

In Lesson 13, we examined the second and third of the four-fold judgments upon David. Amnon was a very disturbed son. He became obsessed with sexual lust for his stepsister, Tamar. This lust led Amnon into attempting to set up an opportunity to try and have intercourse with her.

This account reminds us to obey the Bible's warnings concerning sexual sin. Sexual sin with a sister in Christ (not to mention with any female) is spiritual incest and brings shame and damage upon both parties. Such behavior can forever damage our testimony and service to Christ. Fornication makes us out to be the fool.

Amnon ignored all these truths. His lust blinded him, which led to the rape of his stepsister, leaving her a desolate woman the rest of her days. Absalom, however, was shrewd and plotted how to get revenge for his sister. He pressured and duped David into letting Amnon attend a sheep shearing festival. There he offered Amnon's assassination. The result was a devastated family. Absalom fled to his grandfather's homeland, while David mourned day after day due to the consequences of his sin. Three years passed, and David's heart began yearning for Absalom once again. This is where we pick up this week's study.

DAY 1

A Wise Woman 2 SAMUEL 14:1-14

Please Read 2 Samuel 14:1-14 and answer the following questions.

[1] Joab discerned that David longed for Absalom. What plan did he devise to bring about their reunion (versus 2-3)?

Note: Tekoa was about 10 miles south of Jerusalem.¹

[2] This "wise woman" put on quite an act. She related a story similar to what happened in David's family. She asked for David's help in preventing the slaying of this son. David told her to go to her home and he'd take care of things. How did she indirectly obligate him to take action (verses 9-11)?

[3] How was her real intent exposed in verses 12-14?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] This woman was probably better described as being shrewd than wise, and she shrewdly required a commitment from David that he couldn't escape from fulfilling.² We must truly be careful to not make a promise before we really think it through. What light do the following passages shed about being careful about how we speak in general, especially in light of making foolish promises?

Psalm 17:3; 141:3

Proverbs 6:1–2; 12:13–14

James 1:26, 3:2

[2] One good point this woman made was that once we are gone, it will be too late to make amends for the things we never dealt with. In the same way, we need to seek reconciliation with those from whom we are separated, because one day it may be too late to do so. What did Jesus tell us about the need to sort this out (Matthew 5:23–24, 43–44)? How did Paul seek to remain right with others (Acts 23:1; 24:16)?

Daily Life Point: Have you made foolish promises you now regret? If so, welcome to the human race! But based on what we read today, what are some practical steps you can take to better avoid making such foolish statements from now on? Please share your thoughts and pray through it with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

This week we will memorize 2 Samuel 15:25b–26. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

'If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. But if He says thus: "I have no delight in you," here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.' (2 Samuel 15:25b–26 NKJV)

DAY 2

A Reluctant Father 2 SAMUEL 14:15–27

Please Read 2 Samuel 14:15–27 and answer the following questions

[1] This woman really laid the flattery on thick. David then realized there was something fishy about this. What did he ask, and how did the woman respond (verses 18–20)?

[2] What then did David order about Absalom (verses 21–24)?

[3] What facts did the author of 2 Samuel include about Absalom's looks, hair, and children (verses 25–27)?

Note: The Hebrew word for the word *praised* means "to be celebrated, praised, or famous, and comes from the root word meaning radiance."³ The NLT translates the weight of his hair to be five pounds per haircut. Warren Wiersbe well said, "The only thing weighty about Absalom was his hair. His good looks camouflaged a bad heart."⁴

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] There is a real danger in flattery, especially if we believe it and let it go to our head. We need to avoid flattery. What do the following passages say about avoiding flattery and honestly communicating when dealing with others?

Psalms 5:9; 12:1–2

Proverbs 26:28; 29:5

1 Thessalonians 2:3–6

[2] Absalom was in many ways the opposite of his father David, but we must also find some fault with David's parenting here. David was wrong in the way he "forgave" Absalom. In fact, it sowed the seed of rebellion within Absalom.⁵ In what type of attitude are we, as fathers, to discipline and guide our children?

Ephesians 6:4

1 Thessalonians 2:7

Daily Life Point: We must avoid the sin of flattery. That doesn't mean we are tactless, of course, but it does mean that we speak the truth in love. We need to seek to reflect Christ in the way we relate to those around us.

In what situations may you be tempted to use flattery? How can you avoid this in a loving way? How does this tie in with the way that you will deal with and discipline your own children? Write down some ideas here and then discuss some of the things that you can do to better practice these things in your own life.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

'If I find _____ in the eyes of the Lord, He will
_____ me back and show me both it and His dwelling
place. But if He says thus: "I have no _____ in you," here I
am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him.' (2 Samuel 15:25b–26 NKJV)

DAY 3

A Manipulative Son
2 SAMUEL 14:28-15:9

Please Read 2 Samuel 14:28-15:9 and answer the following questions

[1] David went two years without making an effort to set things right with Absalom. When Absalom sought to talk with Joab about seeing David, he refused to come. What unusual way did Absalom deal with this, and why (verses 30-32)?

