

# David: After God's Heart

Selfish ambition dishonors God and fosters unwarranted fear.



**TRANSFORMATION**  
for Adult LifeGroups

2 SAMUEL 15:10-16,24-30 - DEPOSED

JULY 15, 2018/JULY 18, 2018

## TODAY'S TEXT

**Text:** 2 SAMUEL 15:10-16,24-30 (NIV), *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.*

*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.*

## FIRST THOUGHTS

- ° Today we are going to look at one of the first accounts of "fake news" - when David's son Ammon spread lies about his following and used that false information to try to depose David as King.

## UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT

Even though he had not been punished for the murder of Amnon, Absalom displayed no gratitude toward his father David for this reprieve. Neither did he display any remorse over his murder of Ammon (2 Sam. 14:32). Because of selfish ambition, Absalom began to undermine David in order to seek the throne for himself.

The first indication that Absalom was driven by selfish ambition was in his procurement of a chariot and horses. Extravagances in the ancient world, they are typically associated with nations who warred with Israel and were enemies of the Lord God. Given that the terrain of Jerusalem was not suited for them and that Samuel forecasted that they would someday be used by kings (1 Sam. 8:11), it appears to reveal the self-centered ambition of the prince.

By inserting himself into judicial matters where citizens sought justice, Absalom began to position himself as king in the eyes of the people. With great subtlety, he fermented discontent among those seeking a favorable verdict in their disputes by his winsome and courteous behavior. Being persistent for four years, Absalom was able to mount an insurrection that nearly toppled David's reign.

A key element of Absalom's ruse was his request to go to Hebron—the location where David had been declared king. The rationale for this request was the fulfillment of a supposed vow made by Absalom while he was in exile. His sincerity must be questioned since the law mandated that a vow was to be fulfilled with haste (Deut. 23:21) and it had been four years since the vow was made.

Given that David's reign was an imperfect foreshadowing of the reign of Christ Himself, we can also see in Absalom's conspiracy a picture of the schemes of the enemies of the Lord. Darkness masquerading as light has always been the strategy of the evil one (2 Cor. 11:14). Unfortunately the work of evil sometimes intimidates the people of God. The diversion of their focus from the power of God to the schemes of man brings fearfulness and anxiety.

## EXPLORE THE TEXT

### ENTITLEMENT

#### > Read 2 Samuel 15:10-12

- ° What do these verses indicate Absalom was willing to risk to become king?

- Does being wronged justify immoral actions? Can a sense of having been cheated out of what is “rightfully yours” create a notion that you are entitled to take what is not yours? What examples of an attitude of entitlement from today’s world come to mind? What character trait is the opposite of entitlement?
- How can we stop selfish ambition and self-inflation from growing in us? What questions could help?

## FRIGHT

### > Read 2 Samuel 15:13-16

- Selfish ambition dishonors God and fosters fear in others. How did this happen for David, his subjects, and his servants? Are you surprised King David reacted this way?

### > Read Psalm 131

- What may have led to David’s writing Psalm 131?
- Have you ever felt attacked by those you thought were your loyal friends? How did it feel when some stood up for you and showed their loyalty? How can we do that for others?

## FLIGHT

### > Read 2 Samuel 15:24-30

- How did David manage his own selfish ambition? How can we control our own selfishness?
- How can we deal with the selfishness of others?

## SUMMARIZE AND CHALLENGE

While most of us will never face such an extreme case of disloyalty and betrayal we can learn from the key doctrine of this story - that God is our Sovereign Father. He reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. Therefore, when life seems turned upside down we can trust that God is still on His throne. Trouble comes when man tries to depose God and put himself on that throne. The truth is we have all put ourselves there and have tried to control circumstances to our advantage. At the root of sin is Self which manifests itself in selfishness.

Can you think of a sin that does not have its root in selfishness?

*Personal Challenge:* Who is someone you can call on when you see your selfish ambition needs to be kept in check? We all have areas we struggle with wherever it be at work, at home, or with particular situations or people. How might you help a friend through wrongly-directed ambition or through another kind of opposition?

## UPCOMING LESSONS

- Read 2 Samuel 19:1-15
- Where have you witnessed a relationship that has been restored?
- Do you have a relationship that needs restoration today? Pray for God to heal that circumstance.

Restored – 2 Samuel 19:1-15

Averted – 2 Samuel 20:1-2, 14-21

Resolved – 2 Samuel 21:1-14

## LIFE OF DAVID - BIBLE READING PLAN - Week 8

**Monday, July 16:** 2 Samuel 18, Psalm 42    **Tuesday, July 17:** 2 Samuel 19, Psalm 126    **Wednesday, July 18:** 2 Samuel 20, Psalm 109

**Thursday, July 19:** 2 Samuel 21, Psalm 44    **Friday, July 20:** 2 Samuel 22, Psalm 18

## READ THROUGH THE BIBLE

**16th** - Isaiah 25-28; Hebrews 13 | **17th** - Isaiah 29-31; James 1 | **18th** - Isaiah 32-35; James 2 | **19th**- 2 Kings 17; 2 Chronicles 28; Psalm 46; James 3 | **20th** - 2 Chronicles 29-31; James 4 | **21st** - 2 Kings 18-19; 2 Chronicles 32; James 5 | **22nd** - Isaiah 36-37; Psalm 76; 1 Peter 1