

David's Home in Turmoil

2 Samuel 13

Lesson Outline

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David's Home Filled With Deception

2 Samuel 13:1-20

Amnon's Desire: 2 Samuel 13:1-5

Amnon's Affection

Amnon was David's firstborn son. His mother was Ahinoam the Jezreelitess (2 Samuel 3:2). Sadly, he followed David's sinful ways instead of his correct example. Tamar was David's beautiful daughter. She was Absalom's sister, so her mother was Maacah (2 Samuel 3:3).

Amnon became sick due to his affection for Tamar. This was improper because it was a sin for brother and sister to be together (Leviticus 18:6-9; 20:17). Because he was unable to have access to her, Amnon became upset. Since Tamar was a virgin, a morally correct woman, she probably lived a protected life separate from society, as was the custom.¹ Amnon's immoral love sought personal gratification instead of Tamar's welfare. Scriptures teach that correct love is not immoral and seeks the benefit of another (1 Corinthians 13:4-5). If Amnon truly loved his sister he would have protected her. It is clear his love was dishonorable lust.

1. *Amnon's wicked thoughts* – he dwelt on Tamar and became sick. He chose to meditate on sin.
2. *Amnon's wicked behavior* – his conduct was the result of his thoughts. Eventually he was unable to control his wicked intentions.

¹ John Butler, "David: The King of Israel," (Iowa: LBC Publications, 1998) p. 774

Amnon, David's eldest son, was heir to the throne. Although he had plenty, this prince of Israel coveted that which was forbidden and lived in discouragement. Position, power, and possessions were unable to remedy his sinful desires. Contrary to popular opinion, environment does not change bad behavior. The problem is the heart and the LORD alone is able to provide the remedy (Titus 3:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

Amnon's Assistance

Amnon's friend Jonadab noticed his discouragement. Jonadab's father was Shimeah or Shammah, making him David's nephew and Amnon's cousin (1 Samuel 16:9). Jonadab was a subtle man, meaning he was wise and cunning. This cousin proved more an enemy than a friend (Proverbs 13:20). After pressing Amnon for information he was told the problem. Evidently Amnon was not ashamed of his sinful thoughts so he shared them (Proverbs 29:11). When sin no longer produces shame, immorality and wickedness will follow.

Amnon was given a sinister plan of deception that would provide opportunity for him to gain his evil desire. It was immoral and inconsiderate. He was encouraged to play sick so David would visit. He then could ask that Tamar make him a meal, knowing his caring father would comply. In so doing he would get Tamar alone. Being David's son and a prince nobody would suspect him of deception, including the king. It was poor counsel but it appealed to his desires so he listened as his friend encouraged him to sin. Not all advice should be heeded (Psalm 1:1, Proverbs 1:10).

Amnon's Deception: 2 Samuel 13:6-20

Amnon's Trickery

Following Jonadab's counsel, Amnon faked an illness and asked David to send in Tamar. Apparently implying his sickness was so great he had to witness the preparation of the food. It is clear David loved his children. He had no reason to believe Amnon would act in an evil manner, so he directed Tamar to prepare him a meal. Perhaps he was too busy to properly assess the situation or was completely fooled. Either way he failed to notice the danger his daughter faced. Of course, he should have refused and allowed her to remain where she was, but he was deceived. Parents, pay attention to your children and do your best to guard them from danger.

Tamar was summoned and immediately obeyed David's direction. The scriptures indicate she was a dedicated and obedient young woman. Unaware of Amnon's filthy desires she went to his house and made him cakes. In so doing, she unknowingly placed herself in great danger. Amnon applied evil counsel and it produced wicked actions (Psalm 10:8-10).

Amnon's Treachery

Amnon refused to eat and ordered everyone out of the room except Tamar. Perhaps he pretended to be extremely ill or tired. In order to carry out his wicked plan it was important to remove any hindrances. Upon being asked to join Amnon in a private area, Tamar went and assisted believing he was sincerely sick. Amnon made his evil intentions known and Tamar immediately refused him. This morally correct young woman understood his desires were wicked.

