

1. There is an interesting fact of life that goes as follows: “If you know how others see you, go have children”. What that means is one’s personality often comes out through their children. We see our good and bad character traits come out through their children.
 - a) In the last chapter, David messed up badly. He had sexual relations with a married woman and then had her husband killed in order to cover up that affair. God pronounced punishment on David by saying in effect, “for the rest of your life you are going to have problems because of what you did.
 - b) Chapters 13-14 begin the historical lessons of how David’s past comes back to haunt him.
 - c) In these two chapters alone, we’re going to read of incense, rape, and murder. The sad part is that this is just the start of David’s problems.
 - d) I have been contemplating a theory about these chapters: “God’s judgment on David wasn’t necessary.” All God had to do is watch his children commit the same type of mistakes David did, and let David suffer the consequences. In many ways, David’s children are simply a reflection of David’s own behavior. In Chapter 12, God announced His punishment upon David. I’m pondering if the punishment wasn’t so much “God ordained” as much as just letting “David be David” and watching the consequences unfold. The guilt David carries for his sins reflect his parenting style and is reflective in his children’s behavior.
 - e) The great lesson of these chapters is: “The mistakes we make in life come back to haunt us.” Yes, God forgives us of our sins. At the same time, punishment is often inflicted if for no other reason, to show us how bad we messed up and never do it again.
 - f) We’re going to read of David’s problems with his children. Here’s what we don’t read: David ever having another martial affair or murdering someone to cover it up. The point is David was forgiven. The inflicted punishment is a motivation tool to prevent David from doing it again.
 - i) In other words, we only move on from our mistakes when we realize the pain it has caused and we’re willing to learn from them. If God only forgave our sins without allowing some sort of punishment in this lifetime, it would be too tempting and too easy for us to repeat the same mistakes. We learn from pain.
 - ii) In Chapter 14, David forgives one of his children for some action without any sort of significant punishment. That child ends up rebelling against his father in Chapter 15. It is another example of “cheap forgiveness” and the lack of any remorse or change upon the individual being forgiven.
2. One trend that I’ve noticed all through 1st Samuel and 2nd Samuel is bad parenting.
 - a) If you are looking for ideas on how to treat your children, do the opposite of what is written in these chapters. ☺
 - b) The book of Samuel opened with a story of the high priest Eli. His sons messed up and God picked the boy Samuel to effectively “be in charge” over them. (Ref. 1st Sam. 2:12).
 - c) Then we read the Samuel’s own children messed up. (Reference: 1st Sam. 8:2).
 - d) The chapter then focused on King Saul. He was such a bad role model for his children that his oldest son Jonathan sided with David over his father. Saul tried to kill his son Jonathan. (Reference: 1st Sam. 20:32).
 - e) Now the last ten chapters of 2nd Samuel primary focus on David and his children. We’ll read of rape, murder and treason among his children. This is not a good trend. ☹

- f) So, what is it about all these leaders that cause them to be bad parents?
 - i) Part of the answer is "God raises up who God raises up". It is almost as if God goes out of his way to prevent any sort of dynasty to happen. God wanted the Israelites to focus upon Him and not any sort of potential family dynasty.
 - ii) I believe a bigger answer is the price of leadership is often that their family suffers. When a man spends all day making big decisions, that man often wants to "shut down" after a hard day's work. It is common for men to be overly passive in the raising of their children because they physically "give their all" at the office.
 - iii) Another issue is guilt. Parents often think, "I messed up like that when I was a young. Who am I to tell my children what is right and wrong. I would be a hypocrite if I dared to discipline my kids as compared to what I did".
 - a) I'm guessing David had that same guilt. He knew he messed up and he knew of God's pending judgment. David made the mistake of pampering the children and no discipline. I suspect part of it is guilt.
 - iv) The correct way to confront older kids and their problems is to say, "Yes I messed up in the past. Here are the scars I carry to this day because of that mistake. I don't want you to suffer the way I did." Grant it, some kids learn and some don't. The point is kids respect you more when you are honest with them and you do discipline them out of love.
 - g) OK, lots of verses to cover. Let the tragedies begin. ☺
3. Chapter 13, Verse 1: In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.
- a) Here we have three children of David: We have Amnon, the son of one wife, and Absalom and his sister Tamar, the son of another wife.
 - b) This verse says that Amnon was in love with his half-sister Tamar.
 - c) Absalom is mentioned here, as he is a prominent figure over the next several chapters.
 - d) Remember that chapter 12 was all about a curse being placed on David. It all started when David was lusting after someone he should not have been.
 - i) Here the events of Chapter 13 are beginning with Amnon lusting after someone he should not have been. The event of both chapters will "parallel" each other.
 - ii) In Chapter 11, David's lust eventually leads to murder.
 - iii) Here in Chapter 13, David's son has lust that eventually leads to his murder.
 - e) In Second Samuel Chapter 3, Amnon was the oldest son and therefore, first in line to be the king. It is "interesting" then that the problems begin with him.
4. Verse 2: Amnon became frustrated to the point of illness on account of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.
- a) Amnon "wanted" his half sister and knew it was against the law. It was a death sentence to have sex with your sister (Ref.: Leviticus 20:17). Yes, a half-sister counts. ☺
 - b) So what did Amnon do? He pouted. He probably threw tantrums. He got sick over it.
 - c) One of the patterns we're going to read in these chapters is a lack of action by David. We don't read David saying, "Hey Amnon, you're attracted to Tamar? Get over it kid! You can't do it and that's final. You're the prince! Hundreds of girls would love to have you!"
5. Verse 3: Now Amnon had a friend named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. ⁴ He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."
- a) Now we are introduced to a character named Jonadab. Jonadab is the "Eddie Haskell" of the bible. ☺ For those of you that ever watched "Leave it to Beaver" as a kid, the main character had an older brother Wally. Wally's best friend was Eddie Haskell. Eddie was the kind of kid that always got Wally into trouble by giving him bad advice when the parents weren't looking. That's Jonadab.

