



“The Sin’s of the Father”

...like father, like son.

-2 Samuel 13-

**by Pastor Tim Dodson
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Reproduction it turns out, is just that. It often comes as a “bolt out of the blue” ...that epiphany that my

kid IS just like me. And sadly, it is often *not* a pleasant experience! In 30 years of ministry, I cannot think of an issue that has been more greatly ignored than my warnings of such an event.

While the first reaction of King David to the news was one that of anger, his anger apparently did not drive him to any real action. It appears that David’s anger was not that of a father exhibiting paternal love and discipline, but rather the anger of a man in power. The reasons he failed to “step up” could be many. Fear, embarrassment, inadequacy, or perhaps even ambivalence. But the irony is not lost. No doubt David remembered his own sexual domination of Bathsheba, and the murdering of her husband. Had he passed on a sinful sexual legacy to his sons...one driven by sexual lust and personal entitlement, the other by anger and the shocking ability to murder someone to “fix” a situation?

We know that David was a polygamist, so he obviously catered to his own desires and lusts...no doubt because he had the position and power to do so. God warned against such...*especially for kings*, back in Deuteronomy 17:17. Such a warning no doubt helped elite the ministerial mandate that says “keep your hands off the women, the money, and the glory.” But David began to act like every other king on earth instead of God’s king. Did he not realize that His children were watching? Did he not know that they would grow up to be like him?

Having been in a unique position to watch this phenomena play out, I have had the years now in the position of pastor to see this in “real time.” I have myself often been amazed at the similarities between Father and son, Mother and daughter, and yes...sometimes mom has profoundly affected the son and the Father the daughter also. I have watched deceit in the parent play out in the child. Sexual sin by the parent ultimately lived out in the child also. Lack of Jesus passion exposed though poor devotional life and service, later lived out in children who had no interest in the things of God...*they didn’t see the point*. It was never modeled to them, and thus to them this Jesus stuff is just all a theory or antiquated morality. Mom and dad chased the material, and the kids went on to pursue the world of the material. Overtly assertive wives and passive/lazy husbands played out as the son marries into a matriarchal marriage where he takes a back seat and his wife runs the house and home. Liars begat liars, cheater begat cheaters, lazy begat lazy, and self-interest begat self-interested.

“The bible calls us to ‘Train up a child in the way he should go . . .’ To train up is not to force, nor is it merely to lay down the law, or to enforce the law. It is to get the whole nature of the child to move freely in the direction wished. To do this needs on the part of the parent a combination of firmness and love, of patience and decision, of consistent example and sympathetic encouragement. But it needs also, on the part of God and therefore to be asked in earnest, believing prayer, that wondrous power which touches the springs of the heart,

and draws it to Him and to His ways. Only by this combination of parental faithfulness and Divine grace can we look for the blessed result, 'when he is old he will not depart from it.'” William Blaikie

David must have had an “epiphany -moment” when this news “came across his desk.” A glimpse of himself in the mirror of life...

Certainly this sin can be shocking. But it reveals the truth that there is “nothing new under the sun.” (Ecc 1:9) And it reminds us that the world has always been fallen and corrupt and in need of a Savior. That the “*heart of man is desperately evil.*” (Jeremiah 17:9) Amnon lusted for his sister. Not love, though he claimed otherwise. For love “is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-5) That was not what was manifested here in this account.

Amnon was tempted by lust...something that is common in our world, but Amnon was unwilling to say no to such. He was no doubt helped along by the fact that he was a son of the king and no doubt was used to getting what he wanted. But the temptation was not the sin, but it was the acting upon that temptation that was his undoing. He dwelled on the lust and it consumed him. He, like his daddy before him, just “had to have this”, and had to have it *at any price*. It was the innate attitude and thought that what *he* wanted was more important than anything else, *anyone* else and perhaps the only thing that mattered. This is a thinking that is overwhelmingly prevalent today in our culture and age and corrupted our society to the level that we see today.

