

DAVID

AFTER GOD'S HEART



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David and Absalom - 2 Samuel 13-18



DAVID: AFTER GOD'S HEART - PT 3

DAVE FIELDS

I tell my students...there is no world where they can live, learn, fall in and out of love, other than the one they inhabit. A basic teaching of Christianity is that humans are capable of profound and confounding evil. That is not a truth that exists only outside the students. It also exists within them. They must see the world for what it is."

- Esau McCaulley

Act I: Sowing and Reaping...And Grace Still

The Lord said to David: "Why did you despise the word of the Lord by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. Now, therefore the sword will not depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own... 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you...'"

- 2 Samuel 12:9-11

"Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord. Nathan replied, "The Lord has taken away your sin. You are not going to die" (12:13).

David committed sexual sin and then murder – a violent act against another. And then David's sons Amnon and Absalom – they follow David in these ways.

David – though furious about how Amnon rapes Tamar – doesn't do anything about bringing his son Amnon to justice. As both Eli and Samuel failed to discipline and constrain their sons, David fails to deal justly with his son here.

God allows us to make a mess of our lives. Though the consequences of sin are real – so is God's mercy. The fact that God does forgive David means that David is not 'out of the game' of life with God.

God "does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us"

-Psalm 103:10-12

"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows."

-Galatians 6:7



Take Home:

1. When we've messed things up, there is real, genuine forgiveness. There is assurance of God's great mercy! But that does not erase the fact of that there is often a sense of pain that remains.
2. God disciplines those he loves. "God doesn't raise spoiled children."

"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined – and everyone undergoes discipline – then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all....God disciplines us for our good in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it"

- Hebrews 12:7-11

Act II – David Regained: Wilderness Wandering Reloaded

David's heart grows bitter toward his son Absalom because of the killing of Amnon. We read that although Absalom is allowed back in the city, David says: "He must go to his own house; he must not see my face" (2 Sam 14:23).

For five years in total David did not even look at his son, gave him not a word of acknowledgement.

“Sin fed on sin. The rape of Tamar fed into the murder of Amnon, which fed into the hard heartedness of David. Absalom responded to Amnon’s sin by sinning. Then David responded to Absalom’s sin by sinning. Absalom got rid of Amnon by killing him. Then David got rid of Absalom by shunning him. David lost his son Amnon because of the sin of Absalom [and, I would add, by his failure to pursue justice for Tamar]. David lost his son Absalom by his own sin.”

– Eugene Peterson

Referring to the Prodigal Sons Story Jesus tells in Luke 15:

“What if Absalom had been allowed to sit with his father, tell him the story of his affection for Tamar, his anger at Amnon, and the purgatory of his exile? The father would have once more had a son; the son would once again have had a father. But David didn’t do that.”

– Eugene Peterson

This is why Jesus insists on his disciples being those who are forgiving because we’re forgiven. When we forgive, we are becoming like God.

In this ‘wilderness experience’ David regains himself, regains his life of connection with God.

We too may have those times in life that are ‘wilderness’ – times where we find ourselves raw and exposed. We are ‘open.’

The question is what we do with that. This is a place for potential growth. I say potential because the wilderness is a place of exposure, openness and vulnerability, that can lead to deepening reliance on God; to an awareness, of our actual need for Him.

David owns the reality that Shimei shouts. He even goes so far as to correlate the curses of Shimei with God’s own pronouncement: “Let him curse, for the Lord has told him to. It may be that the Lord will -



look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today” (2 Sam 16:12).

David pleads for gentleness toward Absalom. We hear him command the armies, who are now defending against Absalom’s pursuit of David: “Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake” (18:5).

David is a recovery his compassion. He’s beginning to reflect the heart of God once again, in the way he writes in Psalm 103:11: “As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.”

Act III – Grief...and Ultimate Hope

“The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you – O Absalom, my son, my son!” (18:33).

Jesus, the True King who comes to lead us, is the one who knows suffering more intimately than we every will, in order to one day, wipe away every single tear from our eyes. And this is the One who comes to walk with us in our pain, and to carry it off our shoulders once for all time.

Will you trust him? Will you humbly receive his mercy, and even his discipline, so that you might become just like him?



Reflection Questions for Life Group Discussion

Open Up: What discipline did you sometimes resent as a kid that you appreciate now (i.e. piano rehearsal, having to clean your room before playing on Saturday, not overspending your allowance)?

How do you think God's discipline might be similar in our lives?

1. In **2 Samuel 12:7-14** God promises David that he and his family will experience the painful fall out ("the sword will not depart from your house") that is directly related to the sin he committed against Bathsheba and Uriah. David received God's real forgiveness, but he also was left with the consequences of it. Does it surprise you that sin has real consequences, even after we are forgiven? Why or why not?
2. For David, the 'wilderness time' caused him to recover his life with God; he was praying again, he expressed humility in owning up to his sin, and he grew in compassion for Absalom. How might 'wilderness' times - those of pain or discipline - function in a similar way for us?

Read Hebrews 12:1-13

3. How has God disciplined you in the past? How did that lead to peace for you?
4. What is the hardest thing you are going through in life right now? How is, or how might, God use this in your life?

Prayer:

Pray for your Life Group, that in the difficulties each person faces there would be an awareness of God's gracious presence with them. Pray that there would be a continual deepening and maturing in our community of Summit Drive, and the broader church of the city.