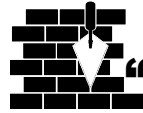


## Nathan - "The Biblical Alternative To 'Unfriending'"



### “Building Blocks”

1. **(Q1)** The main point in this question is to establish that David and Nathan were close friends. This is much more than the typically thin relationship that exists between a political leader and his/her “pastor.” We surmise this deeper relationship between these two men in a number of ways. First, the very nature of the things they talked or even “fought” about: David’s deep longing to build a temple for Yahweh, his personal sexual sin and failure, the birth of Solomon *after* the death of the unnamed son, not to mention those for which we have no record. Second, we are told that Nathan actually wrote a biography of David, *The Chronicles of Nathan the Prophet*.
2. **(Q2)** The Hebrew word translated “took” (ESV) in 2 Samuel 11:4 of our Bibles is a very strong verb. It can mean “to capture,” or “to seize.” The picture here is not a mere kingly summons, but has something of the flavor of an “abduction,” minus the violence. David is *not* “flirting” with Bathsheba. Some scholars even speculate that *this* was the reason “...*David remained in Jerusalem*” while his own army was out to war.
3. **(Q2)** The unnamed servant who told David, “*Is not this Bathsheba the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*” was, in fact, telling the king to “*Cool down, slow down, use your head rather than your instincts!*” The servant links this woman *by marriage* to one of David’s most valiant and loyal soldiers (Uriah was one of David’s elite “mighty men”), and *by blood* to another of his valiant soldiers (Eliam, Bathsheba’s father, was *also* among the “mighty men”!). This unnamed servant’s statement is literally dripping with caution to the king.
4. **(Q5b)** One of the reasons “timing” is so important is because it gives the person time to process their sin. They will either be broken and under conviction *before* you arrive, or they will be hardened and angry. If I go too soon, or too late, they will either minimize the seriousness of the sin, or maximize the problems it has created. Neither will move them towards repentance.
5. **(Q6-Prov 26)** A “*quarrel not my own*” is not referring only to “someone else’s problem.” This must be understood in the larger context of friendship. A “quarrel” a friend has might easily become an excuse for further sin in her/his life. That *is* a “quarrel” that I need to have some sense of ownership for.
6. **(Q6-Matt 18)** This passage is for believers (in its entirety) and is designed to keep conflicts *within* the community of faith as much as how to resolve them and restore fellowship. This passage, in other words, is theological not merely pragmatic. Sadly, Paul shows us what happens when it is forsaken and individual believers have little or no concern for the unity of the faith (cf. 1 Cor 6).
7. **(Q7b)** It is our modern preoccupation with our private lives that blinds us to the power of choices in the lives of *others*. David’s sin of lust that led to adultery was connected in some fashion, to the deaths of seven men and the ruination of the lives of a large number of women, including his own daughter. Nathan’s rebuke, after the fact, restored David to Yahweh. But, imagine if Nathan had had the opportunity to rebuke David *when* he saw him “looking at a woman bathing”!



## “Stumbling Stones”

1. **(Overall)** It is very important to understand the difference between “godly sorrow” and repentance. Paul makes it clear that they are *not* synonyms. “Godly sorrow” brings repentance, but it is not repentance. Being broken and weeping over what I’ve done is not repentance. Repentance takes time to manifest itself. Someone has defined repentance as being faced with the same decision but making a different choice. Christians typically misunderstand weeping as repentance. It isn’t. (cf. 2 Cor 7:10).
2. **(Q3)** Nathan went because it was “right” to *go*, NOT because of what David had done was “wrong.” This is an *enormous* difference in perspective and motivation. Confronting my sister/brother must *always* be done because it is obedience on my part to do so. *Not going* is similar to what David did in the first place! In this case, I am also ignoring the will of God for my life to satisfy my own feelings.
3. **(Q5)** Even though this psalm was written *after* Nathan’s confrontation, it still contains a wealth of insight about what was going on in David’s soul prior to his pen reaching the parchment. He *didn’t* suddenly develop all these thoughts and feelings about himself, his sin, etc. because Nathan backed him into a corner! Nathan’s rebuke turned out to be the lance that pierced the infected “boil” of his festering sin and guilt. I suspect Nathan was the agent of relief, not pain.
4. **(Q6-Prov 26)** Keep in mind that the Proverbs are *not* always true in the same sense that the Ten Commandments are. Proverbs by nature, are generalizations about how life works *most of the time*. That’s what a proverb is. In other words, there will be *some* “quarrels” that are *not* “my own” that I *should* get involved in, and others that *are* “my own” that I should avoid.
5. **(Q6-Matt 18)** It might seem that by “bringing one or two others” to confront someone is stacking the odds against the offender. But, the scripture says that the purpose of bringing “one of two others” is to “establish the charge.” The *offended* party (i.e. me!) may discover in this process that the “charge” doesn’t hold up! That they are in fact, out of line! That’s why, if the spirit of the offended party is truly a godly one, the offended party who is “going” will *not* bring friends or co-belligerents, but rather neutral third party witnesses who can weigh everything. This is more a picture of mediation that just confrontation. The reason this is vital, is because discord among two believers is a problem for the entire community of faith, not just their relationship with each other.
6. **(Q6)** We need to always have in mind that sin is a *corrosive and deadly enemy* of everyone’s soul. Confrontation, forgiveness, and restoration are *not* merely for peace between two individuals. They are life and death issues before God. How we respond to this biblical mandate reveals which of us is eager and willing to obey God in the first place.
7. **(Q7c)** We need to be *very* careful not to assume that confronting a friend will turn out glorious simply because we are obeying God by following scripture. These verses (and others) teach that some *refuse* to be corrected. In fact, in some cases, things become much worse, moving from indifference to hatred. Our responsibility is *not* to turn their lives around, only to show them where they’ve “wandered from the truth.”

8. **(Q11)** These verses have to be tempered with the larger picture of a person's *final* response, not their initial response. Often they are the same, but not always. David's right response to his own guilt took nearly a year before it became genuine repentance.



## “Going Deeper”

1. **(Overall)** “What constitutes ‘sinning against’ someone?” (NOTE: This is really a question designed to reveal what their standards of morality and conscience are.)
2. **(Q6)** “What should you do if *you* know you’ve have sinned against someone and they haven’t come to you to tell you?”
3. **(Q7b)** “Have you ever thought that you might be sparing *others* pain, suffering, and even loss of faith, by confronting a friend?”
4. **(Q7b)** “Use your imagination and project what *might have been the outcome* if Nathan had been on the rooftop with David that afternoon instead of a servant?”
5. **(Q7c)** “How serious do you view sin in a friend’s life?”
6. **(Q8)** “Why do you think we are told to go *privately* to one who’s sinned against us? What do you think God is trying to do here?”
7. **(Q8)** “Who do you typically talk to *first* when someone has sinned against you?”