Just as there is “first degree murder” and second degree murder and even manslaughter, there are degrees of sin manifest also. Such measurements are not an issue of the availability of God’s forgiveness for such nor is such meant to give license to the offender. But “sin” in scripture...in its original and classic sense, is a “missing of the mark.” An offense. Sin is anything that comes short of the glory of God. The English word for “Sin” comes from archery. The archer would shoot at the target. If he missed the mark, the overseeing official would yell “SIN.” Thus sin is going to occur in all our lives from time to time. I say that not as a permission or a “long leash” into the world, but it is a fact, even with the most diligent and disciplined individual. This is because in our bodily form on this planet, we all are “fallen.” Even while redeemed, born again, and restored in God’s grace, we are still humanly fallen. Paul reflects upon such in Romans 7:18-19 saying “*I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.*” Then later in Philippians 3:12 he says “*I don’t mean to say that I have already achieved these things or that I have already reached perfection. But I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me.*”

Then there is the issue of transgression...a “knowing” sin. This is an act involving rebellion and preplanning. Mt 15:3 “*He (Jesus) answered and said to them, ‘Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?’*” This is an act of “willful sin”...knowing the reality of such an act and doing it anyway. Such usually involves the sense of remaining in that sin with no attempt to get out. Hebrews 10:26 says “*For if we sin willfully... there remains no more sacrifice for sins...*” Thus such sin practice condemns us, and exposes our hearts as yet unchanged and thus unredeemed.

The bible actually speaks of various kinds of sin:

1. "Presumptuous sins," or as literally rendered, "sins with an uplifted hand," *i.e., defiant acts of sin, in contrast with "errors" or "inadvertencies" #Ps 19:13*
2. "Secret," *i.e., hidden sins #Ps 19:12*
3. "Sin against the Holy Ghost" (q.v.), or a "sin unto death" #Mt 12:31,32 1Jo 5:16 *which amounts to a willful rejection of grace.*

Amnon's sin was transgression. He didn't stumble, *he jumped*. There was some real planning and conniving involved in this act. It consumed him and drove him to all attempts at personal satisfaction, and that at any cost. For Amnon, 'no' did not mean 'no.' Despite the fact it was an act of illicit sex and incest, he wanted what he wanted. Such selfish premeditated sinning is sadly not as uncommon as one might believe, even in the greater "church community." Nothing was going to stop this guy. He first tried invitation to consensual sex. When that didn't work, he tried coercion, and she tried moralistic reasoning. She appealed to his conscious, and pointed out the abhorrent nature of such an act, and spoke of the tragic consequences of such an act for the both of them, and yet he would not be denied. So he rapes his sister, and he did so because he wanted her and he could.

What followed was not exhilaration or gratification, but rather revulsion and intense hatred. Suddenly he despised the very thing that he wanted bad enough to burn down the village to get it. Vs 15 says "*Then Amnon hated her with a very great hatred; for the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.*" The sad truth is that self-gratification is so often followed by a feeling of revulsion at the act for which it was responsible. The fact that Amnon loathed his half-sister with an intensity that exceeded his earlier undying passion for her gives us an interesting psychological window into the heart and mind of this man.

Now that the 'shoe had dropped' it was Absalom's turn to mirror his daddy by planning and executing first degree murder. Certainly Absalom was wrong to tell Tamar to be quiet and not take it to heart. The shame would have been crushing! He outwardly minimized the significance of the terrible crime against her. Perhaps he did so out of his love for her and his grief over this event. But there was also the issue of taking matters into his own hands and becoming judge, jury and executioner. He no doubt believed that he had a "good reason" to go against the law of God. That he would receive a "free pass" because in his mind his actions were righteous. Thus the picture of attempting 2 evils to make a right, and the "ends justify the means."

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- 1) How do the sins of the fathers tend to reproduce themselves in their children?
- 2) David was angry when he heard about Tamar, but he failed to punish Amnon or help/console Tamar. What does this say about David?
- 3) What does this kind of story teach us about the depravity...the "heart" of mankind?
- 4) Why does the bible include brutal stark accounts such as this one? (*To paint a true and honest picture of humanity and the hearts of man...God was holding nothing back if it was truth...to express the very need for redemption, to be save from our very selves...and...?*)
- 5) What does this account teach us about God? (*His sovereignty? His awareness of all things? His grace? His love?*)
- 6) How would you describe the differences between love and lust?
- 7) Why didn't David get involved when he found out about the situation? Why do you think he was so weak in the area of family discipline and nurturing? (*perhaps he understood the hypocrisy of doing so...or he was self-absorbed and busy with kingdom business and found himself fairly removed from his children and thus unable to exercise such when in a time of crisis...maybe he didn't know how because he had never practiced such...and/or...?*)
- 8) Think about a time when your imagination and thought life got you into trouble. How did you get there?...what led you into that situation?
- 9) How might you have better dealt with the situation to have prevented to unsavory outcome? (*...speak practically...reject all Christian ease and easy church life answers*)
- 10) Despite David's publically recorded failures and shortcomings, he was still "a man after God's own heart." How do you make sense of that? How does such a truth affect you and your relationship with God?