- b) So here is Jonadab asking his buddy Amnon, who is also his first cousin (Verse 3) in effect, "Hey couz, what's wrong, why are you so down in the dumps?"
 - c) Notice that when Amnon explains his "woe's" to his cousin Jonadab. He does not say "I'm in love with my sister". Instead he says, "I'm in love with Tamar who just happens to be the sister of my half brother". The point is we are already seeing Amnon trying to justify his sins by telling half-truths
6. Verse 5: "Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.' "
- a) Verse 5 is Jonadab giving the bad advice to his cousin Amnon. Jonadab says in effect, "Hey buddy, I've got a plan to get you alone with that good looking girl. Just pretend to be sick and ask Tamar to come over to feed you and help you feel better. Then, when you are alone with her, go get her!"
 - i) "The plans of the righteous are just, but the advice of the wicked is deceitful." (Proverbs 12:5 NIV)
 - b) Notice what Jonadab does not say, "Amnon, you've got the hots for your sister? Dude, that's disgusting! Get a life man! Hey, I saw this great looking girl working at the falafel stand. Why don't you check her out? " ☺
 - c) By the way, Amnon cannot claim innocence as he "just did what Jonadab told him to do." God abhors evil counsel, but we are also responsible for our actions as well.
7. Verse 6: So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand." ⁷ David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." ⁸ So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. ⁹ Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat. "Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him.
- a) In these verses, the scheme by Amnon is going into effect.
 - b) Notice what David does not say, "Hey Amnon, I'm not dumb you know. I know you've been eyeing your half-sister. Nice try, but no dice". ☺
 - i) David does not say, "How would having Tamar by your side make your sickness better? Get your mother or a nurse or to take care of you!"
 - ii) My point here is David goes along with this, "no questions asked".
 - iii) Remember this is not long after Chapter 12's prediction that David would have trouble in his own house. You would think that David would be a little paranoid at this point to allow anything to happen that is suspicious.
 - iv) I suspect David, after a long day of being the king, heard this and said, "OK, son, if that's what makes you feel better, whatever."
 - c) Most of this text focuses on Tamar. I suspect she was ordered to do this, shrugged her shoulders. She didn't understand why, but just went out and obeyed. She is the innocent victim of this story and based on the text, does not do anything wrong.
 - d) Notice in Verse 9, Amnon and Tamar are not alone. Amnon commands all people to leave other than Tamar.
8. Verse 10: Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. ¹¹ But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."
- a) So here is where the deception comes out in the open. He starts by propositioning her to have sex with her.
 - b) I suspect Amnon is the kind of kid that gets whatever he wants without any discipline. He had no fear to play out this scheme.

