

In Lesson 5, we examined David's anointing as king over Judah. David received the grievous news of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. He composed a wonderful song of remembrance for them, demonstrating great grace and forgiveness of his persecutor, Saul. David was then anointed king of Judah. However, Abner, the commander of Saul's forces, rose up in rebellion against God's revealed will, making Saul's remaining son, Ishbosheth, king over Israel. This became the root of a civil war.

Abner and his forces met Joab, the commander of David's forces. As both sides faced off, Abner suggested they have some of the young men fight in contest for the two sides. The two men killed each other, resulting in battle. Abner ran off, and Joab's brother Asahel pursued him fiercely. Abner repeatedly warned him to turn aside, but Asahel refused. Eventually, Abner struck and killed Asahel in self-defense. Thus, this Field of Sharp Swords became the spark of a full-fledged war. Fortunately, Abner called for a temporary truce after 360 of his men were killed compared to 20 of David's men. Joab agreed, and returned to Hebron with David.

This is where we pick up our current lesson. This week we will examine what examples are set for us to be a person after God's own heart. We will also encounter some mistakes to avoid in that quest as well.

DAY 1

David's Strengthening **2 SAMUEL 3:1-8**

Please Read 2 Samuel 3:1-8 and answer the following questions

[1] War raged for some time after this. What happened that was foretold through Samuel (v. 1)?

[2] Verses 2-5 list David's sons that were born in Hebron, while 1 Chronicles 3:1-9 gives an additional listing of his children. During this time, Ishbosheth realized that Abner gained a stronghold over the house of Saul. What did Ishbosheth decide to do because of this (v. 7)?

[3] What was Abner's reaction to this (v. 8)?

Note: "A dog's head" was a common expression used of contempt in their culture.¹

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] God was building up David's kingdom and tearing down Saul's. The phrase "grew stronger and stronger" means that it went in the direction of being strong, valiant, powerful, and firmly established.² In contrast, Saul's kingdom was growing weak, thin, and lean.³

Today, we could interpret the house of Saul as being parallel to our spiritual enemies (the world, the flesh, and the devil), and a spiritual civil war rages within our lives.⁴ We are born again, with a new nature in Christ, but that new nature butts heads with the old nature still present in us, causing the conflicts we face (Galatians 5:17). Winning this spiritual battle will be determined by which nature we feed the most. We must starve the flesh and feed the new person in Christ!

How do the following passages equip you to carry out this spiritual battle and see victory over the flesh?

Romans 6:6, 11-13, 16;

Galatians 5:16, 22-24

[2] Possessing one of the court women was the equivalent of holding royal power.⁵ We don't know for sure if Ishbosheth's accusation was justified or not, but it appears to be unjustified.⁶ The accusation was not as much one of immorality on Abner's part, but of treason.⁷ We know that Abner strongly denied it, saying, "I never had sex with that woman!" At some time in our lives, we may face an accusation concerning something we allegedly did, which has no factual basis. The religious leaders did that to Jesus, so we as His followers might also experience such accusations.

What are some things we can do to avoid any grounds for accusation in our own lives?

1 Corinthians 10:31

1 Thessalonians 5:22; 1 Timothy 3:2, 7

Daily Life Point: May God also make our "house" stronger and the effect of the world, the flesh, and Satan be lessened in us! We read that we must daily choose which nature we will feed. We must also daily realize that a struggle is going to face us: "Whenever a work is attempted for God, opposition is always first from without and then from within. It comes from external circumstances and from internal enemies."⁸

Based on what we read today, what are some of the practical steps you need to take to build up the new person that Christ died for you to be? How about strengthening yourself against anyone's accusation in your life, so that like Daniel, the only thing anyone can find against you is that you follow God with your whole being (Daniel 6:4-5)?

MEMORY PASSAGE

This week we will memorize 2 Samuel 3:1b. Review the passage several times throughout each day. By the end of the week, you should have it memorized.

