A screenshot of a website

Description automatically generated

**OPEN THE CONVERSATION**

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

* Ask for each student’s high and low from the week.
* *Word Association Game:* Sitting in a circle, the first person chosen randomly, says a word. Going clockwise, the next person must say the first word and a new word that has a connection with the previous word. Allow 3 seconds for each turn. Example: If the first person says “blue,” the second person could say “berry.” The third could say “pie, etc.”

**INTRODUCTION**

When I was a kid, I got myself into trouble quite a bit. I would consistently defy my parents and do my own thing. Whether it was picking on my brother or sneaking out of bed to watch tv at night, I was consistently acting up. After getting caught in the act, my first response would almost always be to defend myself with some excuse. Rather than take ownership of my mistake, I’d double-down. Sadly, this pattern of behavior isn’t limited to young children. We all can think of adults – celebrities, athletes, politicians - who first seek to defend themselves or point the finger at others. We also don’t have to look to culture for examples as we all still do this at times. We all are sinners who don’t always take responsibility for our actions. In the passage today, however, David shows us how to respond when we inevitability make mistakes. David owns his sin and seeks true repentance. Sin matters to God and the consequences are often far-reaching. In this lesson, we’ll talk about what we can learn from David, the negative consequences of sin, and how we can honor God through repentance of our sin.

***READ 1 Chronicles 21:1-8***

1. Satan used David’s pride to tempt him to sin. Do you see a connection between pride and sinfulness in your own life?
2. David ignored the wise counsel of advisors like Joab who tried to steer him away from sin. When tempted to sin, what are things you can do to help you submit to the will of God rather than sin?

***READ 1 Chronicles 21:9-15***

1. What do the consequences of David’s sin teach us about the nature of sin?

***READ 1 Chronicles 21:16-17***

1. What can we learn from David’s response to God after he sins?
2. How does Christ give you confidence in the face of sin?

**WRAP UP**

**Put today's lesson into action: How can you apply it to your life?**

*Ask for any prayer requests and pray for one another.*

**EXTENDED CUT**

Just as 1 and 2 Samuel & 1 and 2 Kings were written as a single book in the Hebrew Bible, 1 and 2 Chronicles was written as a single book and later separated into two. Before what became what we now know as the Old Testament, the Hebrew canon ended with Chronicles. Written in postexilic Judah, Chronicles (1 and 2 Chronicles) retells a large portion of the history of Israel to that point. Chronicles begins with nine chapters of genealogies, ranging from the beginning with Adam to the postexilic period. 1 Chronicles then transitions from genealogy to narrative quickly covering the story of Saul and then focusing on the reign of King David. Chronicles doesn’t simply recite the history of Israel, however. Chronicles reframes the history of Israel in light of the Davidic covenant, pointing to a future king in the line of David who would be the type of ruler that God intended. While much of Israel’s history to this point includes hardship and disappointment, a theme of Chronicles is the hope of God’s enduring faithfulness.

In the passage today (1 Chronicles 21:1-17), David willfully sins against God by taking a census of the Israelites. Taking a census goes against God’s commands (Exodus 30:11-16). A person should only count and number that which he owned. By counting and numbering Israel, David assumed ownership of the people over God. Additionally, the passage makes it clear that God did not instruct David to do this as it begins with Satan inciting David in 1 Chronicles 1:1. While we will probably never lead a census, we can make the mistake of believing we are the owners and sole arbiters of whatever God has given us. David’s sin and subsequent response to God offer a clear picture of the danger of temptation & sin and the importance of repentance.

**1. Satan used David’s pride to tempt him to sin. Do you see a connection between pride and sinfulness in your own life?**

The passage opens with Satan leading David to take the census of Israel. Taking the census was sinful because by counting the people, David was taking ownership over the people who ultimately belonged to God. Counting and numbering was only allowed for that which a person owned. While Satan does tempt David, David is not without blame. Verse 4 says that David wouldn’t take no for an answer. He dug his heels in and let his pride dictate his actions. David thought he knew best rather than God. His confidence in his direction and lack of trust in God’s led him to sin. There are moments when our pride leads us. We think we know what’s best. As Christ followers, we are called to follow God’s will and obey his commands.

**2. David ignored the wise counsel of advisors like Joab who tried to steer him away from sin. When tempted to sin, what are things you can do to help you submit to the will of God rather than sin?**

Before David went through with the census, he had the opportunity to call off the plan. His advisors including Joab urged him to reconsider. In verse 3 Joab exclaims, “Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?” David’s council was attempting to save him from sin. David ignored the advice and sought security through military power over trusting in God’s plan. In our own lives, we have friends, family, mentors that care about us. When they speak into your life, listen. Perhaps they are trying to help you avoid mistakes you’ll later regret. When deciding on what course to take, listen to advice from trusted friends and mentors who love the Lord. Consult Scripture – do your actions align with God’s desires? Finally, on this side of the cross, Christ has given us his resurrection power to help us overcome sin and temptation.

**3. What do the consequences of David’s sin teach us about the nature of sin?**

Sin, acting against the will of God, always leads to consequences. In verse 8, David acknowledges his sin to God. Despite David’s contrition, his decision still led to painful consequences. After receiving punishment options, David chooses the consequence he would suffer alongside his people. While David may not have chosen the worst option, his sin led to deadly consequences for his people. When deciding to take the census, he had no idea how far-reaching the consequences of his actions would be. When we defy God and sin, we should expect consequences. Sin can lead to tragic results – in our own lives and the lives of those we love. And we may not always know or be able to predict what the results of sin will be.

**4. What can we learn from David’s response to God after he sins?**

After his encounter with the angel of the Lord in verse 16, David and his elders fall before the God and repent. David takes full responsibility for everything that has occurred. After his repentance, God invites David back into fellowship with Him and David worships God. When we humble ourselves before God and truly repent of our sin, God is quick to invite us back to him. Just as immediately worshipped God, we should worship God. Because of what God has done through Christ, there is mercy and grace for us when we repent and turn away from our sin.

**5. How does Christ give you confidence in the face of sin?**

While many thinks of sin as an action, it is really a condition of our heart. When we sin, we are choosing to disobey God. While we are inherently sinful, there is hope. Ephesians 2:4-5 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!” Christ has overcome sin and death. Through him, we can overcome the power of sin and truly follow God.