9. Verse 12: "Don't, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me. Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing.¹³ What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you."¹⁴ But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.
 - a) The girl Tamar is now trying to talk her way out of this situation. She is saying anything and everything to prevent this from happening.
 - i) First, she appeals to the biblical law, how this thing "should not be done".
 - ii) Second, she says in effect, "What about me? If you really do love me, you wouldn't do this thing. Nobody wants a "used bride" in Israel. Don't do this!"
 - iii) Third, she tries appealing to his reputation. She says in effect, "You're reputation in Israel would be ruined by this."
 - iv) Finally, she tries, "Look, let's talk this over with our dad. He can arrange for us to be married." I'm pretty positive she had no emotional feelings for Amnon. She was just trying to get out of the situation.
 - b) None of these arguments made a difference. In Verse 14, he raped her.
 - i) This is the same guy who said he loved her in Verse 4. Now we understand he only lusted after her. This is a case of a spoiled prince who wanted what he couldn't have. When she wouldn't cooperate, he then attacked and raped her.
 - ii) If you are the father of girls, this is a great chapter to read to them. All men know that many young guys will say anything and do anything for sex. They don't care about the consequences or the long-term implications. That describes Amnon.
 - a) Tell your daughters that true love by a man means he wants to serve you and is not demanding of you. Sex is a way of expressing one's love in a marriage and not a sexual conquest.
10. Verse 15: Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"
 - a) Here, we read of Amnon's hatred of her after the rape. Why is that?
 - i) He refused her. I suspect it bruised his oversized ego.
 - ii) She tried to make him feel guilty about what he did.
 - iii) He realized that if this got out, it could ruin him. Therefore, the hatred kicked in.
 - b) Compare all of this with David in the last few chapters. After he had consensual sex with Bathsheba, he needed to plot to kill her husband. The point is sin leads to more sin.
 - c) By the way, Amnon can't blame David for this. Yes, judgment was pronounced on David. My point is Amnon can't say to his father, "This is your fault. If you didn't sleep with Bathsheba, I wouldn't have done this to my sister!"
 - i) My point is we have to take responsibility for our own actions. Yes, David was guilty, and his personality traits affected his children. David's lack of action also affected their behavior. It doesn't excuse what Amnon did and he himself will be accountable to God for his actions. As adults, we are still personally accountable.
11. Verse 16: "No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me." But he refused to listen to her.
 - a) Tamar is saying is, "Look Amnon, you broke it, you've bought it." ☺ The bible states that if Amnon married her, or pays the "bride (dowry) price", he could redeem himself. (Ref.: Exodus 22:16-17). She is saying, "Kicking me out of your life is a worse crime than the rape as now I have to suffer the consequences for the rest of my life."
 - b) Tamar is the one person in this story that I really feel sorry for. Rape is no joking matter. The scars of that event haunt women for the rest of their life.
 - i) The point here is that sin hurts innocent people. She was probably naïve about Amnon and had no idea that he was even interested in her.

- ii) In the same chapter of the 10 Commandments is an interesting phrase: “(God will) punish the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me”. (Exodus 20:5a, NIV)
 - a) The point of that verse is not that God punishes the innocent children and grandchildren because of sin.
 - b) The point is the consequences of sin have affects that last for generations. The personality traits of David and lust were past on to his son. That sin hurt innocent people around Amnon as well as David.
 - c) What does all of this mean to you and me? This is about teaching us the long-term consequences of sin. Even if we don’t care if we get hurt, how do you feel about innocent people getting hurt by your sin and my sin? God “allows” this as a motivational tool to keep us away from sin in the first place.
 - i) But what if the sin already happened? How do I prevent innocent people from getting hurt? The answer is to learn from it. Teach our children about our mistakes and work to prevent them from repeating our mistakes.
 - ii) I once heard a wise man preach, “Our lives would be very happy if we can just learn to not repeat half of our parents negative personality characteristics”.
 - d) Meanwhile, back to the perils of Amnon and Tamar.
- 12. Verse 17: He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of here and bolt the door after her." ¹⁸ So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing a richly ornamented robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. ¹⁹ Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornamented robe she was wearing. She put her hand on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.
 - a) In order to cover up his sin, the rapist Amnon orders his servants to physically remove Tamar from the room and then he locks the door behind her. The idea is to give the impression that “she attacked him” and in his “poor sickly state” must now lock the room for his own protection. Never underestimate what people will do to cover their sins.
 - b) Verses 18-19 are about remorse. Tamar had a special robe associated with a princess. She tore it and put ashes on her head. These were cultural signs associated with remorse. She understood that she was now “used goods” and her reputation would be ruined.
 - c) Don’t underestimate the fact that Tamar was in pain. The verses emphasize that. Not all pain is physical. She was the innocent person in this story and suffered for other’s sins.
- 13. Verse 20: Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart." And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.
 - a) Now we are re-introduced to the other brother – Absalom. Absalom is the full brother of Tamar and a half-brother of Amnon.
 - b) As the oldest brother in that “mini-household”. Absalom takes the lead to comfort her and be responsible for her. The verse implies that she remained single the rest of her life.
 - c) I don’t think Amnon woke up one day and said, “You know, I think I’ll go rape my half-sister today so she could be miserable the rest of her life.” Sin never works that way. It starts off as a simple desire. It grows worse and worse to the point where it causes horrific pain to innocent people. That is the lesson to be learned by Amnon and Tamar.
- 14. Verse 21: When King David heard all this, he was furious. ²² Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.
 - a) Here we read of David getting really angry about this and then, doing nothing.
 - i) The law calls for a death penalty for adultery. David did nothing.
 - ii) The king could have at least banished his son. David did nothing.
 - iii) The king could have chewed out his son. David did nothing.