[2] David and his son were reunited face to face. Interestingly, we aren't told that Absalom kissed David!⁶ It was all part of a subtle plot of Absalom, as we'll see. What are some deceitful steps that Absalom took to begin promoting himself (15:1-4)?

[3] What was the result of all his self-promotion (15:5-6)?

[4] What was the next move that Absalom made in manipulating the people and his father (verses 7-9)?

Note: Most sources state that this passage should read "four years" and not "forty years."⁷

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Absalom had plenty of time to plot his course of action over the two years that he sat in Jerusalem. He was quite the manipulative son. He manipulated Joab, he manipulated the people of Israel, and he manipulated his own father. In many ways, Absalom actually personifies all that God says that He hates!⁸ What are some of the ways we see Absalom reflected in Proverbs 6:16-19?

[2] Again we see how Absalom was the direct opposite of his father David. David won the hearts of the people by his faith, trust, and actions for the God of Israel, while still supporting a bad king of Israel. Absalom did so through lies and deceit, making his father look like a bad guy, dishonoring God's choice of his father as king. What do Proverbs 12:17-22 and John 8:44 tell us about liars? What will be the ultimate result for those who manipulate through lies and deceit, if they don't repent (Proverbs 19:5; Revelation 21:8)?

Daily Life Point: Deceitful manipulation is the twin sibling of flattery! Lying always is destructive. Perhaps David had this incident in mind when he penned Psalm 109:2–5:

For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful have opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. They have also surrounded me with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause. In return for my love they are my accusers, but I give myself to prayer. Thus they have rewarded me evil for good, and hatred for my love.

Have you faced a situation in which someone has lied about you or undercut you in some fashion? How did you deal with it? How can you deal with such situations more effectively, rather than letting your life be destroyed through another's deliberate or unwitting lies about you? Please discuss this with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

'If I find _____ in the eyes of the Lord, He will
_____ me back and _____ me both it and His
_____ place. But if He says thus: "I have no
_____ in you," here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to
Him.' (2 Samuel 15:25b-26 NKJV)

DAY 4

A Hostile Takeover **2 SAMUEL 15:10–23**

Please Read 2 Samuel 15:10–23 and answer the following questions

[1] Of course, this was Absalom's plot. The conspiracy even ensnared David's longtime friend and counselor, Ahithophel. Some think that Ahithophel was actually the mastermind of this coup attempt to get revenge on David for his sin with his granddaughter Bathsheba.⁹ Absalom sent messengers out to proclaim his kingship at the prearranged signal.

What was David's response to the news that Absalom was doing all this (verses 14–15)?

[2] What were some of the preparations that David made as he fled, and who accompanied him (verses 16–18)?

[3] What further support did David find along the way, and how is their departure described (verses 19–23)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] The fourth judgment upon David now unfolds upon him. Yet God was gracious to David. In the midst of betrayal, he found those who offered him their absolute loyalty. It is amazing to see the loyalty of David's men, many of whom stuck by him all the way, even all the way back to thirty years in the wilderness.¹⁰

What do the following passages indicate about the blessed loyalty of a fellow believer helping us through the difficult times in our lives?

Proverbs 17:17

John 15:13

[2] This time of severe trial in David's life led him to produce a number of psalms, including Psalms 3–4; 39; 41; 55; 61–63; 143.¹¹ We'll save Psalm 3 for our "Parting Thoughts" this week. Today and tomorrow let's read some passages from these psalms and examine some of the things that God was teaching David. Summarize what you read from these verses.

Psalm 4:2–5

Psalm 39:4–7

Psalm 55:16–17, 22

Daily Life Point: God may allow strong periods of spiritual discipline in our lives to help redirect us when we really need it. As you read the above passages about David's experiences, what spoke to your heart the most in relation to things you personally have experienced? Have you benefited from another person coming alongside you to help you through your own personal times of struggle? How can you do the same for another you may know?

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory. Then review the passage several times throughout the week.

'If I find _____ in the eyes of the Lord, He will
_____ me back and _____ me both it and His
_____ place. But if He says thus: "I have no
_____ in you," here I am, let Him _____ to me as seems
_____ to Him.' (2 Samuel 15:25b–26 NKJV)

DAY 5

A Weeping Wanderer
2 SAMUEL 15:24–37

Please Read 2 Samuel 15:24–27 and answer the following questions

[1] David left the city and crossed over the Brook Kidron, which means "dark and cloudy,"¹² The Brook Kidron was part of a valley on the eastern side of Jerusalem and separated the city and the Mount of Olives. Interestingly, this was the same one that Jesus passed over just before His night in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:1).¹³

What happened as David set forth, and what amazing thing did he say about this (verses 24–29)?

[2] What horrible news hit David to make this trial even more difficult, but what correct thing did David do about it (verses 30–31)?

[3] God again was faithful to David and brought another dear friend for support. What plan did David come up with in view of this support (verses 32–37)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] David's trust in God is amazing. He realized that God was still in control. Rather than giving into his extremely distressing trial, he entrusted himself to God. David also committed the burden of the news over Ahithophel to the Lord in prayer.

