

King David as Father. – Short notes.

From the Dutch book: Als David je vader is ... by Teun Stortebeker

Rise of David, from shepherd to king. Defeating Goliath. Bringing the ark to Jerusalem. Victory on all sites. Many wives and sons **2 Sam 3:2-5**

2 Sam.7:8-16 your son will build the temple. (:14) discipline

2 Sam 11,12 – Bathsheba, temptation, adultery, murder, death, repentance.

2 Sam 13:1-14 – Amnon and Tamar

Love is justice. Discipline is love.

As sons of the king, David might have favored his children and not given them due punishment when they deserved so. They might have gotten away with many wrong things.

Love is true justice. **2 Sam. 7:14, Prov. 13:24**

What did Amnon actually learn from his father?

Remember: Bathsheba, adultery, murder, silence. Until Natan the prophet came. (2 Sam. 12)

Most likely there was no Father-Son talking, nothing was explained. Amnon only heard the stories.

In this world Amnon became a man, with his own sexual desires. And because he might have never been corrected by his father, he always got what he wanted. With a phony story he got his sister in his bedroom and put his sexual fantasies into practice.

2 Sam 13:15-22

Lonely in a golden cage.

“Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.” **2 Sam 13:16**

Absalom heard his sister’s weeping, went to her and heard what had happened. He tried to comfort her with the words: **“Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Don’t take this thing to heart.** And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom’s house, **a desolate woman.** ” **2 Sam 13:20**

? What do you think of this advice? What advice would you have given? What had Tamar needed?

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2 Sam. 13:23a – Two years later

David was furious when he heard about the rape, but he did nothing.

Two full years went by without anything happening. Amnon was not being punished and lived like nothing had happened. Absalom was dangerously quiet, and everybody felt the day nearing that he would revenge his sister. David kept stone-silent. Tamar was wasting away.

Bitterness was being fed, because nothing happened, no justice, no ruling, no verdict. Absalom, his name means: de father is peace – longed for justice. A desire which is good in itself, but it was driven by hatred. Every day that he saw his mourning sister, his hatred grew, and he started to think up a plan.

2 Sam 13: 23-32

First, he invited David to come along to his sheep shearing party, but David refused. Still, he led Amnon go. There Absalom killed Amnon. After two years, sin had full-grown and brought forth death. **Rom. 6:16** Everybody knew that this was Absalom's expressed intention from the day Amnon raped his sister. **2 Sam 13:32** (How come David did not know?)

Young people who resort to drugs often share the same feeling of misunderstanding. They feel that injustice has been done to them. They seek a way out in drugs and in its alternative lifestyle. Like Absalom, they will only bring more injustice into this world.

It is so important that you learn to communicate. It is not true that death has to be the only way out. Especially in family settings, there is a lot of bitterness. Bitter feelings will not go away by the passing of time. Until something is openly addressed, it keeps eating on you. Bitterness works like a time-bomb, whenever a problem repeats itself, bitter people respond twice as violently as someone going through it for the first time. Time will only heal our wounds after things have been confessed or openly discussed.

Silence is not always gold.

Although we can learn a lot from King David and from his personal walk with God, we have to see that this special man was silent when he needed to speak. He was furious ... but there was no man-to-man conversation, no punishment according to the law of Israel.

? What should David have done? As a father and as a king?

David did have the spiritual power to admit his mistakes and to confess them and humbly return to God. But **he did not resolve the wounds that through his wrongdoing were suffered in his family**. What did the children know of David's repentance, of his sorrow, and about grace?

Sadly, David did not take up his responsibility, and denied (silenced) what had happened and so denied (silenced) what was happening again. David should have talked about what had happened in the past (the adultery and murder) and what was happening now (the rape). If we are denying the less pleasant aspects of our family history, it opens the way to repetition and to escalation.

Children do not copy who you are in private with God, but they copy what they see, hear and feel (or sense). This is decisive and upon this they built their lifestyle. Do your children see a real Christian walk, or just religion and religious occasions? Do they see you are keeping Gods Word in mind and are acting upon it? They might resist it at the beginning or rebel against it, but it does make it a lot easier for them to live according to it themselves at last.

We must dare to take responsibility for the things we have done, even though someone else is in the cause. Let's talk about it as it was, in spite of the pain that might be involved. Sin always starts insignificant, but unless it is dealt with in the beginning, she will not only have a destructive effect on us, but also on our children and grandchildren.

Being silent about sin, is definitely not gold.

King or Father?