But David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker. (2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV)

DAY 2

Abner's Desertion
2 SAMUEL 3:9-16

Please read 2 Samuel 3:9-16 and answer the following questions.

[1] Angered by Ishbosheth's accusations, what did Abner say he would do? How did Ishbosheth react (vv. 9-11)?

[2] What proposal did Abner make to David? What was David's condition for accepting it (vv. 12-14)?

[3] How does the passage describe the results of this agreement (vv. 15-16)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

We now come to a negative aspect of David's character. This aspect involved his love for women and became the root of greater future sin. Deuteronomy 17:15-19 forbade the king to multiply wives, yet David did so anyway. He would reap the consequences of his passion for women often in the future. He married a total of seven women to this point. Four children born from these unions would bring much sorrow, as we'll see in future studies.⁹ Certainly, Michal was wrongly given to this other man, and David was making a symbolic statement by reuniting with her, but the poor new husband's life was devastated by this! We'll see an even worse example of this kind of behavior by David in the future. We'll also see how having Michal back was far from a blessing.

[1] David had married a wonderful woman named Abigail, whose story we missed in 1 Samuel 25. She was very godly, intelligent, and beautiful. Abigail saved David from walking into a situation that would have been destructive to his future. So why did David settle for less than the best and let his lusts for women make him ignore the perfect will of God?

We believers do the same when we fail to be a faithful partner to our mate or when we seek a mate contrary to the best God has for us. What are some ways that these passages instruct us in seeking after and being a faithful lifetime partner, according to God's best for us?

Proverbs 5:15-20; 6:23-29

Ephesians 5:21-29

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

Daily Life Point: We'll look more at maintaining sexual purity in our relationships when we come to Lesson 12. This is a major area of concern, and a major area of attack in the church today. Most of the time "David was delightful, but at other times he was a terrible disappointment . . . David was a sinful, lustful, arrogant man, and it remains a mystery why God continued to bless him."¹⁰ Perhaps this comment sounds a lot like you. Maybe it is a wonder to you that God would bless or use you at all! We must make the choice of our will not only to die to our flesh daily, but also to live purely and honor our marriage commitments.

As you considered the above passages on being a godly marriage partner, what is one way you can make a difference in seeking to fulfill your duties as a spouse? What is one thing you can do to build yourself up to walk in sexual purity, not in the lusts which can so easily ensnare and lead you away from God's best for your life? Share your thoughts and discuss them with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory, and then review the passage several times.

But David grew _____ and stronger, and the house of Saul grew
_____ and weaker. (2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV)

DAY 3

Joab's Conspiracy
2 SAMUEL 3:17-26

Please Read 2 Samuel 3:17-26 and answer the following questions

[1] What significant steps did Abner undertake to transfer the entire kingdom to David? How successful were his efforts (vv. 17-21)?

[2] At that time, Joab's forces returned from a very successful raid. He was shocked to hear what had happened with Abner's desertion. What accusations did Joab make to the king about Abner's intentions (vv. 24-25)?

[3] After this, what did Joab secretly do (v. 26)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

It is possible to see pictures of the work of God in the world in these three characters. David could be a picture of Christ. David did not enforce authority over them; he simply took kingship over that which was offered to him. This is just as Christ asks us to come to Him willingly without forcing His kingdom on us. Abner is a lot like us. We're filled with zeal after accepting God's will (instead of our own), spreading the kingdom as Jesus called us to do in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Joab is like the enemy trying to undermine our work for the Lord, fighting for his own agenda.

[1] When Nehemiah sought to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, discouragement didn't only come from their enemies, but also from their own ranks, as they saw the immensity of the work as greater than the ability of God to help them (see Nehemiah 4). Despite these discouragements, "God has matched the rubbish-makers with excavators, and all through church history God has produced His men who would deal with the rubbish ruthlessly and fearlessly."¹¹

How do the following passages encourage you to not give into the discouragements of the trials and oppositions you will face, and become an excavator, not a whiner and someone who undermines the work of God?

