



Parkway Fellowship

Family Feuds • David vs Absalom • 2 Samuel 13–14 • 11/18/2018

Main Point

To break generational sin, we must decide enough is enough, choose to be persistent and consistent, and extend to others the same forgiveness Christ Jesus has given us.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Who is the greatest TV family of all time? Why?

Why do you think so many people can be so good at other areas in their lives and yet struggle in their familial relationships?

What are common problems that create conflict in families? Why might such conflicts continue for years without resolution? What kinds of scars do people carry as a result?

Sooner or later every family experiences conflict. Sadly, family members often don't resolve their conflicts. Instead, they nurse grudges, square off in opposing camps, and plot possible paybacks. We've seen the generational effects of this throughout this series through Abraham's family lineage. Today we'll look farther down Abraham's family tree to David and his sons, which will serve as a cautionary tale for families today.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

In the aftermath of David's adulterous affair, his family life imploded around him. The initial fracture occurred in relation to his daughter Tamar. Amnon, David's oldest son, lusted after his half-sister.

| Ask a volunteer read 2 Samuel 13:1-2,6-16,21-22.

Do a character sketch of Amnon just based on these verses. What do you learn? In contrast, what kind of woman was Tamar?

In a large-scale sense, what can we say about the way sin works in our lives based on this passage?

Look again at verses 6-16. What did Tamar do in response to Amnon's advances?

Tamar used a verbal form of "no" four different times in response to Amnon's advances. But Amnon didn't listen. What happened was the direct opposite of what sin's tempting lure promised. Amnon ended up hating what he was convinced would make him happy and fulfilled. That is the cruelty of sin and the deception we fall into.

What was surprising about David's response to Amnon's action? What might have motivated him to respond in this way?

Where did both Absalom and David fall short in their reaction to Amnon's sin? How did David's apathy cause turmoil in the family?

What is the relationship between this passage and Proverbs 15:32?

After Amnon had raped Tamar, verse 21 tells us that King David was "very angry," but it appears that he did nothing to discipline Amnon. This let Absalom's anger stew, and taught him that there were no consequences for heinous behavior. Everything that followed could possibly have been avoided if David would have disciplined Amnon. Perhaps he felt he couldn't judge Amnon because of his own past sins, or maybe he was protecting his first born. David's failure to act paved the way for greater tragedy.

| Ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 13:38-39; 14:1,21-24,28-33.

Absalom's resentment of Amnon grew for two years. Absalom plotted and carried out his revenge—he killed his brother Amnon (2 Sam. 13:23-29), and then fled.

Based on 2 Samuel 14, what happened next in Absalom and David's lives? What became of their relationship?

What do you learn about Absalom's character from this sequence of events?

Why do you think it took so long for David to reach out to Absalom for reconciliation?

David wanted to reach out to Absalom, but didn't. Only after 3 years and some guidance from Joab did David even try to get Absalom to return to Jerusalem. When Absalom returned from Geshur, he stayed in Jerusalem for 2 years and David would not see him. Absalom had to connive a way to get Joab to convince David to see him. When he finally did David offered him forgiveness, but the damage was already done. Why David refused to see Absalom is unclear, but as a result a tragic delay occurred in resolving this conflict and moving toward genuine reconciliation. David and Absalom were amicable again, but true reconciliation never took place in this family.

Respond to the following statement: As a parent, you must take the first step of reconciliation with your children.

| Ask a volunteer to read 2 Samuel 15:10-14; 18:5, 9-15, 33.

What does David's response to the messenger reveal about his feelings toward Absalom (vv. 13-14)?

David received news that shook him to the core. He learned that his son, Absalom had declared war against him. David was forced to acknowledge that he would not be reconciled to his son and his kingdom had splintered. David fled Jerusalem. He ordered the two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to remain in Jerusalem and keep him informed. Still, we find that David never stopped loving his son Absalom.

Why didn't David go with the army into battle? What was David's adamant instruction to the army in verse 5?

What do we learn about David's feelings toward Absalom in verse 33 through his expression of grief?

Read 2 Samuel 13:37, 39; 15:30; 18:31-33. What were David's feelings toward his son as expressed in these verses? If David had demonstrated his deep love for Absalom earlier, might the outcome of the incident have been different?

