
NATHAN'S STORY

By

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Great Light Publications

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Preface

One of the most powerful and memorable scenes recorded in the Bible is the confrontation between King David and the prophet Nathan. At a low point in David's life, when he was straying from God as a prodigal son, the Lord sent just the right person with just the right message to call him back from the path of death to the path of repentance unto life.

The beauty and power of the story that Nathan shared with David is founded, in many respects, upon its absolute simplicity. Regardless of age, race, or cultural heritage, few people need to struggle to comprehend the vital moral principles that flow out of the inspired message that was delivered by Nathan. David himself, even in his anemic spiritual condition, had no difficulty identifying where the lines of justice needed to be drawn with respect to the characters presented in Nathan's story. One man was clearly guilty of multiple transgressions against his neighbor, while the other was just as clearly an innocent victim of another man's callous and unlawful behavior. Little wonder why David, who was both a king and judge in ancient Israel, was so thoroughly convicted when he was informed by Nathan that he "was the man", i.e. the guilty party!

Although the story that follows mirrors, to a certain degree, the biblical narrative that first came from the lips of the prophet Nathan to David, it is not intended to provide readers with a strict or literal retelling of the story recorded in 2 Samuel 12:1-9. Nor, I might add, is this book seeking to present some sort of paraphrased version of this scriptural account. The true goal of *Nathan's Story*, simply put, is to provide children with an edifying story that contains many of the key principles of the original biblical account from Second Samuel.

May Almighty God be pleased to use this simple story, which is based on timeless moral principles, to challenge youngsters of all ages to love their neighbor as themselves to the glory of King Jesus.

Michael J. McHugh
Palatine, Illinois
2010

Foreword

The story you are about to read will provide young children with a powerful example of how the sin of coveting can undermine one's ability to love his neighbor. For this reason, both before and after you read this story to youngsters, it is recommended that you explain the following Scripture passages to them:

