

LESSON 11

SIN GROWS

(2 SAMUEL 13–16)



Introduction

When God created the heavens and the earth, He included plans for the marriage of one man and one woman. Of this union, God said, “They shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). In this passage, God addresses the physical union of marriage. However, He also calls husbands and wives to be of like mind while raising any children brought about by this union.

A rivalry among siblings, especially when there is a good deal of money or a kingdom like David’s, often becomes extremely heated and malicious. Polygamy brought David many sons, but it also gave him much heartache. Absalom’s rebellion comes to mind. Before we study this rebellion, let’s take a moment to look at the long line of sons born to David by his wives and concubines listed in 1 Chronicles. These include Amnon, Daniel, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream, Shimea, Shobab, Nathan, and Solomon by David’s wives (1 Chronicles 3:1–5). Nine more sons were born to David: Ibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet (1 Chronicles 3:6–8). This chapter does not mention the names of the sons born to David by his concubines—only that there were “sons of the concubines” (1 Chronicles 3:9). All that remains is a spark to set off this tinderbox. That spark came in the form of the rape of Tamar by her half brother Amnon.

Tamar’s Rape

Read 2 Samuel 13:1–22. The incident described in these verses erupted into the biggest political battle of David’s life. Usually when you think of David, you think of a man of action—decisive and able to make correct decisions quickly. Now, David’s lack of decisiveness allows the tragic rape of one of his daughters to broaden into murder and open rebellion on the part of his son. Innocently, David allowed Tamar to bring food to his “ailing” son, who then raped her. What was David’s reaction to this news? “He was very angry” (2 Samuel 13:21). Yet, no disciplinary action receives mention. This inaction sparked the tinderbox and fueled more sin.

135. How might we say that the rape of Tamar exemplifies sin feeding upon itself?

136. Had you been David, how might you have reacted to the news of Tamar’s rape? What would you say about repentance and forgiveness?



Family Problems

Read 2 Samuel 13:23–14:33. Left unrepented, sin grows. In this case, sin boiled over in the form of hatred between brothers—a hatred seemingly missed by David. Keep in mind Nathan’s prophecy to David, “Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house” (2 Samuel 12:10). Sadly, this prophecy would be fulfilled.

- 137.** One of David’s sons waited to exact revenge. Can you identify the son who fled to Geshur to escape his father (2 Samuel 13:38)?
- 138.** Following a three-year estrangement, David’s trusted general, Joab, facilitated a reconciliation between David and his son. How did Joab arrange this reconciliation?
- 139.** Absalom lived two years without seeing David. Finally, his patience ended. What did Absalom do to get Joab’s attention?
- 140.** After two years of living within the palace without seeing his father, Absalom finally came before David. How did Absalom react to the meeting? What about David?

Absalom’s Plan

Read 2 Samuel 15:1–12. Scripture does not say how much time passed before Absalom turned on his father. Absalom’s technique reminds us of his earlier dealings with Amnon—an outward appearance of repentance coinciding with an inward hatred. Absalom was not sorry for his sins; he was just sorry that he got caught.

- 141.** Absalom built support among those who held grievances against his father (2 Samuel 15:1–4). Like a consummate politician, Absalom “stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (2 Samuel 15:6). Four years later, Absalom sprang his trap and declared his kingship. To what city did Absalom go and under what false pretense?
- 142.** Why do you think Absalom chose this city and not another?

David Flees

Read 2 Samuel 15:13–16:4. Absalom’s influence increased. Rather than do the expected and fight to retain power, David vacated his capital city. Most important, David turned his attention to God in prayer.

- 143.** For what did David pray?
- 144.** Under the circumstances, what would you have prayed for had you been David? Why?

David Is Cursed

Read 2 Samuel 16:5–23. God further tested David’s faith. A member of Saul’s family cursed David. David ignored this curse and in the process showed his trust in God.

- 145.** How did David react, and how did his reaction show his trust in God?
- 146.** David planted Hushai into Absalom’s service as a spy, but before he could influence Absalom, Ahithopel, once another of David’s trusted advisors, offered his advice. What did Ahithopel advise Absalom to do?



God's Word for Today

Times of testing come into our lives as well. How we react also reflects our faith in God. They become defining moments in our lives.

147. How could we relate the words of James 1:2–3 to David's life? to our own lives?

148. God brings defining moments into our lives to achieve a greater purpose (1 Peter 1:6–7).
What purpose does God have in mind?

In Closing

- Consider a time when God tested you. What did God achieve through His testing?
- Think about how Psalm 32:1–2 may benefit you the next time a defining moment occurs in your life.
- Read **2 Samuel 17–20** to prepare for the next session.

Pray: Merciful Lord, You desire to strengthen our faith through the trials we encounter. You also desire oneness of minds in holy matrimony. Guard and protect our marriages—and those who remain single. Keep us from sin, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

BATTLES DURING DAVID'S REIGN

- City
- City with an uncertain location
- Philistines attack David in the Valley of Rephaim, near Baal-perazim (2 Sam. 5:17ff)
- David repels Philistine attacks (2 Sam. 5:25)
- David attacks Hadadezer, king of Zobah (2 Sam. 8:3ff)
- Edomites threaten David at Valley of Salt (2 Sam. 8:13)
- David decisively defeats the Edomites (2 Sam. 8:14)
- Ammonites, aided by the Aramean mercenary forces of Zobah, Beth-rehob, Maacah and Tob, challenge David near Rabbah (Amman) (2 Sam. 10:1ff)
- David's forces defeat the Ammonite-Aramean confederation (2 Sam. 10:7ff)
- Hadadezer, king of Zobah, leads an Aramean army against David at Helam (2 Sam. 10:15ff)
- David defeats Hadadezer's Aramean confederation at Helam (2 Sam. 10:17ff)
- David is expelled from Jerusalem by his son Absalom (2 Sam. 17:21ff)
- David dispatches a census team throughout his realm (2 Sam. 24:1ff)
- ★ Battle scene

0 10 20 Miles
0 10 20 Kilometers