How does Hebrews 12:1–3 reinforce the appropriate choice David made? How does it speak to us in our own difficult circumstances?

[2] The news about Ahithophel must have been like salt poured into David's freshly opened wounds. Yet he expressed his heart about this in Psalm 41.

How does Psalm 41:9–12 especially address this, and how was this actually a Messianic prophecy according to John 13:21–30?

[3] Read some of the additional passages from the following psalms written at this time. Then share some things that they speak to you personally when facing life's tests and trials.

Psalm 61:1–4

Psalm 63:1–3, 6–8

Daily Life Point: David, in the midst of his struggles, had the great comfort of his loyal friend Hushai. He became not just an answer to prayer, but would lead to saving his life and the kingdom!¹⁴ He came like Job's friends did at first, not in judgment, but to embrace and weep with him in his struggles.

Are you that type of friend? Are you the kind of friend whom others can turn to without concern of being judged or preached to? Do you gently lead them to trust in the Lord and take practical helpful steps? Meditate on how Charles Swindoll well described Hushai's intervention. Then record how you can better do so for those friends in your life:

Sometimes when the pain is so great and you have come to the last house, your own personal Hushai arrives ...and with his presence wraps himself or herself around you. That warm, speechless embrace says all that needs to be said. He's there. He's there for you. No sermon. No great messages of hope or verse of Scripture. He may not even pray. Just a hug says it all.¹⁵

MEMORY PASSAGE

Write out this week's passage by memory. Then review the passage throughout the week.

2 Samuel 15:25b–26 NKJV

DAY 6

Pursuing God's Heart

[1] The enemy often uses flattery and deceit to build up someone's self confidence and pride. Through this, he reels us into his deception so he can strike just when the time is right. Often at that point, it's too late to turn back. The damage is done.

How have the things that we examined this week helped you become more aware of temptation? Perhaps the Spirit has convicted you that you are the one who is manipulating and deceiving others through flattery. What are some of the steps you will take to turn away from this?

[2] Although David reaped what he had sown in all of these things, our hearts go out to him in his sufferings. It is a blessing to see how he was confident in God despite the circumstances. How has his example encouraged you in view of trials you have been facing? Meditate on this quotation, and then record some of your thoughts on how you can better trust in God through all He brings across your path:

David was down, but not out; defeated, but not destroyed. His night of anguish was exceedingly dark, but if God permitted the dawn of a new day, he would be ready to meet its challenge.¹⁶

[3] We too can comfort those around us suffering through the trials of this life. People don't need someone who comes with an agenda and a sermon. They need someone who will be there to gently help and restore them in love. Perhaps you need that type of friend right now. Seek to be that to others, and you'll see how quickly those you have assisted in love will rally to your side and support you when needed.

How can you do this in your discussion group? Why don't you share about this as a group and make a commitment to accept and assist one another through the struggles of your lives? Take some time to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

[4] Lastly, please record here any other thoughts or things that the Lord has impressed on your heart during this week's study.

MEMORY PASSAGE

2 Samuel 15:25b–26 NKJV

From memory, write out this week's passage below. Then review the passage throughout the day. Be prepared to share the verse with your group.

PARTING THOUGHTS

So much of David's heart and lessons are recorded for us in the psalms he wrote. His psalms can be of great encouragement for us. Let's close by meditating on Psalm 3, which was written during this difficult time of David's life.

Psalms 3

A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.

Lord, how they have increased who trouble me!
Many are they who rise up against me.
Many are they who say of me,
"There is no help for him in God."

Selah

But You, O Lord, are a shield for me,
My glory and the One who lifts up my head.
I cried to the Lord with my voice,
And He heard me from His holy hill.

Selah

I lay down and slept;
I awoke, for the Lord sustained me.
Will not be afraid of ten thousands of people
Who have set themselves against me all around.

Arise, O Lord;
Save me, O my God!
For You have struck all my enemies on the cheekbone;
You have broken the teeth of the ungodly.
Salvation belongs to the Lord.
Your blessing is upon Your people.

Selah

NOTES

- 1 John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), p. 446.
- 2 Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1990), p. 264.
- 3 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG, 1994), p. 2311.
- 4 Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Nelson, 1993), p. 401.
- 5 Alan Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1962), p. 207.
- 6 Mary J. Evans, *1 and 2 Samuel*. *New International Biblical Commentary* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2000), p. 198.
- 7 *The New Scofield Study Bible, NKJV* (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), p. 385.
- 8 Wiersbe, *With the Word*, p. 402.
- 9 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor Books, 2002), p. 96.
- 10 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 848.
- 11 Wiersbe, *With the Word*, p. 403.
- 12 "Biblical Cyclopedic Index" in *The Open Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1985), p. 190.
- 13 MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, p. 449.
- 14 Wiersbe, *Be Restored*, p. 102.
- 15 Charles R. Swindoll, *David, a Man of Passion and Destiny* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1997), p. 245.
- 16 Powell, *David*, p. 278.