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Exodus 20:17

“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

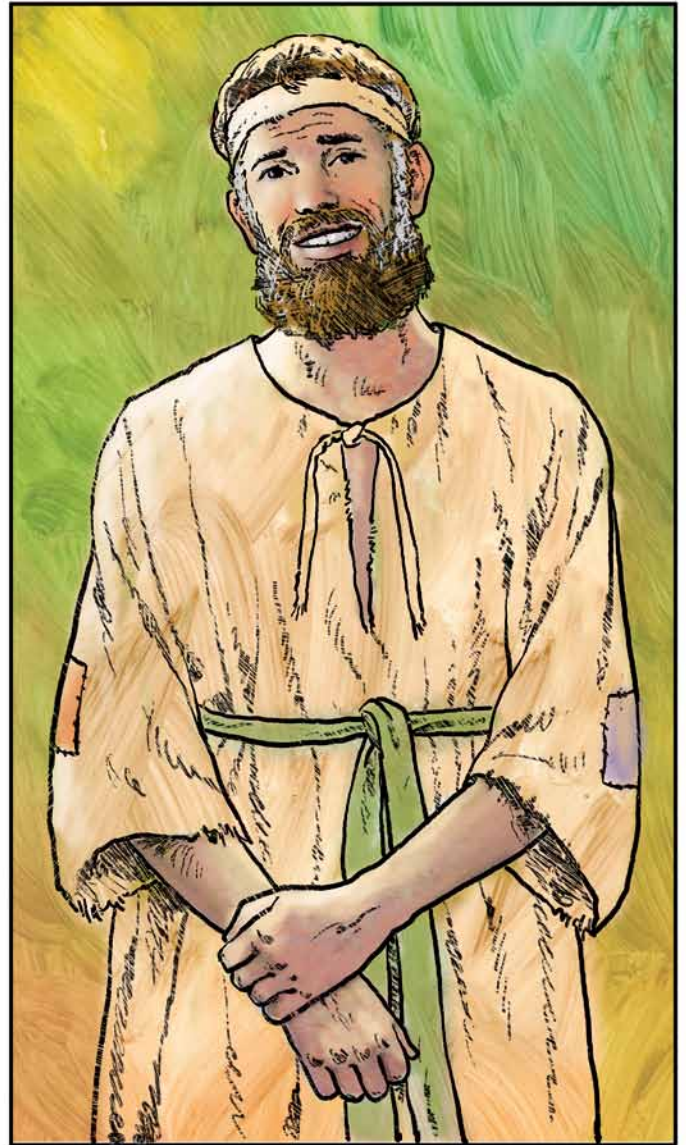
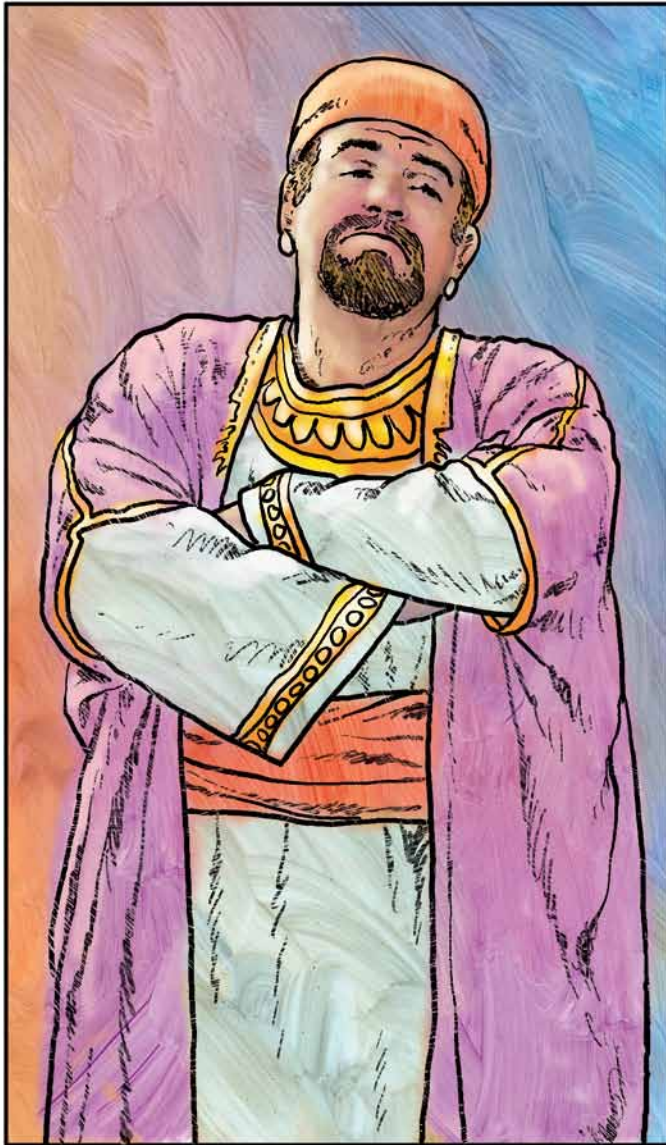
Matthew 22:37-40

A helpful group of teaching suggestions is provided at the back of the book to aid those who are reading through this story with young children.