David loved his sons. **2 Sam 13:30-37**

At first, he had heard that all his sons had died. Luckily this was not true. He mourned over the death of Ammon many days.

2 Sam. 13:38-39

It says that David longed for Absalom. Joab, his army general, saw that David was hurting. He decided to help David by making up a story. At the end David agreed that Joab brings Absalom back home to Jerusalem. **2 Sam. 14:1-21 (:21)**

You would think that all is well now. But when Joab came back with Absalom, King David refused to see him. **2 Sam. 14:23-24**

This was David's change to prove himself to be a father to Absalom, but he failed again. After three years in exile Joab had come to take him back with the news that his father was longing for him. He must have been full

of anticipation when he approached Jerusalem. But he was met with the news that he could not see his father. He could live in his own house, but meeting his father, the king, would not happen. Absalom was rejected. No process, no restoration of relationship. Again, silence and avoiding each other. Just like before. David had repented after the intervention of Joab, but he did not know how to handle himself and to continue the process of restoration.

Absalom finally asked Joab to intervene. Then the King allowed his son to come. **2 Sam 14:33**

Here David had another chance to be a father to his son and to restore the relationship. But it says that Absalom was summoned by the king, bowed down to the king, and that the king kissed him. Three times this verse mentions the word '**king**'. It should have been '**father**'. The meaning of Absalom's name is 'my father is peace' (Abba Shalom). David could have confirmed this meaning at this time. But he failed again. Instead of that there was distance and a kiss. Much like a Judas kiss. Cold and humiliating.

It confirms: You bow down, because I am king. (or Pastor).

Mercy for a bastard (illegitimate child).

Judging the way David was fulfilling his role as a father, you might start to think that David was just a bad guy. But nothing is less true.

We might think: 'What did God see in David? Why did he pluck him from behind the sheep?'

When Samuel, the prophet and judge of Israel, asked Isai to bring all his sons before him, Isai did not even consider bringing David. **(1 Sam 16:5-13)** David was like a 'bastard' child.

The history of David and his sons tells us that this gifted king had not seen any good role models in his life. The mighty Samuel had sons that were totally gone off track, so had Eli, the priest before Samuel. **1 Sam 8:3** They had turned after dishonest gain, accepted bribes and perverted justice. By King Saul he had been given a very bad example. Besides everything he had to endure from Saul, Saul also took away from him the wife he loved and gave her to someone else. **1 Sam 25:44**

David made mistakes, big mistakes, but he went back to God and confessed his sins. He repented and made atonement. He worked to change his lifestyle. But when he finally had things in order, he weakened and came in a difficult time again.

Absalom' s hate campaign

Absalom had bowed down and received a kiss. But that was it. It was cold and distant. Two years Absalom had waited to see if justice would be done to the rapist of his sister. But nothing happened. Absolutely nothing. Then he finally did it himself, because the judge of Israel refused to do his work. But he had to flee from the country like a criminal. Then after three years of waiting somebody got the idea that this was not fair, and he was allowed to come back to Jerusalem. But he had to wait another two years before he was finally granted an audience. And then he received that awful kiss.

2 Sam. 15: 1-6 Absalom was furious he got himself a chariot and horses and fifty men to run ahead of him. He launched a hate campaign. Trying to win the hearts of the people and putting his father, King David, in a bad light.

2 Sam. 15:7-9 He did so for four years. At the end of four years, he went to the king. The King who had remained silent all the time his son was publicly raising hatred and discontent against him. Absalom asked his father for permission to go. David granted him permission. But he did not ask any questions. He did not grab the opportunity to talk with his son. God was giving him another chance, but he let it slip away again. 'Go in peace' he said.

But between him and Absalom there was no peace. They were at war and they both knew it.

Silence from the side of parents or guardians, only vents hatred and rebellion by young people as they feel rejected. Just like Absalom they seek a group of likeminded peers, who are also fed up with the older generation. This also happens in churches. People seek people as a confirmation of their opinion, but this value, this affirmation can only be given by the Head of the church, Jesus Christ. A person who does not have inner peace and who is wounded and rejected, wants to fill this void inside. Finding a common habit and approval, within a subculture with its own rules and language, gives people the feeling that they belong. But they will always get disappointed and hurt again. Only God can give the peace and harmony a human being needs. And out of this peace, healthy, good and edifying relationships are born.

When Absalom finally realized that his father would do nothing to improve their relationship he 'moved in with his friends'. A subculture dreaming about justice and righteousness. A group that says: "Now it is time for our/my needs to be met."

