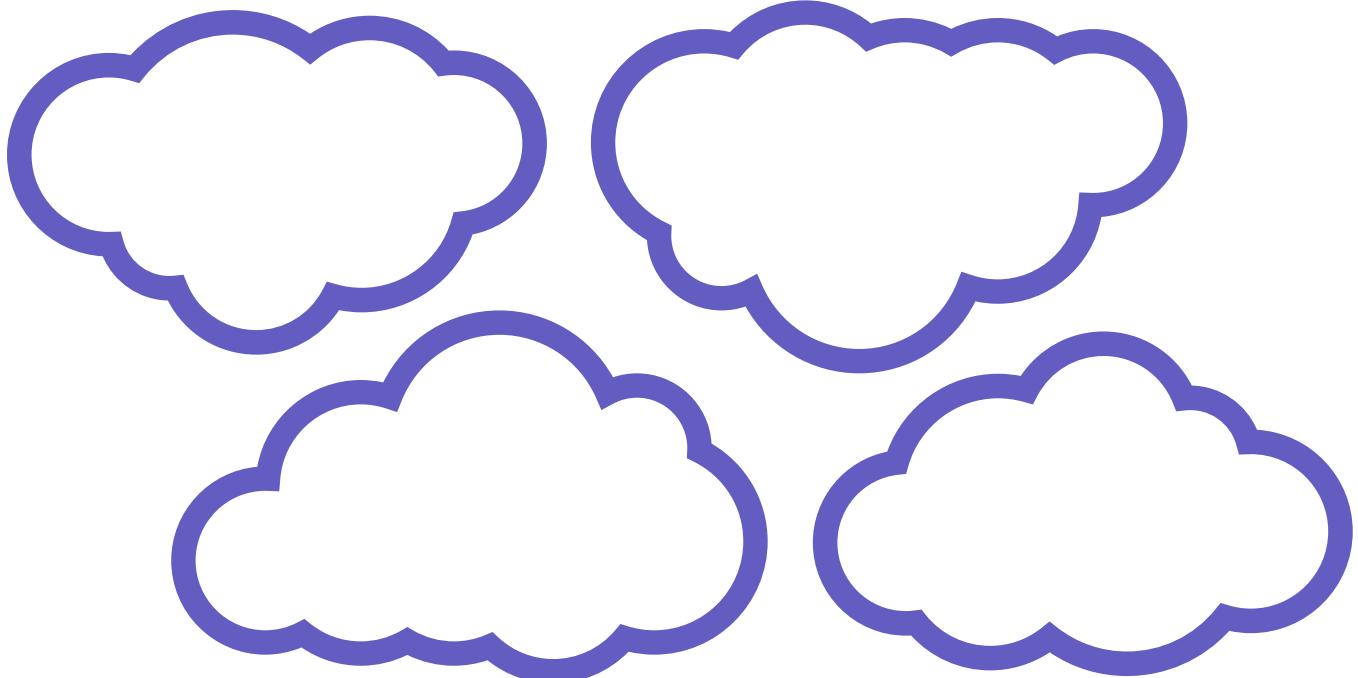
Give the young people a moment to think about your question and briefly share their coda with the group before the session comes to an end.



# ‘Courageous Repentance’

Imagine you are David. Read the scriptures and fill in the thought bubbles from David's perspective.

**BEFORE** Read 2 Samuel 12:1-6



**AFTER** Read 2 Samuel 12:7