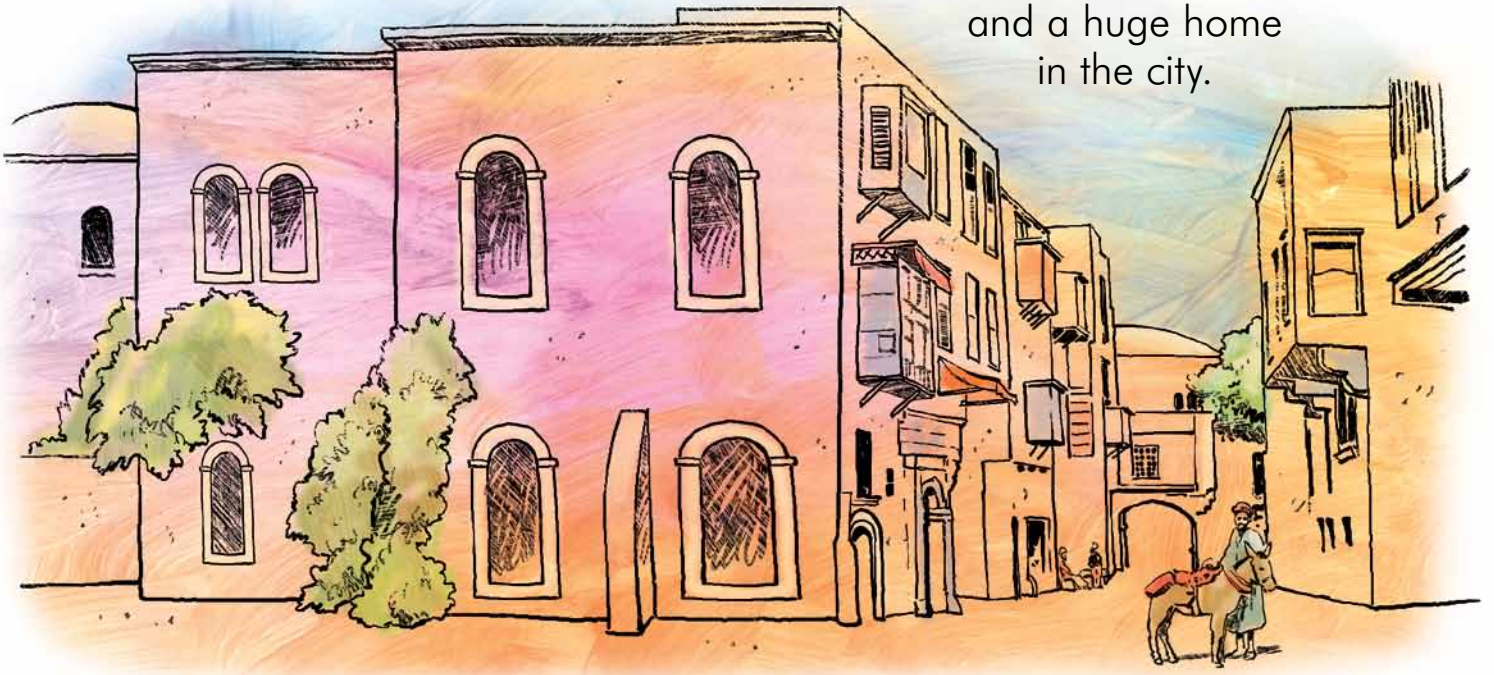
Chapter One

Rich Man, Poor Man

Long ago, near a big city, there lived
a rich man and a poor man.



The rich man had nice clothes,
a fancy gold ring,
and a huge home
in the city.



He also owned a large farm just
outside of town that had big barns
and many animals.

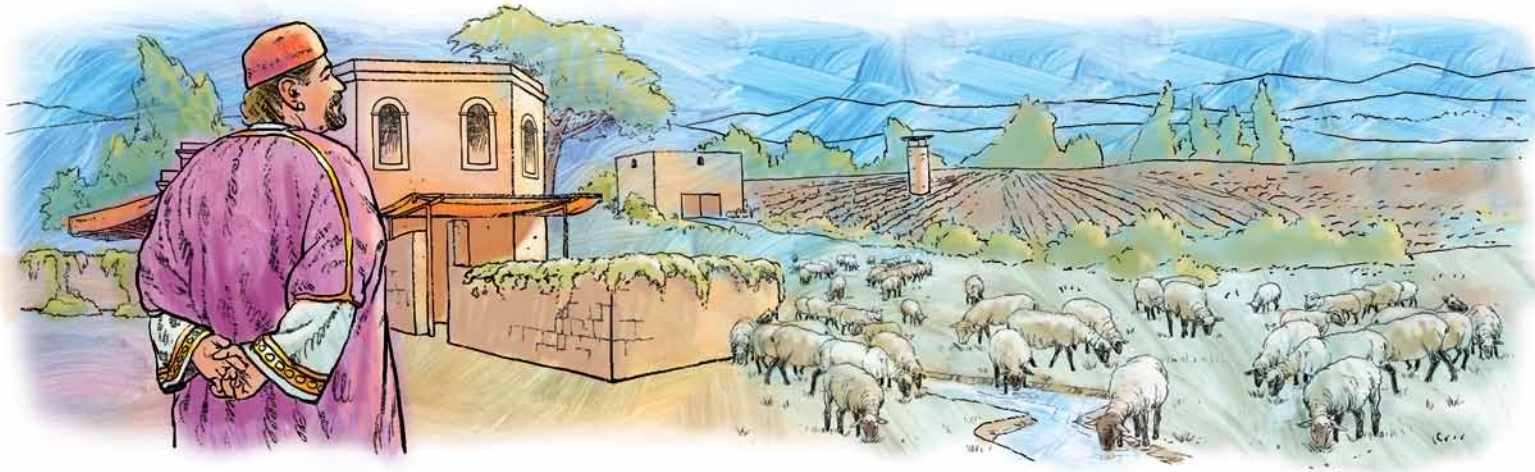


This man had also been blessed with a loving wife, five children, and several servants to help him with his work around the farm.

