

Fighting for Family

In the whole of human history David is recognized as a world-class leader. He excelled in multiple areas and took a small insignificant group of people and built a nation that excelled in so many areas.

Unfortunately, these leadership skills never translated into his home and family. We see this very clearly in the life and story of his son Absalom. David did not deal with the incident that we looked at last week involving his first-born son Amnon and the rape of his half-sister Tamar...Absalom was right in the middle of this situation.

Because David didn't deal with this terrible family situation, Absalom would become bitter and it would end in murder.

Any parent knows there is something very powerful about parental love. Despite their failings and disappointments, he/she is still your child nothing will ever change that. As we look into the New Testament, we see the first impulse of the Holy Spirit in us is to cry "Abba Father".

There is no doubt that David deeply loved his children, but his family was beginning to fracture. Reconciliation was still possible despite all the terrible things that were occurring.

"When King David heard all this, he was furious." (2 Samuel 13:21)

It would be two years after the rape that Absalom threw a banquet and had Amnon killed. David had received some erroneous news that all of his son's had died; Jonadab clarified that only his son Amnon was dead. It was also made very clear that Absalom intended for this to happen since the day of the rape. This had festered in Absalom like a cancer.

"But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's express intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar." (2 Samuel 13:32)

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As we noted last week, David would mourn for his son Amnon but he never mourned for his daughter Tamar. Absalom fled and would stay away for 3 years, but David longed for him and wanted him to come home. In his heart he loved Absalom and wanted reconciliation...but didn't do anything about it.

“As he finished speaking, the king’s sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly. ³⁷ Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned many days for his son. ³⁸ After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. ³⁹ And King David longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon’s death. Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king’s heart longed for Absalom.”
(2 Samuel 13:36-14:1)

Joab brought Absalom back to Jerusalem and the door was open for reconciliation. But he would be in Jerusalem for 2 years and not see his father David.

“²³ Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. ²⁴ But the king said, “He must go to his own house; he must not see my face.” So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king. ²⁵ In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him. ²⁶ Whenever he cut the hair of his head—he used to cut his hair once a year because it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels by the royal standard. ²⁷ Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. His daughter’s name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman. ²⁸ Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king’s face.”
(2 Samuel 14:23-28)

David: Refusal to Reconcile

- The goal of fighting for relationships is Reconciliation

Reconcile = to make compatible.

“...Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.”
(2 Samuel 14:33)

What appears to be a touching moment was merely a formality. Compare this with the prodigal son and how his father responded to him as he came home. He watched for him, threw off his robe, even though under current law the neighbors could have stoned his son for what he did, he ran to him and hugged him. This hug was an expression of love, but it was also a covering and protection.

what he did, he ran to him and hugged him. This hug was an expression of love, but it was also a covering and protection.

For the vast majority of fathers, they want to connect with their children. For some they feel that “too much water has passed under the bridge”. “They couldn’t get past the past” ...but there are some things that are worth fighting for, family is one of them!

As we think about fighting for our families our minds go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were told to work and watch over the garden. These become the same two keys in relation to your family...to “watch over” and “work at it”.

God is saying, I fought for you because you are worth fighting for. I am engaged in your life and has done so even though we were still in rebellion, even hating him.

God fixes relationships that allow us to be reconciled to him. We need to do the same thing.

“...Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹ that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.” (2 Corinthians 5:18-19)

- **The goal of reconciliation is a relationship characterized by acceptance in spite of past offenses and current differences.**

David should have looked at his own life, his failures and sin and then it would be easier to extend forgiveness to his son allowing for reconciliation.

Ahithophel: Refusal to Forgive

We will see the following passages more clearly when we understand who “Ahithophel” is. He is the Grandfather of Bathsheba and is obviously very offended by what David did to his Granddaughter.

“While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom’s following kept on increasing.” (2 Samuel 15:12)

“But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. ³¹ Now David had been told, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” So David prayed, “LORD, turn Ahithophel’s counsel into foolishness.” (2 Samuel 15:30-31)

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²⁰ Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give us your advice. What should we do?”²¹ Ahithophel answered, “Sleep with your father’s concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the hands of everyone with you will be more resolute.”²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel. ²³ Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel’s advice.” (2 Samuel 16:20-23)

- **Betrayal begins with an offense -- scandalidzo**

“And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another.” (Matthew 24:10 NKJV)

“We don’t see offense as a trap, but as an emotional response or a right we have to feel a certain way towards something or someone.”
Ed Silvos

In our culture everyone is easily offended, in truth it is a trap and will snare us.

“And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

(Matthew 6:12-15)

- **Forgiveness is wonderful when we’re wrong, but never more powerful than when we are right.**

Absalom: Justifying wrong behavior

“In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. ² He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?” He would answer, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of

anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."³ Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you."⁴ And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."⁵ Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.⁶ Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel." (2 Samuel 15:1-6)

Guard against: Gossip (Is any discussion about a person or an entity that the person or leader of the entity would disapprove of), **Contrary Visions, Gathering Others, Criticism** (attempting to prove yourself right and your leaders wrong vs honoring and serving them?) **Stealing Hearts, Disengaging, Division.**

⁹ Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.¹⁰ When one of the men saw what had happened, he told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."

¹⁸ During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, "I have no son to carry on the memory of my name." He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day."
(2 Samuel 18:9-10; 18)

Discussion Questions

- 1) In the introduction on page 1, we discussed how historically David was a world-class leader. Sadly, these leadership skills did not translate well to his family and his role as a parent. We know the vast majority of parents have a strong parental love and desire to connect. What keeps parents like David from possessing a connection with Absalom and his other children?

- possessing a connection with Absalom and his other children:
- 2) We know David longed for Absalom and wanted him to come home. In his heart he loved Absalom and wanted reconciliation, but he never took steps to do it. Compare Absalom's return to Jerusalem and the story of the Prodigal son and this father's action toward his son's return in Luke 15?
 - 3) What does this phrase mean to you in the context of our study? *"The goal of fighting for relationships is Reconciliation"* Also what can hinder or stop this from happening, both from our study and from your experience?
 - 4) Again please discuss this key statement; *"The goal of reconciliation is a relationship characterized by acceptance in spite of past offenses and current differences"* (Page 4)
 - 5) On pages 4 and 5 we learn about Bathsheba's Grandfather *"Ahithophel"*. He was offended by the way David had treated his Granddaughter many years ago. This began a lengthy look at offenses and being offended, betrayal and the role they play in our lives and others. Please discuss this topic as well as Ed Silvano's quote: *"We don't see offense as a trap, but as an emotional response or a right we have to feel a certain way towards something or someone."*
 - 6) The following is more than a clever saying, it actually is a truth to live your life by: *"Forgiveness is wonderful when we're wrong, but never more powerful than when we are right"* What does this quote mean to you?
 - 7) Finally, on page 6 of your notes, we read how Absalom won the hearts of the people. He was very clever and sly how he did this. Please read over the passages in 2 Samuel 15 and the section on "guarding against gossip" (also on page 6). Have you ever seen someone in a business, family, corporation or church do this? What were the results?

