

2 Samuel 14 — Absalom's Return

October 15, 2023

Good morning CrossWinds! If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are grateful to have you. I have a few quick announcements. First, a brief reminder that we have our annual meeting on October 23 at 7:00 PM. It will be at the Spirit Lake campus. If you are a member, we need you to vote on the new elders and deacons. We also put the annual report in your bulletins. The annual report is also available on the church app. On the top of the home page, you can access a page in the app detailing the elders and deacons. On the top of that page is a button to access the annual report digitally.

Second, the garage project will get off the ground in the next two weeks. Material is ordered. We are waiting on delivery dates. As soon as I have the information, I will let you know and begin scheduling things through the church app. The garage will be a lot of fun to work on together.

Third, we are in the process of transitioning from pews to chairs. If you would like one or more pews, tell me after the service or call the church office. The chairs are ordered. I don't have an ETA, but we hope to have them soon.

This morning, we continue in our studies of 2 Samuel. We are in 2 Samuel 14. Things have been pretty crazy for the last few weeks in this book. In 2 Samuel 11, King David had an affair with Bathsheba. She became pregnant, so David bumped off her husband to cover up his affair and to take her as another wife. In 2 Samuel 12, the prophet Nathan called David on the carpet for his sin. Thankfully, he confessed his sin with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. God forgave him of his sin, but he still suffered consequences. The child Bathsheba

conceived in their affair died. Three more of David's sons would die due to his affair with Bathsheba. Last week, in 2 Samuel 13, Amnon, David's oldest son, who was next in line for the throne, found himself consumed with lust for a forbidden woman. Just as David was consumed with lust for Bathsheba, who was off limits because she was already married, Amnon also found himself with lust for a woman who was off limits. Her name was Tamar. She was his sister. Just as David refused to sexually restrain himself in 2 Samuel 11, Amnon refused to sexually restrain himself in 2 Samuel 13. He raped Tamar, his sister.

Rape is bad, but this was worse. It was an incestuous rape. What did David do about it? Absolutely nothing. He proved to be a weak leader. For two years never punished his son. Amnon remained next in line to be king. David ignored what he had done.

That led another of David's sons named Absalom, who was second in line for the throne after Amnon, to decide to take justice into his hands. He murdered his older brother. Killing his older brother put him next in line for the throne, which is what he wanted all along, but while his deceased older brother was a rapist, now he is a murderer.

Last week, when we finished 2 Samuel 13, after the murder of Amnon, Absalom fled to Geshur. That was a mini-kingdom ruled by his maternal grandfather. There, he lived out of David's immediate reach for three years.

Just as David did not have the stomach to carry out justice against Amnon, his oldest son who raped his sister, David also did not have the stomach

to carry out justice against Absalom for the murder of his older brother. For three years, David ignored what happened while Absalom lived in self-chosen exile.

2 Samuel 14 is the story of the resolution that brought Absalom back from exile to Jerusalem. When we hear that, it sounds like it will be a positive story. It isn't. There is no resolution. There was no justice. It is a story of more weak leadership by David that causes terrible trouble.

While there are several practical lessons in this chapter, the biggest one I want us to remember is this.

Ignoring justice and extending leniency to those who refuse to repent always leads to disaster.

This is not an enigmatic statement. It is an extremely practical truth for daily life. It should govern how our judicial system works. Right now, in many cities, it seems that leniency is extended to unrepentant criminals by prosecutors who won't punish criminals. There is some truth to this in the wars we see on television. This also applies to parenting children. When we want to be lenient, it may not be wise to extend leniency if there is no repentance on the part of our children. This is not just a challenge in parenting today, but as we will, it was the challenge David wrestled with regarding his sons.

The key word of this chapter is *manipulation*. This chapter breaks into three manipulations. First, we will read about Joab manipulating David. Second, David will manipulate Joab. Third, Absalom will manipulate both David and Joab. When manipulation is the keyword that ties together the different parts of the chapter, you know things will not end well.

Joab manipulates David.

When the chapter begins, three years have passed since Absalom's murder of Amnon. Absalom was living in self-imposed exile in the land of Geshur. We begin with these words.