1. *Tamar pointed out the situation* – he was her brother so it was unlawful (Leviticus 18:6-9; 20:17).
2. *Tamar pointed out the sin* – it was wrong to do in Israel and she refused to consent. Amnon would tarnish the nation with his immorality (Ephesians 4:1, 5:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16).
3. *Tamar pointed out the shame* – it was a foolish desire; she would be shamed, her character ruined, and he would be a fool in Israel.

Amnon was so consumed with lust, so her words had no effect. He raped Tamar, which is a terrible crime. After gratifying his lust, his love for her was gone. Because he mistreated Tamar, he lost affection for her and no longer found her appealing. Mistreatment of a spouse is why many marriages struggle today. A strong marriage is found when a husband and wife treat each with care and consideration (Ephesians 4:32, 5:21-25). Amnon forced Tamar to leave, though she did not want to. By throwing her out, he made the sin public and insinuated she coerced him or at the least consented. This despicable man humiliated Tamar treating her as if she was in the wrong.

Amnon ruined Tamar's life. She left and immediately signified her despair by placing ashes upon her head and renting her colorful clothing. This displayed her great distress due to the mistreatment. Apparently, chaste women wore clothes that signified their morality, probably to distinguish them from married women and signify their honor. Tamar cried all the way home. Sin produces sorrow and weeping. No wonder there will be much weeping in hell (Matthew 8:12, 22:13).

Amnon's Trouble

Absalom was Amnon's half-brother. His grandfather was Talmai, king of Geshur (2 Samuel 3:3). According to A. W. Pink the Geshurites were fierce and lawless.² Absalom encountered his sister, perhaps weeping, and asked if Amnon had harmed her. He probably knew where she had been and was aware of Amnon's character. Upon discovering what occurred Absalom encouraged Tamar to disregard the incident, as if it were not an issue. However, it was a big deal and should have been addressed. His poor advice did not help her situation and she remained desolate in his house.

Absalom, thinking only of himself, probably began planning his revenge against his half-brother. Amnon got more than he bargained for, becoming the target of a relentless adversary. His life would eventually be lost because of his sinful conduct with Tamar. Sin always comes with a price (James 1:15).

² Arthur W. Pink, "The Life of David, Volume 2," (Michigan: Baker Book House, 1981) p. 75

David's Home Filled With Destruction

2 Samuel 13:21-39

Absalom's Hatred: 2 Samuel 13:21-29

Absalom's Resentment

David heard of the incident and was very wrath. He should have been angry because it was a terrible crime that produced a bad stain on his family and made the nation appear wicked. But apparently it ended with David's anger. There was no punishment for the lawless Amnon. This was it, Amnon had to live with knowledge he made his father mad. Why did David allow this sin, which was punishable by the law, to go unchecked?

1. *Lack of witnesses* – perhaps it came down to his word against hers.
2. *Lack of discipline* – perhaps David was lenient towards his son's conduct.
3. *Lack of integrity* – perhaps David refused to address Amnon, because of his personal guilt in a similar situation.

One thing is certain; Absalom hated Amnon because of what he did to Tamar. It would have been fine and commendable to hate the sin. He could have pursued justice and judgment, insisting David deal with Amnon. There is the possibility he attempted that and was rejected. Either way, his hatred of Amnon as a person was wrong (Leviticus 19:17-18; 1 John 3:15).

1. *It produced bitterness* – he said neither good nor bad words to Amnon. He acted indifferent, as if nothing had happened. Basically he ignored Amnon.
2. *It produced vengeance* – he planned to do something about it, which would amount to sin against God (Exodus 20:13).

Absalom's Reasoning

Two years passed but Absalom never forgot what occurred. Allowing his anger to turn to bitterness, he was unable to forgive. Apparently, he did not initially plan to kill Amnon but after dwelling on it for months he decided to murder him. The longer you dwell on something the more it will consume you (1 Peter 5:6-7). We are to control our anger so that we do not sin against God (Ephesians 4:26-27; Romans 12:19). Poor Absalom, bitterness consumed him, "if the sun going down once upon the wrath gives such place to the devil, what would the sunsets of two full years do?"³

Absalom planned a grand festival at Baalhazor, where he had sheepshearers. The sheep were sheared at certain times. The first shearing of the year produced the most wool and was cause for great

³ Matthew Henry, "Matthew Henry's Commentary, Volume 2," (United States: Hendrickson, 1996) p. 398

celebration.⁴ Families would unite at these festivals for a time of great joy. Absalom invited his entire family, in particular David, however the king refused because he did not want to be burdensome. It is possible Absalom planned for this, and may have even expected it, so he pled with David to allow Amnon to be present. David appeared to be suspicious but relented as Absalom persisted. It is likely David was aware of the indifference Absalom displayed toward Amnon but was unaware of the hatred in his heart. Maybe David believed Amnon was safe since others in the family would be present. He might have hoped they would reconcile, but again he was deceived.