2 Corinthians 4:16-18

2 Timothy 1:12

1 Peter 1:6-9

Jude 1:20-25

Daily Life Point: How did these things speak to you about not letting temporal situations and seeming piles of rubbish discourage you from pursuing God and His calling for your life?

Abner was certainly not the best example to follow in the Scriptures, because his motives were not always pure.¹² But at least he was out there spreading the kingdom while Joab only sought his own selfish agenda.

How can putting these things into practice make a difference in how you will view and handle things in the future?

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory, and then review the passage several times.

But _____ grew _____ and stronger, and the house of Saul

grew _____ and weaker. (2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV)

DAY 4

David's Lament
2 SAMUEL 3:27-34

Please Read 2 Samuel 3:27-34 and answer the following questions

[1] What was Joab's treacherous act and David's response to this (vv. 27-29)?

Note: Joab taking revenge for his brother given Abner's change of allegiance was an atrocious act. What makes it worse was the fact that the murder was committed in Hebron. Hebron was a city of refuge, where someone who had killed another in a manner like Abner could find protection and fair treatment (Numbers 35:22-25; Joshua 21:13)!¹³

[2] What did David command the people to do (v. 31)?

[3] David demonstrated a godly heart in his reaction to the death of Abner. How did he do so, and what lament did he take up for Abner (vv. 32-34)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] Joab's desire for revenge destroyed a repentant man. How often Christians are guilty of "killing their own wounded." How have people been guilty of doing this very thing at times? How can we avoid this?

Proverbs 16:28

Galatians 5:13-15; 6:10

1 Peter 4:8-9; 1 John 4:20-21

Daily Life Point: David set the example for us in a godly response to such tragic events and wrote a song of lament for Abner, his one-time adversary. Joab's selfishness sought to destroy; David's selflessness sought to reconcile others.¹⁴

How have the above passages spoken to your heart about not pouring salt in the wounds of those in need? How can we demonstrate practical love and support for them? What is an example of this that you can share? How could it have been handled to restore and reconcile someone in need of help? Please share some thoughts here and with your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory, and then review the passage several times.

But _____ grew _____ and stronger, and the house of
_____ grew _____ and weaker. (2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV)

DAY 5

David's Humility
2 SAMUEL 3:35-39

Please Read 2 Samuel 3:35–39 and answer the following questions

[1] David humbly set the example for his people of how to react to ungodliness in the kingdom. What did he do, and how did the people react to this (vv. 35-37)?

[2] What important things did David remind his servants of that we would do well to remember when faced with similar situations (vv. 38-39)?

EXPANDED QUESTIONS

[1] David's actions and attitude was pleasing to the people. This Hebrew phrase literally means, "It was good in their eyes."¹⁵ This means that they found it good, beautiful, and pleasant.¹⁶ Proverbs 13:15 says, "Good understanding gains favor, but the way of the unfaithful is hard." Obviously we will not always have everyone happy with us for living in a godly way, but what often happens when we do humbly walk with the Lord in the sight of others (1 Samuel 2:26; Luke 2:52; Acts 2:46-47)?

[2] God will indeed reward the doer according to his wickedness; we should then leave it up to God to deal out His own perfectly righteous judgment. David at first was ready to strike back at Joab, dishing out curses toward him, but he then had a change of heart. When David said he was weak, it didn't mean he was a wimp. In fact, the Hebrew term means "to be restrained and gentle", which is in contrast with the hardness of Joab.¹⁷

How did Paul guide us to have this power under restraint when we are tempted to take revenge (Romans 12:14-21)?

Daily Life Point: We must take to heart the lesson that David demonstrated. It wasn't his rising up in revenge that was pleasing to his subjects; it was his humility.

Have you had an experience like this? How did you handle it? Please record some thoughts and brainstorm with your group about how you can face such situations in a more godly way.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory, and then review the passage several times.

2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV:

DAY 6

Pursuing God's Heart

[1] In order to see God's Kingdom come in our lives, we need to get rid of our kingdom. We must offer ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice, crucifying our flesh with its passions and desires. Every obstacle that the enemy can throw in our paths will come as we seek to live a godly life. As we make God Lord over each aspect of our lives, we will have the strength to face and overcome them through His power.