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom. 2 Samuel 14:1 (ESV)

Unfortunately, right off the bat, we begin with some difficult Hebrew. We must untangle this challenging Hebrew to understand what happens in the rest of the chapter. The impression we get from the ESV and many other translations is that David missed Absalom. David wanted Absalom back. I don't think that is what was happened. I think it was the exact opposite. David didn't want Absalom to return or to reconcile with him.

Last week, when we looked at the closing verse of the last chapter, I told you the Hebrew was difficult there, too. Here is how it reads in the ESV.

And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead. 2 Samuel 13:39 (ESV)

As we briefly discussed at the end of last week's study, Hebrew is difficult to translate. While the ESV translates the Hebrew as David *longed for* Absalom and that he was *comforted* about Amnon, those Hebrew words can have a negative connotation instead of a positive one based on the context. If you translate those words positively, you end up with the ESV translation. If you translate them negatively, it reads something like this.

And the spirit of the king *was done with* Absalom, because he *regretted* Amnon's death. 2 Samuel 13:39 (alternate translation)

When we come to 2 Samuel 14:1, the verb *went out* is not used. The sense of what is happening carries over from the previous verse. Remember the ESV assumes these words should be positive. That is why they say David's heart went out to his son Absalom, indicating he missed him and wanted him back. If we translate things negatively, it should read something like this

Now Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart *was against* Absalom. 2 Samuel 14:1 (alternate translation)

That makes much better sense in the context. If the king's heart was longing for Absalom, we would need most of this chapter where Joab was trying to manipulate the king's heart to convince David to bring Absalom back to town.

I know that by translating 13:39 and 14:1 in the negative sense instead of the positive one, I am disagreeing with the ESV, and many other translations. I am only doing that after consulting the best scholars I could find on those verses, who translate those verses negatively too, so thankfully I don't stand alone on this one. If those verses are translated in a positive sense, they don't fit with the rest of the story. If they are translated in the negative sense, the rest of the story makes sense. Let's return to the narrative.

Joab saw David's ongoing antagonism toward Absalom and David's unwillingness to restore Absalom as a problem. Since Absalom was the next heir to the throne, his banishment would be a problem in the case of succession. Joab felt there needed to be some resolution between David and his oldest son. In addition, as we will see, Absalom was extremely popular with the people. A public rift between a popular Absalom and an aging David would not be wise.

I also think Joab's personal history played into his feelings. Earlier in the book, Joab, David's army commander, murdered Abner, the commander of the army of Israel, without justification. Joab was guilty of murder. Despite that murder, Joab was restored to public office. At least at this point in the story, he probably thought Absalom should also be forgiven for the murder of his brother and also be restored to public office.

This will not hold true until the end. Eventually, Joab will be the one who will take Absalom's life in 2 Samuel 18:4. At the moment, Joab, the commander of David's army, was a pro-Absalom guy.

Job schemed to devise a way to turn David from being against his son to softening his heart toward his son. Joab remembered that Nathan, the prophet, used a story to help David see things from a different perspective. It was the story of the rich man and the poor man with the little ewe lamb. We read it in 2 Samuel 12. Joab decided to make up his own story and to see if he could change David's heart with that story as Nathan did in an earlier chapter.

And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead. Go to the king and speak thus to him." So Joab put the words in her mouth. 2 Samuel 14:2-3 (ESV)

Tekoa was about ten miles south of Jerusalem. The woman Joab found had a reputation for wisdom. That does not mean she was wise. It means she was clever with her words. David did not know her, so she could more easily manipulate him.

The last person we met who was clever with their words was Jonadab in the previous chapter. His wisdom enabled Amnon's rape of Tamar, and played an

important role in enabling Absalom's murder of his brother. It is not good to hear that another clever person skilled at manipulating people with words has come into the story.

The prophet Nathan's story was intended to help David see his sin and lead him to repentance. This woman's story was intended to play on David's heartstrings and to manipulate him into bringing his son home. Her story is the longest and most complex conversation in the book of Samuel. We will move through it quickly and break it into chunks so it makes sense.

It begins with all the appearances of a distressed widow in desperate need of help from the king.

