

The Sword Will Never Leave Your House
2 Samuel 13
July 15

When the prophet Nathan confronted David with his sins of adultery and murder, God communicated a prophecy of judgment on David's royal line. "Now the sword will never leave your house ... (2 Sam. 12.10). David enjoyed success in almost every area of his life. He slew the giant Goliath; he faithfully served in the court of King Saul, unified the Jewish tribes, and established a capital city at Jerusalem. The king expanded the borders of Israel into Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan gaining control of the land promised to Abraham. The Bible highlights David as a musician, diplomat, city builder, warrior, and king. David miserably failed in one area of life – the most crucial area of life – family. David was an unfaithful husband and a weak father.

What disaster did God's sword of judgment produce in David's family?

First, the sword of a bad example destroyed David's family. David failed to provide a positive model for his children. David's children knew about the sins of their father. David lacked the integrity to encourage his children by his godly example in the home. David's family members repeated his sins of sexual acts and murder. At best, he could only say, "Do as I say; do not do as I do." 2 Samuel 13 begins with a note of "love" (albeit illicit love); however, the dominant note within the chapter is hatred. Amnon "hated" his sister (v. 15). Absalom "hated" his brother Amnon (v. 22).

Second, the sword of incest cut David's family into warring factions (2 Sam. 13.15-20). David failed to discipline about a heinous crime his son committed. The Mosaic Law prohibited incestuous relations (Lev. 18.9,11). Amnon, a name meaning "faithful," acted unfaithfully toward his half-sister Tamar by raping her. He encouraged her to "Come!" and then after the deed Amnon commanded her to "Go!" Amnon confused lust and love. The Hebrew word for love "aheb" means to love or "to breath after," as in "to pant after." Amnon "breathed hard after Tamar" with lust and thought he loved her. Amnon even involved the unwitting king in his plot of deception (vv.6-7). When informed of Amnon's nefarious deed, David became angry, but he did nothing to the heir apparent. His failure to confront his grown son with his evil actions circulated within the family. David could not control his lust; he failed to confront his lustful son.

Third, the sword of murder attacked David's family (2 Sam. 13.21-36). David refused to be reconciled to his troubled son (2 Sam. 13:21-14:33). Since no man would marry Tamar, Absalom, her brother, provided for her by taking her into his house (13:20). Absalom became Tamar's provider, protector, and defender. Like his father, Absalom refused to confront Amnon. Instead for two years, Absalom planned the murder of Amnon. Ironically, the name Absalom means "father of peace." Yet, Absalom's action escalated the war within the family. In subsequent chapters, Absalom's lead a rebellion against his father.

Fourth, the sword of separation grieved David's family. After the murder, Absalom fled for refuge in his maternal grandfather's house (13:37). Absalom lived with his grandfather for three years. David grieved at the separation between him and Absalom.

Many families allow past hurts to paralyze and debilitate their present relationship. David withheld forgiveness. His bitterness hurt him, Absalom, and the entire nation. Broken relationships poison the totality of life. The church is the family of God, yet in many churches, a refusal to be reconciled gives Satanic forces a crucial victory.