

David's Consequences Rear their Ugly Head

The Making of a King: Part 23

2 Samuel 15

Let's take a moment and catch up on what has happened since we last read in chapter eleven. Chapter 12 details the parable Nathan confronts David with that draws him to the repentance he shows in Psalm 51. Chapter thirteen details the horrible acts of David's son Amnon against his sister Tamar and the revenge Absalom (another of David's sons) takes on him as a result. In chapter fourteen, Absalom's relationship with his father is restored through the wise plan of David's general Joab using the woman from Tekoa. This is where we enter our current passage.

Absalom, now back in his father's good graces, is back home where he belongs. But as time goes on, things begin to change for Absalom. The Bible records that Absalom was a very handsome and (based on what we see in this passage) rather charming man. But unfortunately, Absalom made a mistake with these gifts. Absalom allowed these gifts to inflate his ego and cause him to claim responsibilities that did not rightfully belong to him. And sadly, this first mistake would only be the first step toward Absalom's ultimate downfall.

Discussion Question: Read verses 1-6. How did Absalom's discontentment (and impatience) with his current position lead him down a dangerous path? Why is it so important we learn to be content in whatever role/season God has placed us in?

Whereas Absalom could have been another example of one of David's "mighty men," instead Absalom's misuse of his gifts led him down a much more tragic path. **Verse 6** records for us that, likely through his charisma, Absalom stole the hearts of the people. Even now, Absalom's popularity wasn't necessarily an issue. Sadly, Absalom did not make the right choice with his influence and, as we'll find out in later lessons, it cost him dearly.

Discussion Question: Read verses 7-10. How did Absalom's pride over his God-given gifts lead him down a dangerous path? How can this kind of pride be destructive in our lives?

And so, Absalom's takeover begins in Israel, reigning from the city (Hebron) where his own father originally took the throne. David, upon hearing of not only Absalom's rebellion but his popularity amongst the people, flees for his own safety, taking a group of servants with him. But as David flees, he encounters something interesting. He finds Zadok (a priest) and the Levites carrying the Ark of the Covenant, and what David does next shows the content of his character.

Discussion Question: Read verses 23-26. In contrast to Absalom, how did David show his trust in the Lord through his response to Absalom's rebellion? How can we apply these same principles to our own lives?

But despite all that was going on, David's story was far from over. After all, David had been here before when he was on the run from Saul! And just as God had provided for David with Saul, God would continue to provide for David during this time of adversity as well. David even comes to find out that Ahithophel, one who had been his most trusted counselor and one who the Bible describes his counsel as being like the oracles of God, had sided with Absalom. Even still, God provided for David in ways that would turn out to be key to him retaking the throne.

Discussion Question: Read verses 32-37. The Bible tells us of five people David mentions that remained loyal to him in Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion. List them below. How did God continue to provide for David even in the midst of adversity? How did God show himself to be always in control, even when David felt his whole world was falling apart?

For Personal Reflection: What is the biggest lesson you personally learned from this lesson? Write it out below.