Rebellion is a bad advisor. You are fixed on your own sadness and project that upon the other. People who are driven by hatred, force their burdens upon others, they mislead others cause they themselves have lost the way. Because of the chaos in their own lives, they seek rest and self-affirmation through others. Because they suffer so much by the offence done to them, they convince others that they are totally different. "If I would be judge, I would give you justice. No matter how right you might be: as long as you react out of pain/rejection, you will not carry positive fruit. It is a dead-end way.

Absalom send his men throughout the country to rally people to their cause and to cheer for the new king. **2 Sam 15:10-12**

Also, Ahithophel, David's main advisor joined Absalom. **2 Sam 16:20-23** Who was Ahithophel, who's words were regarded as Words of God? Who was Ahithophel, who's words were regarded as Words of God?

(2 Sam 11:3 "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite. 2 Sam 23:34 Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite, 2 sam.15:12 While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown")

Ahitophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba. A bitter man, who had worked himself up to be the most trusted advisor of the king. But he had never forgiven David the sin against his granddaughter and for the way he had humiliated his family. In joining with Absalom, he finally saw a change to get justice. Also, for the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband.

Ahitophel went very far in his revenge. **2 Sam. 16:20-22** He advised Absalom to rape the wives of David the roof, in full sight of Israel. It happened on the roof from which David had lusted for Bathsheba. After this he gave the advice to kill David. **2 Sam. 17:1-4**

Satan is always out to bring division and destruction to God's people preventing people to walk in God's plan and destiny for their lives.

The keyword of Absalom and Ahithophel could have been forgiveness.

They both had many changes to do so. But the biggest problem in people's mind is the thought that it is the one who has sinned who has to ask for forgiveness. That would be nice, but the gospel teaches us that we received forgiveness and that is why we are asked to forgive the other. "Forgive us our sins like we forgive our debtors."

When someone says: "I cannot forgive", then that is indeed true. Out of ourselves we cannot forgive. Only God can give someone the strength to forgive. When injustice has been willfully done unto us, only the Holy

Spirit can bring a victim so far that he or she can forgive. No one can force another person to forgive. It is a wrestling between God and you, were you will have to fight through all the pain, anger and sadness. But if it happens it will bring a tremendous breakthrough for the Kingdom of God.

Jesus even said; "Bless those that curse you." Luc 8:26

This means that the initiative to forgive has to be taken by the Christian. Even if someone continues to curse you.

Real change mostly does not come for the site of the trespasser, but from the victim. That is where the real power is. The moment the victim forgives with the help of God, real spiritual deliverance takes place.

Has justice been done at the moment we forgive? No, there is deliverance from hatred and from possible bondage, but that is not the same as justice.

The hard road back

The moment that King David was told about the coup in Hebron, things chanced. The man who did not know how to confront his own sons with the truth, new exactly what to do now. David never strived to become king before his coronation, neither he did he strive now to keep his power. For David, Kingship was not something to fight for, but an office you were called into.

2 Sam 15:13,14 He said: "Get up and let us run. Or else none of us will be safe from Absalom. Hurry and go, or he will be quick to catch us and bring trouble upon us. He would destroy the city with the sword."

2 Sam. 15:30 It was one big tragedy. The people were crying as they followed behind the Royals. King David was on the run for his own son. What a disgrace.

And yet, this flight out of the capital turned out to be a turning point. The man after God's heart, showed the same faith and trust as when he was hunted by king Saul.

David knew whom he was fleeing from. Not from a political opponent, but from his very own son, his own flesh and blood. The son who so desperately had looked to him as a father but was disappointed again and again.

The story of David and Absalom is a human story of an ordinary father with an ordinary son. That is the beauty of the Bible, that everything has been recorded so honest and ordinary.

Sadly, this story did not end well. Absalom, continued to pursue his father and it came to his tragic death. **2 Sam. 18:14** Absalom died and with him twenty thousand others.

David wept and kept on weeping. Absalom, Absalom, my son, my son.

Not ruling but serving

David was not a ruler by nature. He had received the kingship as a gift of God. The miracle of David, in comparison to Saul, is that he held his position with open hands.

But David had one big problem; He was unable to separate his private life from his civil life.

David did not only receive the kingship from God, he received much more. He was a great poet and composer. He was a great prophet. Apart from Isaiah no one spoke so precisely about the suffering and dying of Christ than David did. David was also a great strategic commander and a great fighter.

Yet he failed when it came to raising his own children.