- iv) So why did David do nothing? Maybe he saw his own lust reflective in his son and felt too much of a hypocrite to say anything. Maybe David remembered the punishment prediction by Nathan the prophet and thought, "I shouldn't say anything as God is punishing me for my sins".
 - b) Here's the problem: Whatever David's past mistakes were, he focused on himself and not his son. Whether it was guilt or the fact he was too passive toward his children, David, as a parent is at fault for not taking action.
 - c) The sad thing is David is giving a "green light" for his other children to sin. The other kids can think, "Well, if Amnon can get away with this, I can get away with stuff too!" If we don't put up boundaries with kids, it only gets worse.
 - d) The verse also teaches of Absalom's hatred toward Amnon. Absalom never said anything, but just held in the anger and let it stew. More on that in a few verses.
15. Verse 23: Two years later, when Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there. ²⁴ Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his officials please join me?"
- a) The verse opens with the phrase, "two years later".
 - i) I'm sure David was thinking, "OK, that was bad, but time heals all wounds. The thing is over with and I can go back to being the king. Yes, my daughter is hurt, but after all, she's still a princess and will be well taken care of the rest of her life."
 - ii) My point is being passive doesn't fix things. It just bottles up the emotions that will eventually come pouring out one day like a volcano.
 - b) Now we read of Absalom's plot for revenge. From Verse 23 until the end of the chapter is all about Absalom organizing the murder of his half-brother Amnon.
 - c) The story starts with Absalom organizing a party.
 - i) With shepherds, the annual "haircuts" (i.e., shearing) is payday. This is when the sheep have their wool cut and the wool is sold. It is a party time. Absalom wants to invite all of his family and his parents to this party.
16. Verse 25: "No, my son," the king replied. "All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go, but gave him his blessing. ²⁶ Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us." The king asked him, "Why should he go with you?" ²⁷ But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons.
- a) Let me paraphrase David, "No son, I'll take a pass on going to the party. Besides, I'm an old foogie and I don't care for the kind of music you kids play today. ☺ You go have a party and invite your friends and siblings."
 - b) Again, David's mistake is being a passive parent. He should have remembered the prediction by the prophet Nathan how in effect, David will have trouble in his house as long as he lives. David should know that Absalom would have some anger against Amnon. At the least, David should have suspected "something was up".
 - i) In Verse 26, Absalom specifically asked for Amnon. David asked why out of suspicion, but David never put his foot down and said no. Again the mistake is "passive parenting" when David should have known better.
 - c) The application for us parents is to be parents. Our jobs are not to be our kids best friends, but to raise them right so they can live a Godly life on their own.
17. Verse 28: Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Have not I given you this order? Be strong and brave." ²⁹ So Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.
- a) Here we read of Absalom giving the orders to kill Amnon. He told the contracted killers to wait until Amnon was drunk so he wouldn't be suspicious.