When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground and paid homage and said, "Save me, O king." And the king said to her, "What is your trouble?" ... 2 Samuel 14:4–5a (ESV)

Remember, her story is completely fictional. Joab made it up. She was an actor. She played her part well, looking like a poor woman in mourning. Kings love to save widows in distress, so this was a good setup to manipulate David's heart.

...She answered, "Alas, I am a widow; my husband is dead. And your servant had two sons, and they quarreled with one another in the field. There was no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him. And now the whole clan has risen against your servant, and they say, 'Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed.' And so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal that is left and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth." 2 Samuel 14:5b–7 (ESV)

She claimed she had two sons. They fought, as brothers often do, and the one killed the other. Now, the entire clan wanted to prosecute the remaining son

for murder and take his life. At first, this sounds reasonable. Look what the Bible says.

“Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death.” Exodus 21:12 (ESV)

She said there were mitigating circumstances.

1. If they killed her remaining son, there would be no heir. That meant her family’s land would be lost and redistributed to the community.
2. They would quench her remaining coal. If they took her final son’s life, they would take what remained of her light and joy in the world.
3. Their family line would be wiped out.

David took the case at face value and gave it little thought. He immediately announced a verdict in her favor.

Then the king said to the woman, “Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.” 2 Samuel 14:8 (ESV)

Ok, I will make sure your son is not killed. Talk to the bailiff. Next case, please! The woman was not satisfied with this quick judgment in her favor, so she pressed on.

And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “On me be the guilt, my lord the king, and on my father’s house; let the king and his throne be guiltless.” 2 Samuel 14:9 (ESV)

She claimed that if she said anything wrong or did not accurately represent everything fairly to the king, let her family bear the guilt, not the king’s, for siding with her in his judgment. In other words, she swore she was not lying or exaggerating in anything she said, which is actually funny because the entire story was a lie.

The king said, "If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again." 2 Samuel 14:10 (ESV)

David said, I told you, you have nothing to worry about. If anybody disagrees with my conclusion, bring them to me. They will never bother you again. That kind of promise from the king should have put her at ease. I imagine David thinking he was done with her. He picked up the paperwork and signed the bottom line, giving the judgment in her favor, and then turned to start the next case. But our fake widow piped up again. I am sure by this time, David thought she was annoying.

Then she said, "Please let the king invoke the LORD your God, that the avenger of blood kill no more, and my son be not destroyed." He said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground." 2 Samuel 14:11 (ESV)

Who was the avenger of blood? In the Old Testament, when someone was killed, and there was no good reason for it, in the days before a king, an avenger of blood was appointed in the family. That is a relative of the murdered man who had to carry out justice for a murdered relative. We read about this in the book of Numbers.

The avenger of blood shall himself put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death. Numbers 35:19 (ESV)

David swore to her with an oath in the name of God that the avenger of blood would not be allowed to take her son's life. David loved to defend the poor and the widows. He thought he was finally done with this persistent woman, but she started again. This time she slipped into a different subject. Instead of talking about her son, she started talking about Absalom, David's son.

Then the woman said, "Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king." He said, "Speak." And the woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself,

inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again. We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life, and he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast. 2 Samuel 14:12–14 (ESV)

Almost as an aside, she moved from talking about her problems and her fictional son who was in danger of losing his life to talking about Absalom. She accused David of having a double standard. David protected her son after murder and restored his life, but he wouldn't protect his own son after murder and restore his life. The purpose of her story, which Joab gave to her, was to make David feel guilty and move his heart to forgive Absalom and restore him to the kingdom, which David did not want to do.

The story was effective. David felt convicted in his heart, at least for a while.

Then, just as fast as she slipped into talking about Absalom and guiltling the king for not bringing him back to Jerusalem, she slipped back into her cover story about being a poor widow grateful for the king's protection.

Now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid, and your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant. For the king will hear and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.' And your servant thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me at rest,' for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil. The LORD your God be with you!" 2 Samuel 14:15–17 (ESV)

To put the icing on the cake, at the end, she flattered David, claiming he was like an angel of God and could discern good from evil. Of course, that is ironic because the whole story was a lie. She figures that if she is going to tell a lie, she might as well tell a big one.

At this point, I picture David rubbing his chin and beginning to figure out there was an agenda behind this woman.