David's faith, his deep spiritual awareness and his prophetic gift are still being praised. But in his private life, all these gifts were not used in the reality of his daily family life.

Today also we see that great leaders still make the same mistakes. If someone has received spiritual gifts, they don't operate automatically in one's private life. They are meant for the church and for the society. Having gifts and talents says nothing about your own private faith life. That requires another value system.

When we do not make the deliberate choice to apply the talents God has given us in our personal lives, we are actually living two different kinds of lives. Everything is centered around the gifts/talents/position. But is our relationship with God the formation of character and personality is much more important.

If you chose to also be a servant of God at home, it means total transparency and openness, in order to be just who you are. In David's life this transparency was not there. He failed bitterly towards his wife and children.

The fact that David is called a man after God's heart, is only because he recognized this, wept and repented of his own attitude. This also gives hope to fathers and mothers who see these traits in themselves. There is

a way back. God knows the tension which is there because we did not know how to deal with the gifts.

This story is an encouraging warning. Take care to keep both sides in mind. Your family requires different choices than your ministry. Where the Bible speaks about the requirements of an elder/leader, it speaks strongly about his behavior in the family. There things have to be in order, not only before we take office, but also during our office. (**1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12**)

The way someone functions in his private life is in the eyes of God decisive for the position he/she can take in the church.

Are we as leaders open to correction? Can our youngest son/child say something about our shortcomings? Am I open for any signal from God through anybody? God often uses people to bring correction to us of whom we do not expect it. Other leaders or co-workers are often afraid to tell you the truth, because they are afraid for their own position.

David could have learned an awful lot if he had dared to take off his crown in the company of his own children. (Not being a pastor in the house, but a father.)

He would have been able to talk man to man with Amnon, about controlling your sexual desires. He could have talked with Absalom about justice and forgiveness. He could have sat with Tamar, comforting her, acknowledging her pain and leading her to wholeness. He could have given a lot more credibility to all that God had given him.

The Consequence

From the time that Amnon raped Tamar, till the time Absalom was defeated was eleven years. Eleven years in which David did not dare to confront his own sons.

Only when he left Jerusalem and humbled himself, he became again the man who realized that he is nothing without God. He again put his trust in God, choosing total obedience and surrender.

Though we live in a world which is lost in sin, many Christians chose to stop fighting and live a life at home, waiting for Jesus to either come back or to take them home.

While Jesus has given us the command to preach the gospel, to heal the sick, and to set the captives free. Once we turn away from this, our lives water down, we linger on the roof and fall for temptation. We are called to remain active in the fight to bring God's Kingdom into this world.

Back to the source

Some of you might be discouraged now as you realize that your marriage or your way of parenting is lacking. David is a human like you and I. He has failed, and the Bible does not try to brush this away. As we all make mistakes, we can all identify with him.

What we can learn from this story is that in the midst of our failure, we must invest as much as we can in our communication.

Communication between husband and wife, parents and children, and between siblings.

We are living in the age of communication. Technically everything is possible, but if we fail to communicate in our most intimate relationships, this all is meaningless. No matter how big a mistake has been made, or how many times, keep talking with each other.

David suffered incredible damage because of his sin, he lost three of his children here; Amnon, Tamar and Absalom. And yet, God did not turn his back on him. His life remained valuable. It is a testimony of God's goodness and his faithfulness.

Jesus opened the door for us to an open relationship between God and men. David was a man after God's heart because he returned to the source of life.

That's what we can learn from him.

Let's also go to that source and not wait for others to make the first step. There is only one perfect Father, and he waits for us with open arms.

Application:

Who are you in this story?

- You could be **David**, having to address things at home. Share your personal life, address sin, maybe discipline your children. Not being a Pastor at home, but a Father or a Mother.
- You could be **Amnon**, having sinned against your sister (or brother). Keeping it quiet and acting like nothing ever happened. You will need to repent, to confess and ask for forgiveness and face the consequences of your sins.
- You might be **Tamar**. People have sinned against you, and you are wasting away on the inside. You will need to talk about the bad

things that happened. Receive counselling and understanding. Maybe even address the sinner. Even if it is the pastor, son of the pastor or elder. Let God be your Healer, find the way of forgiveness by letting go of the past.

- You might also be **Absalom (or Ahithophel)**, living in resentment and bitterness because of injustice, and because of the effects of the sins of others who are seemingly getting away with it. You will need to forgive and not let resentment bring you to ruin or bring division in your family or in the church.