- b) Again, notice the parallels of David's life and Absalom's life:
 - i) David had Bathsheba's husband Uriah killed by others. David gave the order.
 - a) Absalom had Amnon killed by others. Absalom gave the order.
 - ii) David got Uriah drunk in Chapter 11 to take away his suspicions.
 - a) Absalom got Amnon drunk to take away his suspicions.
 - c) David's sins came back to haunt him through Absalom. Yes, Absalom is still guilty here and he will be held accountable for his actions. Absalom can't blame David.
 - d) Back in my introduction, I talked about the fact that if we want to see ourselves, both good and bad, look at our children. The lesson for us in these verses are:
 - i) 1) Watch our behavior. It affects more people than you think.
 - ii) 2) Are you not sure what your faults are? Look at your children! If we want to know what areas of our life that we need to clean up, check our children's behavior. Further, don't be afraid to tell your kids, "I know we both have this problem. It is wrong. Let's both work on it."
 - e) The last verse mentions that all the king's sons fled for their lives.
 - i) The other sons were now worried about Absalom. They didn't know how long the killing spree would last. I'm sure all the sons were wondering who would be the next king. They didn't want Absalom killing all of them to get the throne.
18. Verse 30: While they were on their way, the report came to David: "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left." ³¹ The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his servants stood by with their clothes torn.
- a) You know how rumors spread and grow worse. By the time the report reached David, "word was it" that all the sons were killed, and not just Amnon.
 - b) Remember that David knew the prediction that he would have trouble the rest of his life. I suspect David thought this prediction was now coming true if all the kids were dead.
 - c) David was also told by God that one of his sons would rule forever. Here was this initial and false report that all of his sons were now dead. I wonder if David was worried that this promise of one of sons ruling forever was "lost" based on his past actions.
19. Verse 32: 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 expressed intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. ³³ My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."
- a) Remember Jonadab? This was David's nephew, the one who gave the bad advice to Amnon in the first place. He was the one to break the news to David.
 - b) To paraphrase Jonadab (I still keep thinking of Eddie Haskell. ☺) "Hey Uncle Dee, don't sweat it. Absalom only killed Amnon, not all of your family. He's been angry ever since Amnon raped Tamar. It was a revenge thing. It's understandable. Everything's cool." ☺
 - c) Notice Jonadab "forgot to mention the part" it was his idea for Amnon to send Tamar to his room all alone.
20. Verse 34: Meanwhile, Absalom had fled. Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, "I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill." ³⁵ Jonadab said to the king, "See, the king's sons are here; it has happened just as your servant said." ³⁶ As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his servants wept very bitterly. ³⁷ Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned for his son every day.
- a) To summarize these verses, this is about all of David's other children coming back home. The verse mentions the palace guards spotting all the other kids coming back from the place where Amnon was murdered. If David was worried about all of his children being dead, these verses would be a comfort to him.

- b) Absalom is the only son that did not come home. He flees to his grandfather, who is the king of Geshur. Back in 2nd Samuel 3:3, we learn that Absalom's mother was the daughter of this king. David probably married the daughter of this foreign king as a political arrangement. Absalom "flees to grandpa" for safety.
21. Verse 38: After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. ³⁹ And the spirit of the king longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death.
- a) The last chapter (12) ended with David being told that there would be trouble in his house (family) for the rest of his life. We've only made it through one chapter since this prediction. So far, we've had incense, rape, the murder of one brother and the murdering brother fleeing the country. This is not a good start. ☺
 - b) These verses say it was three years before David had any sort of indirect contact again with Absalom. It will be another two years after that before David sees him again.
 - c) Verse 39 says the king "misses" Absalom. What's going on here?
 - i) The verse says David was "consoled" about Amnon's death. In other words, David was "over it". David understood that he couldn't bring Amnon back again. David understood that this was just punishment for his crime. David probably felt guilt because he understood his lack of action was partially responsible.
 - ii) David misses Absalom because David could relate to him. David was a warrior and understood killing out of anger. All parents understand the fact that your children "never stop being your children". In some cases, parents hate what their children have done with their lives. Such parents can "disown" them in shame or hatred, but deep down, they understand that they will always be their children.
 - iii) A reason we refer to God as, "our Father" is no matter what we do, we will always be His children. We can mess up and lose privileges. Some people choose eternal damnation because they don't want to be with God the Father or live by His rules. No matter what we do, God wants us to return to Him as a loving father.
22. Chapter 14, Verse 1: Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart longed for Absalom. ² So Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead. ³ Then go to the king and speak these words to him." And Joab put the words in her mouth.
- a) Here we are reintroduced to "General Joab". This was David's right-hand man and in charge of the military. Joab saw that David was depressed because his son Absalom had run away from home. Joab cooks up a scheme to remedy the situation.
 - b) Joab's plan was to have a woman approach David with a story. That story would be "similar enough" to David's problems with Absalom, but "different enough" so David would believe the story was true.
 - i) Remember that the king is also "The Supreme Court" in Israel. If the local townsfolk couldn't settle a legal dispute or a criminal matter, the issue could be appealed to the king. Part of the king's job is to "hold court".
 - c) To summarize the next bunch of verses, the woman is to pretend to be in mourning because one of her two sons killed the other. She wanted the king to pardon the other son of murder. Then she was to say something of the effect, "Since you're pardoning my son, why don't you pardon your own son, Absalom as well?" Anyway, that's Joab's plan.
 - d) What's Joab's motivation to do all of this? All we can do is speculate.
 - i) Maybe he didn't want to see the king "down in the dumps" and tried to fix it.
 - ii) Maybe it was a morale issue. If the king was depressed, it would affect the troops and the whole country.
 - iii) Joab was publicly shamed when he murdered a rival general back in Chapter 2.
 - a) Maybe Joab thought this scheme would help his public reputation.

