**Becoming a Woman After God’s Own Heart**

**Life Lessons from David**

**Lesson 12 Prioritizing Your Family**

**Samuel 13:1-15:37, 2 Samuel 18:1-18, 33**

**2 Samuel 13**

 In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

**2**Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

**3**Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. **4**He asked Amnon, “Why do you, the king’s son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won’t you tell me?”

Amnon said to him, “I’m in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom’s sister.”

**5**“Go to bed and pretend to be ill,” Jonadab said. “When your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.’”

**6**So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, “I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand.”

**7**David sent word to Tamar at the palace: “Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.” **8**So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. **9**Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

“Send everyone out of here,” Amnon said. So everyone left him.**10**Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand.” And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. **11**But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, “Come to bed with me, my sister.”

**12**“No, my brother!” she said to him. “Don’t force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don’t do this wicked thing.**13**What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you.” **14**But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

**15**Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, “Get up and get out!”

**16**“No!” she said to him. “Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me.”

But he refused to listen to her. **17**He called his personal servant and said, “Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her.” **18**So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing an ornate[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8336a)] robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. **19**Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the ornate robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

**20**Her brother Absalom said to her, “Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? 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.

**21**When King David heard all this, he was furious. **22**And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

**23**Two years later, when Absalom’s sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king’s sons to come there. **24**Absalom went to the king and said, “Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his attendants please join me?”

**25**“No, my son,” the king replied. “All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go but gave him his blessing.

**26**Then Absalom said, “If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us.”

The king asked him, “Why should he go with you?” **27**But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king’s sons.

**28**Absalom ordered his men, “Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, ‘Strike Amnon down,’ then kill him. Don’t be afraid. Haven’t I given you this order? Be strong and brave.” **29**So Absalom’s men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king’s sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.

**30**While they were on their way, the report came to David: “Absalom has struck down all the king’s sons; not one of them is left.” **31**The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his attendants stood by with their clothes torn.

**32**But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother, said, “My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom’s express intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. **33**My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king’s sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.”

**34**Meanwhile, Absalom had fled.

Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, “I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8352b)]

**35**Jonadab said to the king, “See, the king’s sons have come; it has happened just as your servant said.”

**36**As he finished speaking, the king’s sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly.

**37**Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned many days for his son.

**38**After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. **39**And King David longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon’s death.

**2 Samuel 14**

Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king’s heart longed for Absalom. **2**So Joab sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, “Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don’t use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead. **3**Then go to the king and speak these words to him.” And Joab put the words in her mouth.

**4**When the woman from Tekoa went[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8361c)] to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, “Help me, Your Majesty!”

**5**The king asked her, “What is troubling you?”

She said, “I am a widow; my husband is dead. **6**I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. **7**Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, ‘Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.’ They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth.”

**8**The king said to the woman, “Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf.”

**9**But the woman from Tekoa said to him, “Let my lord the king pardon me and my family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt.”

**10**The king replied, “If anyone says anything to you, bring them to me, and they will not bother you again.”

**11**She said, “Then let the king invoke the Lord his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed.”

“As surely as the Lord lives,” he said, “not one hair of your son’s head will fall to the ground.”

**12**Then the woman said, “Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king.”

“Speak,” he replied.

**13**The woman said, “Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son? **14**Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.

**15**“And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, ‘I will speak to the king; perhaps he will grant his servant’s request.**16**Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from God’s inheritance.’

**17**“And now your servant says, ‘May the word of my lord the king secure my inheritance, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the Lord your God be with you.’”

**18**Then the king said to the woman, “Don’t keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you.”

“Let my lord the king speak,” the woman said.

**19**The king asked, “Isn’t the hand of Joab with you in all this?”

The woman answered, “As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant. **20**Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land.”

**21**The king said to Joab, “Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom.”

**22**Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay him honor, and he blessed the king. Joab said, “Today your servant knows that he has found favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because the king has granted his servant’s request.”

**23**Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Absalom back to Jerusalem. **24**But the king said, “He must go to his own house; he must not see my face.” So Absalom went to his own house and did not see the face of the king.

**25**In all Israel there was not a man so highly praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the top of his head to the sole of his foot there was no blemish in him. **26**Whenever he cut the hair of his head—he used to cut his hair once a year because it became too heavy for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was two hundred shekels[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8383d)] by the royal standard.

**27**Three sons and a daughter were born to Absalom. His daughter’s name was Tamar, and she became a beautiful woman.

**28**Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king’s face. **29**Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a second time, but he refused to come. **30**Then he said to his servants, “Look, Joab’s field is next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire.” So Absalom’s servants set the field on fire.

**31**Then Joab did go to Absalom’s house, and he said to him, “Why have your servants set my field on fire?”

**32**Absalom said to Joab, “Look, I sent word to you and said, ‘Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, “Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!”’ Now then, I want to see the king’s face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death.”

**33**So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom.

**2 Samuel 15**

In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. **2**He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, “What town are you from?” He would answer, “Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel.” **3**Then Absalom would say to him, “Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you.” **4**And Absalom would add, “If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice.”

**5**Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. **6**Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.

**7**At the end of four[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8397e)] years, Absalom said to the king, “Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the Lord. **8**While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: ‘If the Lord takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the Lord in Hebron.[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8398f)]’”

**9**The king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he went to Hebron.

**10**Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, ‘Absalom is king in Hebron.’” **11**Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. **12**While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom’s following kept on increasing.

**13**A messenger came and told David, “The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom.”

**14**Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, “Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword.”

**15**The king’s officials answered him, “Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses.”

**16**The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace. **17**So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at the edge of the city. **18**All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

**19**The king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland. **20**You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your people with you. May the Lord show you kindness and faithfulness.”[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8410g)]

**21**But Ittai replied to the king, “As surely as the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.”

**22**David said to Ittai, “Go ahead, march on.” So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.

**23**The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the wilderness.

**24**Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.

**25**Then the king said to Zadok, “Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the Lord’s eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. **26**But if he says, ‘I am not pleased with you,’ then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him.”