Then the king answered the woman, “Do not hide from me anything I ask you.” And the woman said, “Let my lord the king speak.” The king said, “Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?” The woman answered and said, “As surely as you live, my lord the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said. It was your servant Joab who commanded me; it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. In order to change the course of things your servant Joab did this. But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth.” 2 Samuel 14:18–20 (ESV)

Yes, you figured it out, King. It was Joab who put all these words in my mouth and who set up the entire thing. He concocted this story to help you see how foolish it is to keep Absalom away. Joab is trying to change your mind because he feels that if Absalom is not restored, disaster is on the horizon.

At this point, David’s heartstrings were touched. He felt like a fool for forgiving and restoring her fictional son while not willing to forgive and restore his own son. In the emotions of the moment, he will change his mind, at least for a little while, and decide to bring Absalom back to town.

But before we get to that part of the story, we should pause and consider this woman’s fictional story and see if it paralleled the story of Amon and Absalom. If David had taken the time to think about things, he would have realized this woman’s story about her sons and the true story about his sons were not parallel stories. There were significant differences between them. She engaged in what is known as legal misdirection. Let me show you a few areas where the parallelism of these stories break down.

1. She spoke of her fictitious son accidentally killing his brother. Absalom intentionally killed his brother. The woman's fictional son was guilty of manslaughter. In the Old Testament, those guilty of unintentional murder could flee to a city of refuge where they would find protection from the avenger of blood. If you committed premeditated murder, no such provision for your protection existed. For premeditated murder, which Absalom was guilty of, the only option was execution. This is a big difference in the two stories.

But if he did not lie in wait for him, but God let him fall into his hand, then I will appoint for you a place to which he may flee. (A city of refuge) But if a man willfully attacks another to kill him by cunning, you shall take him from my altar, that he may die. Exodus 21:13–14 (ESV)

2. In her story, she claimed her remaining son was the only heir in the family. If he died, there would be no heir. That is more misdirection. David had other sons. If Absalom was out of the picture, there were other sons who could take the throne.
3. In her story, she spoke of people in her clan wanting to kill her son. He needed protection. Nobody wanted Absalom killed. David hadn't done anything to threaten his life, even though he should have. At this time, Absalom's life was not in danger, even though it should have been.
4. She claimed that God devises a way for the banished to return. This is true. She was appealing to David's experience after his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah. God forgave him of his sin and allowed him to continue as king. God devised a way for the banished to return. But there are big differences between David and Absalom on this. God devised a way for

David to continue as king after he confessed his sin and repented of what he had done. Absalom had no interest in repenting. He felt justified for what he had done. God does not devise a way for the unrepentant to be restored.

Notice what she did. She touched David's heartstrings with her fictional story. She was trying to manipulate David into making the wrong choice of restoring his unrepentant son. Isn't that the way Satan works today? He plays to our emotions. We make decisions based on what feels right at the moment. Fifteen minutes later or a few days later, we regret the decision we made. If only we had stopped and taken the time to think things through, we wouldn't have made such a foolish and impulsive decision.

Notice David did not take the time to pray about bringing Absalom back. He didn't take the time to phone a friend. He didn't take the time to check his Bible. In the emotions of the moment, based on what felt right after being manipulated, he made a decision, he will regret. Here is David making that regretful decision.

Then the king said to Joab, "Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man Absalom." And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant." So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 14:21–23 (ESV)

Joab, go get Absalom. Joab was thrilled that he was finally able to bring Absalom back. He left celebrating.

David manipulates Absalom.

While Joab was on his way to get Absalom, David had a chance to think things through. He realized he made an impulsive decision that he would regret.

As the king, he couldn't go back on his word and send Absalom back to Geshur. What was he to do? Joab manipulated David, so David decided to manipulate Joab.

And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence. 2 Samuel 14:24 (ESV)

Absalom was allowed to return to Jerusalem, but David refused to see him and to forgive him for what he had done to his older brother. David didn't have the stomach to execute Absalom for murder, but he also knew he could not absolve Absalom from for the murder of his brother. So David did what David does best. He stalled. He did nothing. David did nothing with Amnon's rape of Tamar for two years. David did nothing about Absalom's murder of his older brother Amnon for the last three years. Now he does nothing with Absalom except ignore him when he comes back to town.