What are the central things you have seen in your own life that are a consistent problem? How have the things we read today spoken to you personally, and what are some steps that you can take to see more victory and less failure? Please record this here, and then take time in your group to entrust these over to the Lord in prayer.

[2] It would be a mistake to assume that everyone completing these lessons has taken the step to make christ the Lord of their lives! We must let christ reign as Lord over each aspect of our lives. Have you done this?

Read the following quote from Alan Redpath, and then write out a prayer of recommitment telling how Christ will be Lord of every aspect of your life.

The kingdom of Christ is not one of force but of love. He insists on having the absolute consent of your will, and that means that His rival must be put down May I say firmly that it is your favorite sins that have to go, the ones you secretly adore have to be abandoned. Most important of all, love of yourself and pride in your reputation must go, for to talk about being saved and yet to love your own way is absolute blasphemy There has to be a clean sweep of the false to make room for the true. If David is to be king, Ish-bosheth must be beheaded and finished. But you will not be able to master even one sin in your own strength. Of course not; God doesn't expect you to! You cannot chop off that head of this habit and that, because if you do, you only drive it in so that it comes out in worse form.¹⁸

[3] Finally, if there is anything else that specifically ministered to your heart this week, please record it here to share with the others in your group.

MEMORY PASSAGE

Fill in the blanks by memory, and then review the passage several times.

2 Samuel 3:1b NKJV:

PARTING THOUGHTS

In Psalm 8, David celebrates the Lordship of our God. This doesn't begin with humanity; it begins with God's majesty. It puts the pride of humanity in the place it should be.¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon well pointed out, The scope and business of this Psalm seems plainly to be this: to display and celebrate the great love and kindness of God to mankind, not only in his creation, but especially in his redemption by Jesus Christ, whom, as he was man, he advanced to the honour and dominion here mentioned, that he might carry on his great and glorious work. So Christ is the principal subject of this Psalm, as it is interpreted of him, both by our Lord himself . . . and by his holy apostle²⁰

So let's take time to meditate on this psalm today, and to recommit our lives to Christ as Lord of all!

Psalm 8

To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath. A Psalm of David.

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who set Your glory above the heavens!
Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.
When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?
For You have made him a little lower than the angels,
And You have crowned him with glory and honor.
You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands;
You have put all things under his feet,
All sheep and oxen-
Even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air,
And the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

NOTES

- 1 John MacArthur, ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible* (Nashville: Word, 1997), p. 430.
- 2 Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Old Testament* (Chattanooga, Tenn.: AMG, 1994), pp. 2311, 2314.
- 3 James Strong, *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1890), p. 30.
- 4 Alan Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1962), p. 138.
- 5 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 814.
- 6 Ivor Powell, *David, His Life and Times* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel, 1990), p. 167.
- 7 Joe O. Lewis, *Layman's Bible Commentary*, vol. 5 (Nashville: Broadman, 1980), p. 81.
- 8 Alan Redpath, *Victorious Christian Service* (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1958), p. 71.
- 9 See H. L. Willmington, *Willmington's Guide to the Bible* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1984), pp. 108-109.
- 10 Powell, *David*, p. 166.
- 11 Redpath, *Victorious Christian Service*, p. 85.
- 12 Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas, 1993), p. 387.
- 13 Willmington, *Willmington's Guide*, p. 109.
- 14 Wiersbe, *With the Word*, p. 387.
- 15 *The New Scofield Study Bible*, (Nashville: Nelson, 1989), p. 372.
- 16 Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study*, p. 2322.
- 17 Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Restored* (Colorado Springs: Victor, 2002), p. 30.
- 18 Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God*, pp. 142-143.
- 19 James M. Boice, *Psalms*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), p. 67.
- 20 Charles H. Spurgeon, *The Treasury of David*, vol. 1 (Nashville: Nelson, Undated Reprint), p. 79.