**27**The king also said to Zadok the priest, “Do you understand? Go back to the city with my blessing. Take your son Ahimaaz with you, and also Abiathar’s son Jonathan. You and Abiathar return with your two sons. **28**I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.” **29**So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

**30**But David continued up the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. **31**Now David had been told, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” So David prayed, “Lord, turn Ahithophel’s counsel into foolishness.”

**32**When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. **33**David said to him, “If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. **34**But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘Your Majesty, I will be your servant; I was your father’s servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,’then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel’s advice.**35**Won’t the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king’s palace. **36**Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear.”

**37**So Hushai, David’s confidant, arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

 **2 Samuel 18:1-18, 33**

David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. **2**David sent out his troops, a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab’s brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king told the troops, “I myself will surely march out with you.”

**3**But the men said, “You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won’t care about us. Even if half of us die, they won’t care; but you are worth ten thousand of us.[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+18%3A1-18%2C+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8482a)] It would be better now for you to give us support from the city.”

**4**The king answered, “I will do whatever seems best to you.”

So the king stood beside the gate while all his men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands. **5**The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, “Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake.” And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

**6**David’s army marched out of the city to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. **7**There Israel’s troops were routed by David’s men, and the casualties that day were great—twenty thousand men. **8**The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest swallowed up more men that day than the sword.

**9**Now Absalom happened to meet David’s men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom’s hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.

**10**When one of the men saw what had happened, he told Joab, “I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree.”

**11**Joab said to the man who had told him this, “What! You saw him? Why didn’t you strike him to the ground right there? Then I would have had to give you ten shekels[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+18%3A1-18%2C+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8490b)] of silver and a warrior’s belt.”

**12**But the man replied, “Even if a thousand shekels[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+18%3A1-18%2C+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8491c)] were weighed out into my hands, I would not lay a hand on the king’s son. In our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, ‘Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+18%3A1-18%2C+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8491d)]’ **13**And if I had put my life in jeopardy[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+18%3A1-18%2C+33&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8492e)]—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have kept your distance from me.”

**14**Joab said, “I’m not going to wait like this for you.” So he took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom’s heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree. **15**And ten of Joab’s armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him.

**16**Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab halted them. **17**They took Absalom, threw him into a big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap of rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites fled to their homes.

**18**During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King’s Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, “I have no son to carry on the memory of my name.” He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom’s Monument to this day.

**2 Samuel 18:33**

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!”

When David was 50 years old, he sinned with Bathsheba and had her husband, Uriah, murdered to cover his sin. The prophet Nathan told him “the sword will never depart from your house.”

In 2 Samuel 13-15 we see the beginnings of Nathan’s prophecy being fulfilled.

**21**When King David heard all this, he was furious. **22**And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

1. In 2 Samuel 13:21-22, do you notice a “like father like son” trend? Describe it.

2. Did Amnon truly love Tamar? Why or why not? What was driving his strong desire for her.

3. List some specific things David could have done differently to spare himself and his family some of their troubles.

4. Why do you think David kept quiet and didn’t confront Amnon, despite being furious about what Amnon had done?

**23**Two years later, when Absalom’s sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king’s sons to come there. **24**Absalom went to the king and said, “Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his attendants please join me?”

**25**“No, my son,” the king replied. “All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you.” Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go but gave him his blessing.

**26**Then Absalom said, “If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us.”

The king asked him, “Why should he go with you?” **27**But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king’s sons.

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**30**While they were on their way, the report came to David: “Absalom has struck down all the king’s sons; not one of them is left.” **31**The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his attendants stood by with their clothes torn.

**32**But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David’s brother, said, “My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom’s express intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. **33**My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king’s sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead.”

**34**Meanwhile, Absalom had fled.

Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, “I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill.”[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Samuel+13%3A1-15%3A37%2C+1+Kings+1%3A6%2C+&version=NIV#fen-NIV-8352b)]

**35**Jonadab said to the king, “See, the king’s sons have come; it has happened just as your servant said.”

**36**As he finished speaking, the king’s sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly.

**37**Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned many days for his son.

5. Read 2 Samuel 13: 23-37. Two years later, when Tamar’s brother, Absolom, saw that David was not dealing with Amnon’s sin, what did he do?

6. Read chapter 14. Joab perceived that the king’s heart was troubled because he missed his son, Absolom so he hatched a plot to get David to bring Absolom back to Jerusalem. Briefly jot down the gist of his plot. What was the end result?

7. Read the last verse of chapter 14 and chapter 15. Absolom pushed Joab to set up a meeting with David and it finally took place. What happened in that meeting, and why did Absolom then begin plotting to overthrow his father and seize the throne?

8. When God forgives us, he forgives us completely. Even the memory of our sins is wiped from His mind. Unfortunately, Absolom and David couldn’t forgive each other like that. Even after 5 years, David couldn’t completely forgive Absolom, and Absolom sensed it, so bitterness grew in Absolom’s heart. Put yourself in Absolom’s sandals, and jot down some of the reasons you have decided to overthrow your father and take the throne.

9. Finally Absolom had himself declared king in Hebron and a messenger told David that the hearts of the men of Israel were with Absolom. What did David do?

10. Read about Absolom’s death in chapter 18, and the way David wept and wept when he got the news that his son was dead. There are many more chapters to David’s story but briefly describe what you know about his parenting from these chapters. Did David prioritize his family?

11. Do you see any ways in which David’s words or deeds demonstrated that he was a man after God’s own heart in these chapters?

12. Journal one of these passages SOAP style.