Absalom manipulated Joab and David.

Before we hear about Absalom's time in Jerusalem, the chapter pauses to tell us about Absalom the man. It gives us a window in the kind of man Absalom was and why David avoided him.

Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom.... 2 Samuel 14:25a (ESV)

Absalom was a beautiful man, and he knew it. Last week, we learned his sister Tamar was an extremely beautiful woman. He was an extremely good-looking guy. He had a physique like Arnold Schwarzenegger in the movie Terminator. Absalom was a celebrity. David may have shunned him, but the people loved him. Nobody in all the nation was better looking than he was. He

was the male cover model in all the magazines. All the women couldn't keep their eyes off him, and he knew it. You can imagine what that did to his ego. His ego was so big it didn't fit in this room.

If you have been with us for earlier studies in 1 Samuel, a flag should go up at this point. Earlier in this book, there was another man who was known for his good looks on the outside but his terrible character on the inside. Do you remember his name? It was King Saul.

And he had a son whose name was Saul, a handsome young man. There was not a man among the people of Israel more handsome than he... 1 Samuel 9:2a (ESV)

Absalom returns to Jerusalem as a King Saul 2.0. He was good-looking like Saul. He had a terrible character like Saul. He was determined to destroy David, just like King Saul. David regretted that impulsive decision to bring Absalom back to town.

...From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. 2 Samuel 14:25b (ESV)

He is described as the perfect male specimen. He was not just good-looking, but everything about his physique had a 5-star rating. He had wide lats, a big chest, chiseled abs, the perfect chin, and flawless skin. You couldn't find anyone better looking in the nation.

While he was perfect on the outside, where it mattered, on the inside, he was an egotistical, narcissistic murderer.

And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; when it was heavy on him, he cut it), he weighed the hair of his head, two hundred shekels by the king's weight. 2 Samuel 14:26 (ESV)

Not only did he have the perfect body, but he was a pretty boy. He prized his appearance. He took a long time in the mirror each morning to get ready. He loved his long, flowing, beautiful, thick hair. I picture him combing it every morning until he looked his best. I am sure he used expensive shampoos and conditioners in the shower. After he styled it, he put a lot of product in it to keep it looking just right. He wore it long. Every year, when he cut his hair, the weight of his hair was 200 shekels. That is almost 5 pounds. Imagine a guy having hair so thick that he lost 5 pounds after a haircut. That was so seriously thick hair.

The summary of Absalom is that he was very good-looking. He had the perfect body, and he was into himself. He loved his long hair. That is what he was known for. He was known for his looks on the outside, but his character on the inside was terrible.

The problem is when most people see someone with a physique like his and looks like his, they are immediately drawn to people like him. It is only later that you understand who the real person is on the inside. When that happens, you are eager to get away from people like Absalom.

There is one more thing we learn about him.

There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter whose name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman. 2 Samuel 14:27 (ESV)

We are not given the names of his three sons. Later, in 2 Samuel 18, he has no sons. That means he has no sons left. Apparently, his three sons died as children. He had one daughter, who was a very beautiful woman, just like her father. He named her Tamar, after his raped sister. The text is telling us there is a reason he named his daughter after his raped sister. He never wanted to forget

what happened to her. The focus of Absalom's life will be to get rid of his father because David failed to protect her and didn't execute Amnon after what he did to her.

Now that we have a portrait of what Absalom was like, the action begins.

So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence. 2 Samuel 14:28 (ESV)

When Joab brought Absalom back, he expected to be restored. He didn't expect to be stuck in limbo for 2 years. As we have seen, that was typical of David. Rather than being decisive, he put everything on hold, hoping the problems would go away. It was now 7 years since Amnon's murder. Absalom was frustrated with the exclusion and humiliation he experienced from his father, so he decided to carry out his own manipulative scheme to move things along.

Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come. 2 Samuel 14:29 (ESV)

At the beginning of the chapter, Joab is eager to bring Absalom back to town. But as Joab got to know Absalom, he now wanted nothing to do with him. He refused to return Absalom's calls.