23. Verse 4: When the woman from Tekoa went to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, "Help me, O king!" The king asked her, "What is troubling you?" She said, "I am indeed a widow; my husband is dead. ⁶ I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. ⁷ Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.' They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth."
- a) Here is the actual "court case" of this woman before David. Remember her story is fictional. Joab found this "wise women" to tell this story and pretend to be in mourning.
 - b) To paraphrase her thoughts, "Your highness, I have two sons. They got into a fight and one killed the other. Now my local residents want to arrest the other son and have him killed. If that happens, I have no heir. My family name will be lost.
 - i) Some believe she is also implying that if the other son is killed, their family property will be taken over by distant relatives. She may be implying the alternative motivation for "justice" is to seize her property.
24. Verse 8: The king said to the woman, "Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf."
- a) This is not the answer the woman wanted. What she wanted was a binding oath that no one would touch her son. She was afraid that when David finds out this story is fictional, he could change his mind about Absalom. Therefore, she wants a binding oath.
 - b) There is a pattern here I want you notice:
 - i) The woman admits the other son is guilty.
 - ii) David for some reason has pity on her without balancing the fact that her son did commit murder. That is a sign of David's problem as a parent. He has sorrow on his children without any punishment for their action. More on this thought later.
 - c) Since the woman did not get the "oath" she wanted, she continues her speech.
25. Verse 9: But the woman from Tekoa said to him, "My lord the king, let the blame rest on me and on my father's family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt." ¹⁰ The king replied, "If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he will not bother you again."
- a) Here is this woman's second attempt to get an oath that David could not go back upon.
 - b) Her attempt fails because the king still does not give a binding oath to pardon her son, unconditionally. All the king does is promise that he won't be put on trial for his crime.
 - c) In Verse 11, she gets "blunt" with her request for an oath.
26. Verse 11: She said, "Then let the king invoke the LORD his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed." "As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground."
- a) At this point, she got what she wanted. The king swore and invoked God's name that "her son" would not be put on trial for this crime.
 - b) David's mistake is that out of pity for this woman, or the fact that he couldn't stand her pleading anymore, he pardoned her son. David never took the time and trouble to desire to "hear the other side of the story".
 - i) The reason I am emphasizing this point is the same reason this story is included in this chapter: It is to show "David's bad parenting skills" in which there is no punishment on his children. The same way David didn't discipline his sons for their crimes is the same way David is letting this woman's son be pardoned.
 - c) Now that the woman got her "binding pardon", she will now ask for the same binding pardon for Absalom in Verse 12.

27. Verse 12: Then the woman said, "Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king." "Speak," he replied. ¹³ The woman said, "Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son? ¹⁴ Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But God does not take away life; instead, he devises ways so that a banished person may not remain estranged from him.
- a) This woman now, in humility, "expands her request". Let me paraphrase, "Your highness, all of Israel knows that your son Absalom murdered his brother. He has fled the country out of fear of retribution. Absalom is "effectively" dead unless you pardon him. Your highness, if you pardon Absalom, this "dead person" will be alive again."
 - b) What we have here is a request for forgiveness without any sort of punishment.
 - i) On the surface, this is a story about Joab working through this woman to get David to forgive his son.
 - ii) The story is designed to teach us about God's forgiveness. Yes, God forgives our sins when we ask Him. Those sins are gone, and forgotten. Our problem is we deal with the guilt longer than God does.
 - iii) On the other hand, God often punishes us the same way he is punishing David. Yes, God forgave David for the adultery and murder. At the same time, God punished David so 1) he would never do it again and 2) others could learn from David's mistakes. God loves us too much to leave us alone. God desires to mature us into better people. That often requires some sort of punishment. Remember David never had repeated those same sins again.
 - iv) The mistake David makes in these chapters is the lack of any sort of discipline toward his sons. David forgives him, and then in Chapter 15, Absalom will rebel again. The problem with "cheap forgiveness" is we have little or no motivation to avoid sin in the future.
 - c) Meanwhile, back in the courtroom, this woman is still talking. ☺
28. Verse 15: "And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will do what his servant asks. ¹⁶ Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from the inheritance God gave us.' ¹⁷ "And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king bring me rest, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the LORD your God be with you.' "
- a) Let me try to paraphrase some key points here. She is saying, "Your highness, I agreed to make up this whole story for a reason. You, your highness have banished the person who could be the next king of Israel. (As best we can tell from Chapter 3, Absalom was the next-oldest living son and maybe next in line to be the king.) Please, your highness, it is not good for a king to banish his son. As a king over God's people, God gives you great discernment to judge right and wrong." (See Proverbs 20:8, below). Now your highness, judge wisely and pardon your son."
 - i) "A king sitting as judge weighs all the evidence carefully, distinguishing the true from false." (Proverbs 20:8, The Living Bible)
29. Verse 18: Then the king said to the woman, "Do not keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you." "Let my lord the king speak," the woman said. ¹⁹ The king asked, "Isn't the hand of Joab with you in all this?" The woman answered, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant. ²⁰ Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God--he knows everything that happens in the land."
- a) For some unknown reason, David figured out Joab was behind all of this. These verses are the woman admitting that Joab is the one who designed this whole story.

