

# Bad Guys and Gals of the Bible

Throughout the course of history, God has woven certain people into His plan that, not by accident or coincidence, have made a mistake or two that resulted in some larger-than-life outcomes. The Bible is filled with stories of people, just like you and me, that have struggled, stumbled, failed and simply just messed up. It's in these "whoopsie" moments, that the Lord teaches us His greatest lessons and He reveals His will along the way. It's also an opportunity to see the power of God's great mercy, forgiveness and grace.

## The Apostle Paul

Before he was Paul, he was Saul — a ruthless crusader intent on stopping the growth of Christianity at any cost by putting them in prison, destroying churches and even overseeing their murders. He was so zealous in his Jewish faith, that he wanted to eradicate Christians completely. That is, until God revealed himself to Saul on the road to Damascus and his life would forever be changed and transformed. It was there he became the great Apostle Paul, one of the greatest soldiers for Christ—dedicating his entire life to spread the message of salvation to the world. For God to not just forgive a man blood-thirsty to persecute Christians, but to use Him greatly for His purpose is one of the greatest examples of God's love, mercy and grace for us.

## King David

King David is one of the most highly revered and important characters in the Bible. He triumphed over a lion, a bear and the giant. God even used him to lead His people during a very difficult time. But even as a "man after God's own heart," David had a history of making mistakes. In fact, he broke HALF of the 10 commandments. Those of which include, murder (2 Samuel 11:17; 12:9), lying (2 Samuel 11: 7-8, 12-13), adultery (1 Samuel 11:4), coveting a neighbor's wife (2 Samuel 11:3) and even stealing another man's wife (2 Samuel 12:9). Even though his sins were many, he turned to God, confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness. And God forgave him.

## Moses

Even the great Moses had a troubling past before God called him to lead His people. When he was 40 years-old, he became incensed when he discovered an Egyptian taskmaster beating a Hebrew slave—so he killed him and buried him in the sand. Instead of dealing with the consequence of being found-out, he fled

Egypt and began a new life. Despite the murder, God used Moses to lead two million Israelites out of Egypt and eventually, into the Promised Land.

### **Tamar**

Tamar left her family at a young age to marry into the family of Judah. In these times, a woman's value was determined by her offspring, but she was unable to conceive with her first husband, Er, so God struck him down and she married a second brother, Onan. Onan refused to conceive with Tamar, so God punished him and he also died. By law, Tamar then married a third brother, and was still unable to conceive. Faced with the fear of being childless and destitute, she set out for justice. Dressed as a prostitute, she coerced her father-in-law, Judah, to have sex with her and she bore twin sons. While her actions were unethical and she almost lost her life for it, one of the sons was the ancestor of King David—a direct lineage to Christ.

### **Simon Peter**

Even with the foresight of having Jesus' prediction, a weak and fearful Peter denied ever knowing Him—not just once, but three times. This was the ultimate test for Peter, but even with his loyalty firmly rooted in Christ, he still failed Him. Even though he turned his back on Jesus, God forgave Peter and reaffirmed his faith—he repented and continued to share the Good News, even until his death.

### **Jonah**

Who can forget the odd and awe-inspiring story of Jonah and the whale? When God spoke to Jonah, He commanded him to preach repentance to the city of Nineveh—but he refused out of stubbornness. Instead, he did the opposite—he ran away from the Lord and set out on ship directly way from Nineveh. It was there that God sent a violent storm to capsize the ship, but just before, the sailors tossed Jonah overboard and the seas went calm. Instead of drowning, Jonah was swallowed by a whale that God provided. While in the belly of the whale, Jonah repented and begged God to save him. And the Lord listened. Jonah went on to spread God's message to the Ninevites, they repented and God did not destroy them.

### **Rahab , Samson, and many more...**

**Who else can you think of who was a bad person and whom Jesus transformed?**