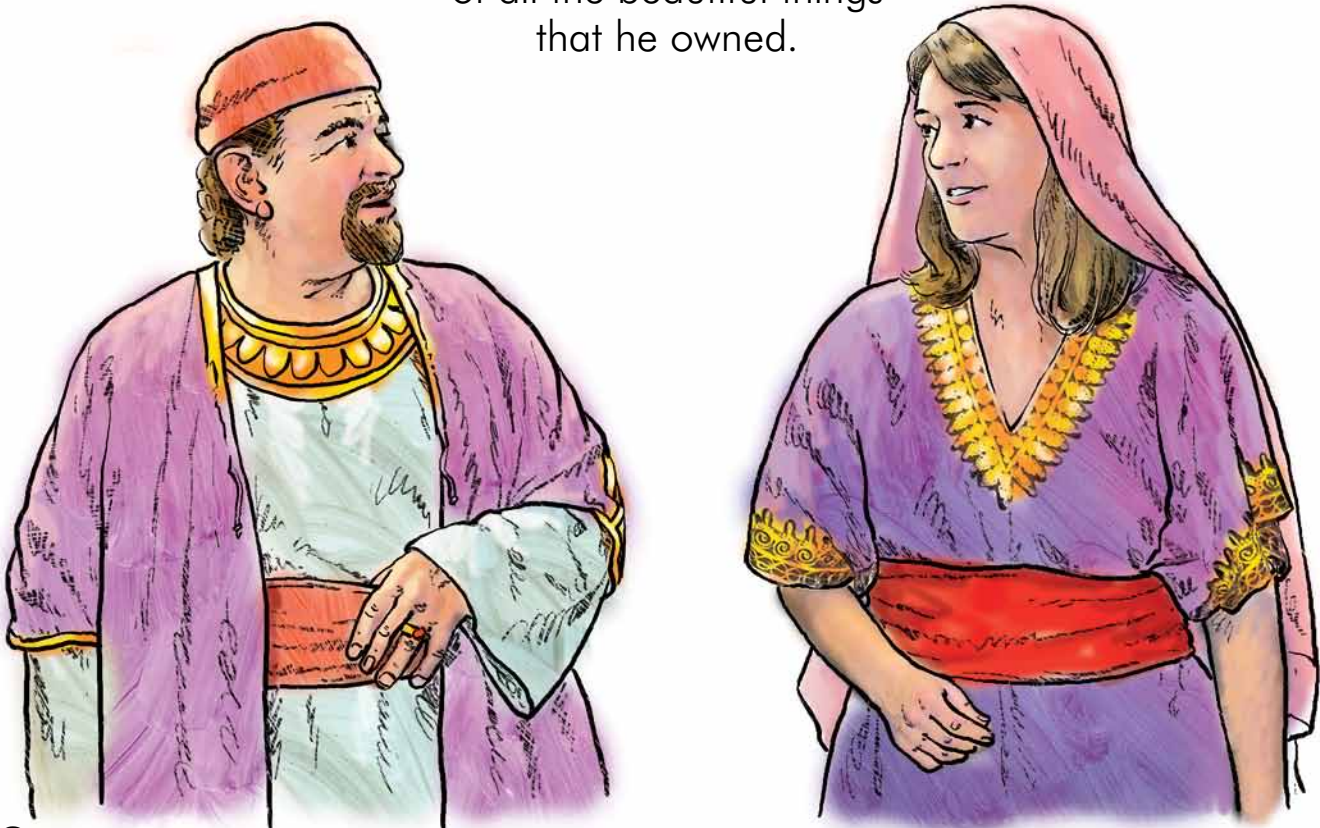


No wonder that people called him a “rich man”.

Every day, the rich man loved to walk around his farm and look at his big house, and admire all of the animals in the field.



He also liked to take long walks with his wife so they could watch their children play. This man was very proud of all the beautiful things that he owned.



Sometimes, the rich man would ask himself;
“I wonder what I have done to deserve all of these riches?”



The only answer that seemed right to this man, was that his riches must have come to him because he was so wise and good.