- b) This woman, who now had a legitimate fear of her life for making up this story, admits that Joab cooked up this whole scheme.
 - c) Now we are back to the “parallel’s” between David’s actions with Bathsheba as compared to David’s actions with his sons.
 - i) When David was guilty of having sex with Bathsheba, it took Nathan the prophet to tell a fake-story (a parable) to make David aware of his faults.
 - ii) Now we have another parable told to make David aware of his faults.
 - iii) This is how much of the bible works. It tells stories that are partially there to convict us of our sins. The easy part of reading your bible is to shake your head in disgust at these sin-stories. The hard part is to personalize it.
 - a) The same goes for David. If someone accused David directly of his sins, his “ego would get in the way” and David would get self-defensive. By telling David (and us) of our problems through stories, this “softens the blow” and lets our guard down so we can personalize these stories.
30. Verse 21: The king said to Joab, "Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom."
- a) Verse 21 is David saying, “OK, fine, you win. You (Joab) go get Absalom and bring him back to Jerusalem.”
 - b) Notice what is not said by David, “I’ll then deal with Absalom personally. We’ll have a talk about this and figure out an appropriate punishment for what he did.”
31. Verse 22: Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honor, and he blessed the king. Joab said, "Today your servant knows that he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant's request."
- a) Here we read of Joab saying “thank you” to King David for granting “his” request to pardon Absalom and putting up with this story. Remember that David could have had this woman and even Joab killed for telling this false-story to David.
 - b) A few pages back I speculated as to why Joab cooked up this scheme. The only clue we have here is that Joab “found favor in his eyes”. The only bible-clue we have is that Joab was publicly shamed back in Chapter 2. This would lead to the idea that part or all of Joab’s motivation was to get back in good favor with the king.
32. Verse 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.
- a) In these verses, Absalom is “pardoned” and the only punishment is that Absalom was banished from David’s presence.
 - b) Chapter 14 opened with the statement that David in effect, “misses” Absalom. Even though Absalom murdered his brother Amnon, the chapter opened with the fact that David was “over” Amnon’s murder and, essentially just-misses Absalom while he was spending his three years in asylum.
 - c) So now that Absalom is pardoned, David banishes Absalom from his presence. How does that solve David’s dilemma of “missing” his son? The answer is it doesn’t.
 - d) The interesting thing about David is, when it came to confronting his enemies, David was as bold as a lion. When it came to David confronting his guilty children, David was passive and procrastinated. Here was his son guilty of murder. After three years, all David could say, is “OK, fine, he can come home, but keep that kid away from me!”
 - i) My question is “Is that all?” No trial? No one-on-one discussion? What kind of parent is that? Here was David, not afraid to go to war with people trying to kill him, at the same time, not wanting to confront his own son, a murderer.

