

### The Wives of King David

**Memory Verse:** *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions* (Ps. 51:1 NIV).

#### Background Helps:

We have now moved beyond the period of the judges to the days of the kings of Israel. Use your maps and charts set as appropriate.

We have already met with the practice of polygamy in earlier weeks: Abraham with Sarah and Hagar, Jacob with Rachel and Leah (and their two female servants), and Elkanah with Hannah and Penninah. In each case we have seen the jealousy and strife that erupted in each family because of this practice. As we come this week to the wives of King David, this problem is portrayed in an even worse light. Polygamy was common among the kings of that day, but this fact does not excuse David for multiplying his harem. Not only were multiple wives contrary to the original monogamous ideal set forth in Genesis 2:24, but this practice was specifically forbidden to the kings of Israel: “He must not take many wives” (Deut. 17:17).

We will focus on three of David’s wives—Michal, Abigail, and Bathsheba—but David had many others: see 1 Samuel 18:27; 25:39-44; 27:3; 2 Samuel 3:2-5; 5:13-16; 11:27. The disastrous consequences of this practice is seen in the terrible strife within David’s family and nation (2 Sam. 13–19; 1 Kings 1–2) and in the subsequent idolatrous polygamy of Solomon (and his descendants), who followed David’s example (1 Kings 11:1-13). Although David was a man after God’s own heart (Acts 13:22), his marriage and family life was not the area of his greatest success and pride!

#### Lesson Helps:

If the question of David’s multiple wives comes up in class, deal with it as indicated above. (In teen and adult classes you may want to address this issue head on.) Aside from this matter, you should probably choose one of David’s three primary wives (Michal, Abigail, or Bathsheba) and build your lesson around that one character.

1. My aim is to teach my students about David’s first wife Michal, so that they will choose to be devoted to their spouse. This lesson is aimed at married couples. Consider the early devotion of Michal to her husband, David, even risking her own life to save his: 1 Samuel 14:49; 17:25; 18:22-29; 19:8-17. How did her attitude toward David later change? See 1 Samuel 25:39-44; 2 Samuel 3:2-5, 12-16; 6:12-23. How do you account for this change? Exhort husbands and wives to a life of absolute love and devotion to their life mate.
2. My aim is to teach my students about Abigail’s intervention in David’s life, so that they will serve as peacemakers. This lesson will be suitable for children, teens, and adults alike. Make a study of Abigail’s character in 2 Samuel 25. What outstanding traits do you find in her? (A “combination of characteristics” lesson

may be appropriate here. See “Handling the Character Study Lesson.”) What kind’s of situations in life require the intervention of a peacemaker like Abigail (e.g., at school on the playground, at home among family members, at work among coworkers, or in the church among members)? Following the model of Abigail in 1 Samuel 25, devise and act out some role playing exercises in a contemporary setting (e.g., intervening in an argument on the playground). See Matthew 5:9, Romans 12:17-21; 14:19, Philippians 4:2-3, and James 3:17-18 in the New Testament.

3. My aim is to teach my students about David’s wife Bathsheba, so that they will flee from sexual immorality. This lesson is appropriate for teens and young single adults as well as for married couples. Either story-telling or investigative Bible study (or a combination of both) is a method you can use to unfold the tragic story found in 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Try to consider the events from Bathsheba’s point of view (2 Sam. 11:2-5, 26-27; 12:15-25). How much responsibility do you think she bore in the act of adultery? Try to imagine her responses to the birth and death of her first son and the birth of her second son. What further light is shown on Bathsheba’s character in 1 Kings 1 and 2? How did God show his grace and compassion to Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:24-25; Matt. 1:1, 6)? Make appropriate applications using such passages as 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, and Hebrews 13:4. Incorporate the memory verse, Psalm 51:1 (or even the whole psalm), into your lesson.

**Assignment:**

-  Read about women in the days of the kings (Prominent Women of the Bible).
-  Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:10.