

# When kings go to war

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**By Lenny Cacchio**

LEE'S SUMMIT, Mo.—In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 11:1, NIV).

I have some questions about this verse:

- Was David a king?
- What did kings do at that time of year?
- If David was a king, what was he doing in Jerusalem instead of joining his men in the field?

David stumbled, and these questions point to a reason why. David failed to do the work of a king. The nation was at war, but David stayed in Jerusalem, where he could enjoy his perks of office, rest comfortably in his own bed, eat the best foods and have others fulfill his every whim.

If he had been doing the work of a king, he would not have been in his palace ogling the wife of one his trusted aides and sending a servant to fetch her for an afternoon tryst.

I wonder how often we Christians are content to keep our religion in our palaces while ignoring the duties that God sets before us. Instead of going off to fight in spiritual warfare, we want to stay back in our safe places and live a life of ease and comfort. When we do that—when we abandon the post that God expects us to guard—we risk getting too close to the edge of the wall and falling into the distractions of temptation.

This famous story of David and Bathsheba continues with David's failed attempt to cover up his crime and David's backhanded murder of Bathsheba's husband in the field of battle. Under David's orders the more honorable Uriah approached too close to the enemy's wall, and this innocent man died.

This disgusting episode in the life of one of the most revered figures of the Bible is punctuated in Matthew's genealogy of Christ. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Matthew refuses to use Bathsheba's name or to call her David's wife, instead referencing her as "her that had been the wife of Uriah" (Matthew 1:6). It sounds like the stench was still in God's nostrils over the betrayal and murder of a good man.

Keep fighting the good fight instead of seeking the creature comforts of the gilded palace where there lurks the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. Stay in the fray of the battle and those temptations won't be as tempting.