- e) OK, just what should David do? (I'm so glad you asked that question! ☺)
 - i) "And what does the LORD require of you (that's you and me!), To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8 NIV, insert added).
 - ii) God commands us to have a balance of "justice and mercy" as well as to act humbly in our life. That is what is meant by "act justly and love mercy".
 - iii) God had mercy on David by forgiving his sins. God acted "justly" by allowing David to go through all sorts of trials to keep him aware of his past mistakes.
 - iv) God wants us to show that same sort of "balance and mercy" toward others.
 - v) Let me give a possible example of what David should have said to Absalom: "Absalom you murdered your brother and you need to be punished. Yes, it was wrong of Amnon to rape your sister. It is my fault for not punishing him and I need to take responsibility. At the same time, you are not the final judge. He was deserving of the death penalty and he should have been on trial. Therefore, I will give you some sort of punishment for taking the law into your own hands. At the same time, if you are willing to ask forgiveness, I will restore our father and son relationship to the way it was. I will bless you, but at the same time I will punish you for your actions because I love you too much to let this go."

33. Verse 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 from time to time when 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. The daughter's name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.
- a) We interrupt the story of David and Absalom's relationship to describe Absalom himself. He was good looking in appearance. He had long, thick hair and took a lot of pride in his hair. The only reason Absalom ever got a haircut was when it got long, it was too heavy on his head. He even had his hair weighed when it was cut. It weighed "200 shekels". Experts vary as to what that means, but a consensus view is about 2-3 pounds.
 - b) The reason the hair-thing is mentioned is that the vanity of his hair will become his downfall. We'll read in a few chapters of his death partially due to his long hair getting Absalom stuck in a tree branch when he is killed.
 - c) The verse mentions Absalom had 3 unnamed sons in exile and one daughter. A positive note is that he names his daughter Tamar after his sister.
 - d) I alluded earlier to the fact that Absalom was next in line to be the king. Second Samuel, Chapter 3 lists the king's sons. Amnon was the oldest and is now dead. There is a second son (Kileab) that is never mentioned again, and most speculate he died young. Absalom is third in line. In the next chapter, Absalom will rebel against David to be king. His popularity grows partially due to the fact he is good looking.
34. Verse 28: Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king's face.²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come.³⁰ Then he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.³¹ Then Joab did go to Absalom's house and he said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"³² Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, 'Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!' Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.'" ³³ So Joab went to the king and told him this. 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.

- a) Let me summarize this last paragraph: Absalom comes home. He finds out through Joab that he can't see his father, the king. After Absalom making several requests to see the king, Absalom sets Joab's personal grain field on fire. It is Absalom's way of saying, "OK, the king won't see me? No problem, I'll just commit some more crimes until he will!" This worked. Finally, David agrees to see Absalom and the chapter ends with the king kissing Absalom.
- b) David never punishes Absalom for the murder. We don't even read of David punishing Absalom for burning the field of Joab!
 - i) David is willing to forgive, but David is not willing to punish.
 - ii) Absalom can't respect a father or a king like that.
- c) In the next chapter, we'll read of Absalom organizing a rebellion against David.
 - i) In a sense, Absalom's rebellion is almost like a kid thinking, "Gee, what do I have to do around here to get my dad to notice me? I kill somebody and "nothing". I burn property and "nothing". Next (in Chapter 15), I'll try mutiny!" ☺
- d) I opened this lesson with the discussion that a child often reflects one's own strengths and weaknesses.
 - i) Absalom has David's boldness. He is a warrior who is not afraid to be a leader and take action. At the same time, David is too passive in raising his children, and now David suffers because of it.
- e) The important lesson for us in this chapter has to do with forgiveness and punishment.
 - i) God does forgive us, but at the same time, God punishes (or just "allows" negative things to happen) so we can mature as a believer. That does not mean that all negative things are God's punishments. It means that the God allows the consequences of our sins to happen mainly so we don't sin again.
 - ii) In other words, if God just forgives us with no further punishment", we will never learn from our mistakes. If we just get "cheap grace", the incentive to sin again is there because we have no fear of retribution. Yes, we are eternally forgiven, but God allows us to suffer in this lifetime, not out of anger or revenge, but out of love. God wants to mature us. That requires that there be consequences for our actions.
 - iii) God wants us to impose those same standards on others. That gets back to the quote of Micah 6:8 about "justice and mercy". As parents, as leaders and as members of society-in-general, God calls on us to do both in order to make us better Christians and make society a better place to live.

35. Let's Pray: Heavenly Father, thank you for these lessons on forgiveness and punishment. Romans 8:28 teaches that all things to happen to us have a purpose. Therefore, help us to have discernment about the things to happen to us, especially the negative aspects. Help us to have an eternal perspective that even the bad things in our life have some sort of eternal purpose. For those of us who are parents, help us to raise our children right with a balance of forgiveness and proper punishment. Help us as Christians to have mercy and act justly in our dealings with other believers as well as society as whole. Guide us as we glorify You, in Jesus name, Amen.