Absalom was a brat. He was used to getting what he wanted. It didn't matter what it took for him to get it. Last week, he felt murder was acceptable to get even with his brother. Now he tries arson to get even with Joab because he refused to take Absalom's calls.

Then he said to his servants, "See, 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. 2 Samuel 14:30 (ESV)

In case you missed it, Absalom was a terrorist. That is what a terrorist does. Her terrorizes other people and destroys their property. Absalom had Joab's attention at this point.

Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?" Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent word to you, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still." Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king, and if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death.'" 2 Samuel 14:31–32 (ESV)

Joab came running. Why did you burn my field? Farmers, you know how costly it would be to lose a field of corn or soybeans. It would make you hoping mad if someone set a field on fire. That was Joab.

Absalom said to Joab, "The next time I call you, you better come."

Absalom lays out his case. Why have I come from Geshur if the king will not see me? He said, "I want to see the king right now. If there is guilt in me, let the king himself put me to death." Absalom knows that while his father considers him guilty of murder, David does not have the stomach to put his son to death. He didn't have the guts to execute Amnon. He doesn't have it in him to execute Absalom. Absalom calls the question. Either kill me now if I am guilty or declare me innocent.

Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom. 2 Samuel 14:33 (ESV)

Absalom's scheme worked. David kissed him and forgave him. Absalom was declared not guilty of murder. Notice how it happened. There was no weeping or hugging. There was no emotion between them. No words were

spoken. It was an official kiss declaring his forgiveness, not a parental kiss declaring his love.

What happened is the opposite of what we see. Absalom manipulated Joab to bring him to King David. Absalom manipulated David into declaring him innocent because he knew his father loved him too much to execute him.

David allowed himself to be pushed into showing leniency to an unrepentant murderer because he didn't want to hand out justice. By doing what he did, he has set himself up for the greatest challenge his kingdom would ever face. A popular, good-looking, manipulative man who is already a murderer, a terrorist, and an arsonist is now in the center of Jerusalem forming a coup to overthrow his father. Next week, the disaster of the coupe\ begins.

Let me give you four applications from this chapter.

Applications

- 1. Ignoring justice and extending leniency to those who refuse to repent leads to disaster.** There was a world of difference between God's forgiveness of David after he confessed his sin and sought forgiveness and David's forgiveness of Absalom when he refused to repent. David's leniency toward his unrepentant son will lead to disaster.
- 2. Even if it has been a long time, those who refuse to repent will continue in sin if restored.** It was seven years since Absalom murdered his brother Amnon. It felt like things needed to move on and Absalom be restored. The problem was that since Absalom didn't repent, his restoration would only lead to him resuming his sinful deed where he paused them seven years before.

3. **A father who fails to discipline his children will experience trouble.**

David's ignoring Amnon's rape of Tamar didn't make the problem go away. It made it worse. David ignoring Absalom's murder of his brother didn't make the problem disappear. It made it worse. Parents ignoring the sins of their children instead of addressing them will not make those problems go away. It will only make them worse.

4. **When we repent and confess our sins, God forgives us with open arms**

when we come home. When David forgave unrepentant Absalom, there was no love between them. It was formal without love. Sometimes, we feel that is the way God forgives us when we sin. We feel God looks down from heaven and forgives us, then says, "Well, if I have to, I guess I will forgive you." That is not the way God forgives us. In Luke 15, we read the story of another prodigal son who left his father. That father didn't ignore him for years, but every day he searched the horizon longing for him to come home. When his prodigal son finally came to his senses, realized his sin, and came home confessing his sins, his Father ran to him, kissed him, hugged him, and would not let him go. He killed the fattened calf and celebrated his return. My friends, when we repent of our sins, God doesn't begrudgingly forgive us of our sins because he was forced to. He loves us. He celebrates over us. He sings over us with joy when we repent of our sins and come home. That is the kind of good God we serve, not a God that forgives us in coldness like David forgave Absalom, but a God who celebrates over us with joy the moment we ask repentance, turn to him, and come home.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

© You are permitted and encouraged to reproduce and distribute this material in any format provided (1) you credit the author, (2) modifications are clearly marked, (3) you do not charge a fee beyond the cost of reproduction, (4) you include the web address (www.Christ2RCulture.com) on the copied resource.