Absalom's Revenge

David's sons went to Absalom's feast. There was no indication of anything amiss, so they enjoyed the festivities. But unbeknownst to them, Absalom shrewdly prepared his servants to murder Amnon. They were to observe his conduct and notice when he became drunk. This would provide the opportune time to strike because drunkenness deadens the senses to reality, rendering one useless and defenseless. Drunkenness has led to the destruction and loss of many lives (Proverbs 20:1, 31:6). Believers are to be filled with the Spirit and not alcohol (Ephesians 5:18). Upon command Absalom's servants were to slay Amnon.

1. *Absalom challenged them with cowardice* – he knew it was a sin against God and treason against the king, so he appealed to their bravery.
2. *Absalom challenged them with his command* – they were accountable to him, and afterwards he would be one step closer to being king. Murder was legalized but it remained sin.
3. *Absalom challenged them with courage* – he motivated them to action by removing the fear of man and God.

Absalom's servants moved swiftly and slew Amnon. Yes, he was wicked and deserved punishment but Absalom's actions unjustified. It was a dreadful act of murder (Exodus 20:13). David's other sons quickly fled the scene. Either Absalom was only interested in revenge against Amnon or unable to attack all at once.

Absalom's Haste: 2 Samuel 13:30-39

David's Discomfort

Word spread fast that all of David's sons had been slain. Upon hearing this terrible news the king tore his clothes, fell upon the ground and mourned greatly. It was tragic for David that one son was slain and terrible that he believed all were dead. This was a false report and proof that gossip always travels fast while producing negative results. Many that claim to be honest historians and journalists are often the guiltiest concerning false reports. Why, perhaps because sensational news spreads faster and draws more attention. Sadly, many believers are also guilty of gossip though God's Word forbids it (1 Thessalonians 5:13; 1 Peter 4:15). False words are always deceitful (Proverbs 12:17).

⁴ John Gill, "Gill's Commentary on the Bible: 2 Samuel," (Bible Truth Forum: E-book, 2005) p. 157

Eventually David received the correct information from Jonadab, the same man that produced the plan to rape Tamar. Apparently he was aware of Absalom's hatred of Amnon and desire to slay him, though he may not have known Absalom's plan. If he believed Amnon was in danger, he should have said something earlier (James 4:17). As Jonadab informed David why Absalom slew Amnon a large group was spotted coming towards the city. It was David's sons and their servants. They arrived in Jerusalem, confirmed Amnon's death, and mourned with their father.

Absalom's Departure

Understanding the seriousness of his actions, Absalom immediately left the area refusing to see David and face punishment (Genesis 9:6). Because it was a willful murder Absalom could find no safety in the cities of refuge. He fled to Geshur where Talmi, his grandfather, was king (2 Samuel 3:3). There, under the supervision of a pagan royal, he remained for three years until Joab retrieved him (2 Samuel 14:23). David did not demand his return and Talmi did not willingly send him back.

David mourned for his son every day, probably referring to Amnon. His mourning was great, perhaps he was unsure of Amnon's relationship with God or hurt knowing it was a result of his sinful actions (Galatians 6:7-8). Eventually David moved on concerning Amnon's death and longed to see his son Absalom. David probably understood the difficulty of the situation – Absalom was a murderer on the run, not only had he killed a man but it was the heir to the throne. How David could justify bringing Absalom home probably puzzled him. Nothing is said of Absalom's desire to return or of David seeking the LORD in the matter. Apparently it was simply David's desire. The chapter ends with David's home in shambles. His daughter Tamar had been raped and remained desolate. His oldest son Amnon was guilty of immorality and slain. His son Absalom was guilty of murder and lived as an outcast in Geshur. Sin filled his home with destruction and heartache (James 1:13-15).