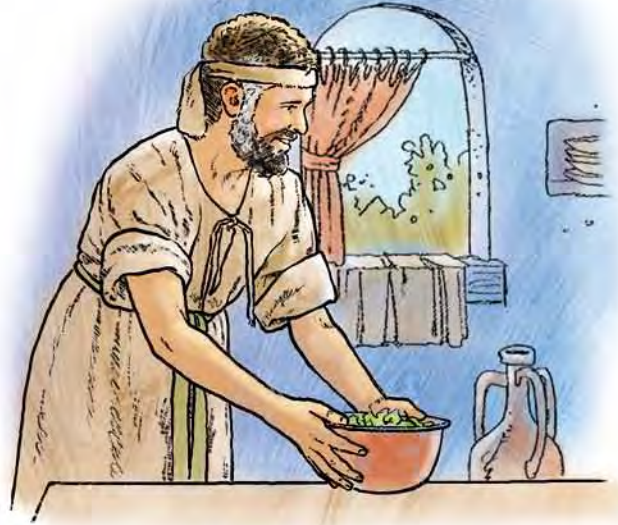
The rich man had a neighbor living close to his farm who was very poor.



The poor man lived in a tiny stone house with his two sons. His wife had died shortly after giving birth to their second son, so the poor man was very sad and lonely without her.



This father had such a small garden that he could barely feed his children. Day after day, he worked hard just to put food on the table.



One day, the poor man decided to do something to try to bring some joy into his hard life. He decided to go to a small farm near his home, in order to buy a tiny lamb for a pet.



Oh, how happy the father was to carry his new friend home on his shoulders. Now he would not be so lonely or sad anymore!

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

The following information can be useful to teachers who wish to help young children to comprehend the main truths or biblical principles contained in *Nathan's Story*. It is recommended that instructors utilize these suggestions after they have first read the story to the children, as well as the Bible passages listed in the Foreword.

Chapter One

Rich Man, Poor Man

Scripture Reading: 1 Timothy 6:17-18; Matthew 25:1-30; James 4:1-6

Young children need to be taught that the world will always be filled with both rich people and poor people. Remind youngsters that the Word of God never condemns someone merely because he is rich or poor. The Scriptures do, however, set forth the principle of "...to whom much is given, from him much will be required." (Luke 12:48) The Lord, therefore, requires that His creatures be good stewards over that which has been entrusted to them — whether they have much or little. Read the Parable of the Ten Virgins and the Parable of the Talents from Matthew 25 with your student(s), and discuss the importance of God's people using the time and talents that the Lord provides wisely.

The Bible encourages people not to think more highly of themselves than they should, but to be clothed with the virtue of humility. The Word of God also warns men not to be prideful by declaring in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." In the case of the rich man in our story, the real underlying sin that blinded him from being able to recognize his duty to love his neighbor

was his pride. Talk with your student(s) about the sin of pride and its destructive fruits. Help them to recognize how pride breeds selfishness, as well as contention and strife with their fellow man. It is a true and faithful saying that, “God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

At the close of chapter one, the reader is introduced to a poor man who is a widower. He is described as being sad and lonely of heart after losing his beloved wife. Ask your student(s) if they know what it means to be lonely. Help them to recognize that one of the first things that God identified as “not good” soon after He created human beings was loneliness. Almighty God declared in Genesis after He made Adam, that it “...was not good for man to be alone.” Read James 1:27 and Lev. 19:32-34 to your student(s), and encourage them to make it part of their mission in life to help those who are struggling with loneliness, particularly in cases where they come across widows and orphans. Even when children are playing with other youngsters from their community, they should be encouraged to go out of their way to try to include everyone that wants to join them in their activities or games.

Chapter Two

For the Love of a Lamb

Scripture Reading: Genesis 1: 24-31; Deut. 25:4; Proverbs 12:10

The Bible teaches us that the Lord placed animals on the earth primarily for the service of man, so that these creatures would be a blessing to mankind. Sadly, after the fall of man, not all creatures remained a blessing to the human race. Nevertheless, most animals are still quite useful or profitable to men even if it is only for companionship.

The opening of chapter two presents the touching story of the relationship that existed between a lonely man and his tiny lamb. The little creature was chosen as his pet, for the poor man needed companionship at this stage of his life even more than he needed more meat on his table.

Although few children struggle with the sin of being cruel or neglectful to animals, nevertheless, it is still helpful to remind youngsters of the fact that the Bible forbids cruelty to animals. Read Proverbs 12:10 and Duet. 25:4 to your student(s) and discuss why it is wrong to torture or starve any creature.