Notes for “Trouble with the Total Tribe” -2 Samuel 13

March 30, 2025

1. “Good” families are not perfect families.

* Recognize the tendency in life to label “good” and “bad”, “black” and “white”
* David would meet our requirements to be labeled “good”
* David’s life was fully of bad elements
  + Adultery
  + Conspiracy to commit murder
  + Polygamist
  + Inaction in case of rape of daughter
* Our confusion of relative “good” and perfect is dangerous
* Every family has problems

1. “Good” families are not immune to horrific problems.

* Restate the succession of problems in David’s life
* This passage adds to it the “sin-sickness” of Amnon’s lust for his half-sister
* We tend to doubt the ability of “good” people to do bad things
  + Our shock at news stories proves this fact
* Our vulnerability comes from a lack of understanding of the full depravity of sinful man

1. Ungodly influences aren’t always as far away as you think.

* Amnon isn’t hiding his struggle well- visibly ill and losing weight
* Conspirator and sinful architect is friend, Jonadab
  + Jonadab Is called “crafty, subtle, shrewd, sinfully wise”
  + He is not a godless, foreign pagan
  + He is Amnon’s cousin
* The sinful encouragement was not outside the gate, but inside the camp
* We live in a time when it is extremely difficult to protect our families from potential danger
* We must simply recognize that all threats are not from obvious, far-off sources

1. Left unchecked, sinful actions lead to more sinful actions.

* Amnon determines to act of the sinful plot
* Amnon complicates the sinful attitude by adding to it manipulation of his father and sister
* Then it is further complicated through the act of sexual assault.
* As if that is not enough, he then continues to compound the offense by throwing her out like trash after the event
* His love (actually lust) becomes intense hatred
* Without confrontation, sin does not remedy itself. It will devolve.

1. Scars and signs of struggles are more apparent than we care to admit.

* Tamar is thrown out and locked out following the assault
* There is unfortunately no visible effect on Amnon- other than his disgust for his sister
* Tamar tears her prized robe that symbolizes her purity, value and virtue
* She wails and laments the intense emotional pain
* Amnon didn’t just take her innocence and purity, he took her happiness, hope and future
* The effects were visible to those around
* We might try to hide our family drama, but it is more visible than we care to admit

1. Avoiding confrontation does not mean the avoidance of consequences.

* Aim of sermon is this point- and a massive point of personal failure
* Absalom takes his sister in and cares for her
* However, he resolves not to speak to his brother about this- neither good nor bad
* David is livid. He is burning with anger. But nothing happens.
* And the story remains here for two years.
* When we refuse to address massive problems, there is usually a process that begins
  1. Anger Festers
* Left unchecked, anger doesn’t just go away
* You don’t get over it. It gets over on you.
  1. Aggression Builds
* Eventually, “I’m angry” doesn’t cut it anymore.
* Emotions begin to demand some kind of action.
* Absalom begins to plot the attack on Amnon
  1. Attacks Occur
* Eventually, the aggression reaches a point where the anger is expressed- verbally and/or violently
* In this case, Amnon is murdered
* In our families, murder is not usually the result, but explosive arguments, increased volatility are part of the process
  1. Alienation Follows
* When anger produces that result, eventually alienation follows
* Absalom retreats to his grandfather’s home for three years
* David grieves the loss of his sons
* Unfortunately, this is not the end of the story. There comes a day when Absalom returns. However, it is not long until that return is an impetus for his attempt to overthrow his father’s throne and assume control as king of Israel. David has to flee for his life. And in the ensuing battle, he loses his son. Absalom is killed by David’s commanders despite his orders not to harm Absalom.
* It affected David’s lineage. Absalom was never the same either. We know that he always carried a mark from this occasion. He had multiple sons and a daughter. He chose to name his daughter Tamar- after his sister.
* The hurt that served to push the revolt and attempted coup all goes back to this problem that was left unconfronted.

Unfortunately, the passage does not provide us with a “how to” guide to healthily confront problems within the context of the larger family. David’s family, however, demonstrates the drastic dangers of what can occur when we fail to exercise due diligence.

1. Confront the problem prayerfully.
2. Confront the problem lovingly.
3. Confront the problem directly.
4. Comfort the hurting compassionately.
5. Communicate continuously with honesty.