David hoped in the battles that Absalom would be safe, and instructed his generals to keep him alive. When Joab ignored David's order and killed Absalom, David mourned his son's death to the point that Joab had to set him straight because David was spurning the sacrifices the fighting men made on his behalf. Although David missed some opportunities to discipline his sons and take actions toward reconciliation earlier in their

relationship, his love for his sons, despite what they had done, is a reminder to us of the love God calls us to have for our children.

Throughout this series, we've learned that our sins don't disqualify us from God's promises. In 2 Samuel 7:11-12, before David's sin with Bathsheba and his failures as Absalom's dad, God promised to use David's family line to accomplish His eternal purposes. And God fulfilled that promise, even after David messed up. How does this encourage you going forward in your own family life and relationship with the Lord today?

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Is there a sin or struggle your family continues to deal with that you are ready to say "enough is enough"? How can this group help you in that?

What is an area where you need to be more consistent and persistent in your family life?

Why is forgiveness a vital part of breaking the chain of generational sin?

Pray

Thank God that He is not apathetic toward us. Ask Him to lead you into healthy and godly relationships with your friends, family members, and fellow believers so that those relationships would be characterized by love and reconciliation.

Commentary

| 2 Samuel 13:1-39

13:1 David had several wives, and he fathered many children by them (3:2-5; 5:13-16). Both Absalom and Tamar had Maacah as their mother, whereas Amnon, David's firstborn son, had Ahinoam as his mother. The words was infatuated with her may also be translated as "loved her," but Amnon's actions toward Tamar show that he never really loved her.

13:2-3 Amnon was frustrated because he wanted Tamar for his wife, but he could not marry his half sister (Lv 18:11; 20:17). Jonadab was Amnon's friend and cousin. Shrewd is literally "wise," but Jonadab's wisdom was clearly not used for godly means. Jonadab devised a plan by which Amnon could get alone with and close to Tamar.

13:10-12 The bedroom was normally the innermost room of the house and the least public. Sleep with me is literally “lie with me”—have intercourse. Three times Tamar urged her brother not to violate her. Doing such a thing was a serious offense in the law of Moses (Dt 22:25-29).

13:13-15 Tamar also insisted the crime would shame both her and her brother. Tamar then suggested that Amnon speak to the king about marrying her first. Her suggestion, however, may have been a means to escape the situation. The words Amnon hated Tamar show that his feelings toward his half sister had been nothing more than lust.

13:16-19 The Torah required a man who raped a virgin to pay her father a significant bride price, and he could never divorce her (Dt 22:28-29). The law protected women by warning men of the consequences of uncontrolled sexual urges. Amnon’s attempt to send Tamar away after he had assaulted her was much worse than the rape itself since it would ensure that her shame was permanent. Tamar’s actions were typical signs of mourning.

13:20 Absalom found Tamar and discovered Amnon had raped her. Be quiet for now meant Absalom wanted Tamar to refrain from revealing what happened until he could think of a way to help her. As a desolate woman, Tamar would probably not marry.

13:21-22 David was furious, but he apparently did nothing. The law required that Amnon and Tamar should marry since Amnon raped her (Dt 22:28-29), but it also prohibited sibling marriages (Lv 18:11). Thus this unusual case had no easy solution. David also may have feared challenging Amnon about Tamar because Amnon may have challenged him about his relationship with Bathsheba. Absalom, Tamar’s full brother, didn’t say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, choosing instead to wait for an opportunity for revenge.

13:23 Two years later was a long time, but Absalom had not forgotten Amnon’s sin. Sheep-shearing was a time of celebration (1Sam 25:7-8), so Absalom invited all the king’s sons to Baal-hazor about 14 miles north of Jerusalem.

13:26 Absalom’s request for Amnon to come may have been veiled as something David should do—send the crown prince if the king himself could not come. David challenged Absalom’s request in light of the tension that probably was obvious between him and Absalom.

13:27 After much discussion, David sent Amnon and all the king’s sons. Maybe David sent the others along in hopes of keeping things peaceful between Absalom and Amnon.

13:28 The narrative shifts suddenly to Baal-hazor. Absalom commanded his young men to strike Amnon. He reassured them because they probably feared reprisal from David. Amnon commissioned his hit men with words similar to those God spoke to Joshua (Jos 1:9).

| 2 Samuel 14:1-24

14:1 Joab saw David's wounded heart, so he devised a plan to help heal the family and let David focus more on the matters of the kingdom.

14:4-8 The clever woman (v. 2) came to the king and acted as if she were seeking David's judgment on a matter. The woman's clan was attempting to execute justice and put her living son to death. However, if they killed the brother who killed his brother under extreme circumstances, they also would destroy the heir to the woman's estate, and her husband's family name would come to an end. David assured the woman that he would issue a command protecting her living son, but the woman's words in verses 9-11 suggest the matter was not settled in her mind.

14:9-12 The woman's words suggested she had put David in a difficult position to let a murderer go free, and she asked that any blame rest on her and her family. David further assured her that no one would trouble her any more. The woman persisted, asking David to invoke an oath before the Lord that her son would not die. David vowed that everything would be okay. The woman had received her judgment, but she broke protocol and requested a chance to speak a further word to the king—a request David granted.

14:13 The woman gently but precisely drew a parallel between her situation and David's. Her words the king... has pronounced his own guilt implied he was unwilling to give himself the same judgment. He was unwilling to restore Absalom, who had killed Amnon.

14:17 The woman's closing words were somewhat ambiguous in their application. Would the word of the king bring relief for her or for David? Her blessing, May the Lord your God be with you, may have hinted that just as the king could discern the good and the bad for others, perhaps with God's help he could discern for himself the wisest thing to do about Absalom.

14:21-22 Despite David's recognition of Joab's ploy, he asked his nephew to bring Absalom from Geshur. Joab appeared pleased to have played a part in beginning the reconciliation process between David and Absalom.

14:24 Ironically, David gave Absalom permission to return to his house, but he would not give Absalom an audience. David's "halfway" decision only inflamed the tension between himself and his son.

| 2 Samuel 15:10-14

15:10 The sound of the ram's horn across the land, combined with Absalom's messengers shouting Absalom has become king in Hebron, would enable news of Absalom's assuming the throne to spread quickly. Absalom probably hoped he could get to Jerusalem and take power before David could prepare to defend himself.

15:12 David's adviser Ahithophel was one of the king's wisest men, making the conspiracy of Absalom even more strong.

15:14 David summoned his servants with him in Jerusalem and insisted they all needed to flee at once. He knew Absalom and his forces would head straight for the capital and attack it if necessary.

| 2 Samuel 18

18:1 The phrase commanders of hundreds and of thousands shows that David had been able to rally considerable support for his cause.

18:3 The people considered David's suggestion to march out with them too risky, so they prevailed on him to support them from the city—to stay away from direct confrontation with Absalom's forces.

18:5 The text makes it clear that David gave specific instructions about Absalom's treatment, and it emphasizes that all the people heard the king's orders.

18:7-8 David divided his troops into three groups. This allowed him to spread Absalom's forces thinly over the entire region, preventing their united stand in the open country where their superior numbers would give them the advantage. A forest presented natural obstacles or threats such as wild animals, pits, low branches, and marshes.

18:11 Joab learned about Absalom's defenseless position. David's general had once again determined to take matters into his own hands for what he believed to be the king's own good.

18:12 This soldier was not ready to disobey a charge that David had given his generals. He also repeated David's charge; the writer is making it clear that Joab knew David's command.

18:13 The warriors did not trust Joab. If they killed Absalom, they thought Joab might let the blame fall on them.

18:14-15 Now at the place where Absalom was hanging alive in the oak tree, Joab and his men surrounded him, struck him, and killed him in violation of David's order.

18:16 Joab then blew the ram's horn to assemble the troops (2:28; 20:1,22). With Absalom dead, the battle was over.

18:17 All Absalom's supporters fled, uncertain what reprisal might come from David's victorious forces. Absalom's body was taken down and thrown into a large pit in the forest and covered with a huge mound of stones, thus denying him a place in his family's tombs and dishonoring him in his death (Jos 7:26).

18:19 Ahimaaz had been David's trusted messenger throughout the ordeal, and now he wished to carry the good news of David's victory. He also may have thought he could more gently break the news of Absalom's death to his father than another messenger could.

18:20 Certain runners brought good news and others brought bad news. That way, as soon as a runner was recognized, the people knew the basic outcome (v. 27). Sometimes a solitary runner indicated good news and two runners together indicated bad news (vv. 25-26).

18:29 David's question revealed the focus of his concern. Ahimaaz, who knew the truth, suddenly found himself at a loss for words.

18:32 After the Cushite responded essentially as Ahimaaz had (vv. 28,31), David's further inquiry specifically about Absalom brought the reply the king did not want to hear. The kingdom was David's again, but he had lost another son.

18:33 The gate chamber over the gate provided isolation for David, though the sound of his wailing could be heard by others (19:1).