

# Leader guide

*The Sin and the Sins, Part 3*

## *In this lesson:*

### SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 16-19

### CORE PRACTICE

Authenticity

### TAKE HOME TRUTH

While consequences are the undertow of sin that eventually affects both others (12-13) and ourselves (14-15), they never ultimately override God's will (16-19).

For more resources related to this series visit [www.ffcgroups.com/2samuel](http://www.ffcgroups.com/2samuel)

## OVERVIEW OF THIS LESSON

In August 1923, Calvin Coolidge became President of the United States following the sudden death of President Warren G. Harding. During his time as Vice President, Coolidge, a man of few words, had earned the nickname "Silent Cal."

In 1924, Coolidge won the election in his own right and would serve as the president during "The Roaring 20s," a time in which the US Economy boomed.

On June 30, 1924, just at the start of Coolidge's second term, his two teenage sons were playing tennis on the south lawn of the White House. Coolidge's younger son, Calvin, Jr., had a blister develop on one of his toes. Within a couple of days, the toe had become infected, and young Calvin, only 16-years of age, became sick. This was before the discovery of antibiotics, and simple infections could become life-threatening. By July 2, Calvin Jr. was transferred to Walter Reed Army Hospital in critical condition, where he died on July 5 of sepsis, an infection of the blood.

President Coolidge was grief-stricken, and, in many ways, never recovered from the death of his son.

Three years later, during the summer of 1927, the Republican Party was looking forward to the 1928 presidential election. The US Economy was booming, and for the most part, President Coolidge was popular and expected to win re-election.

Vacationing at his "Summer White House" in the Black Hills of South Dakota, President Coolidge called a midday press conference. When the reporters were assembled, Coolidge handed each one a small strip of paper he had cut out himself. On the strip of paper, he had typed the words, "I do not choose to run for president in 1928." After handing each reporter a slip of paper, he simply stated, "There will be nothing more from this office today."

Coolidge rarely talked of the death of his son, and many believed his grieving had ended long ago. Yet, writing in his autobiography in 1929,

Coolidge explained his decision not to run again for the presidency. Referring to the death of his son, Coolidge stated simply, “When he went, the power and the glory of the Presidency went with him.”

## NOTES

Nothing in life prepares you for the death of a child. This week, we see the culmination of David’s Great Sin in the death of his son, Absalom. This becomes David’s Great Sorrow. As you read the remaining chapters of 2 Samuel, you get the sense you are watching a broken man go through the motions of being king. Like President Coolidge, David would probably concur that “When Absalom died, the power and the glory of being king went with him.”

This is a sad, difficult passage of Scripture, but through the darkness of David’s example, we can learn some important lessons about parenting and family relationships.

### MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart—These, O God, You will not despise.”

### CORE PRACTICE

**Authenticity** (John 13:33-34): I know and understand biblical truths and transfer these truths into everyday life. Who I am on the inside and outside is a pure reflection of Christ and His Word.

### INTRODUCTION

*Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People’s responses can often lead into one of the questions in the “Digging Deeper” section. Also, some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.*

**If you had to offer a new Mom or Dad the best piece of parenting advice you’ve ever heard, what would it be?**

**Reflecting back on your childhood, what did your Mom or Dad do that proved to be a great example for you and your siblings?**

**Looking back at your notes from this week’s sermon, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?**

### READ THE TEXT

David’s dysfunctional family goes from bad to worse when civil war breaks out between David and Absalom. While the war itself is short-

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lived, the consequences for David are tragic, resulting in the death of his son, Absalom. Read 2 Samuel 16-19.

NOTES

*Note: this is a long passage of Scripture. Rather than read the text in your group, use the summary under the first question to bring your group up-to-speed on what is happening.*

### **DIGGING DEEPER**

*In this section, feel free to develop your own questions to help guide your group's discussion. Below are some suggestions. Remember, if you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have to time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with Question #6, then go to Question #5 and if you have time come back to Question #4.*

#### **What is happening in 2 Samuel 16-18 between David and Absalom?**

*In short, Civil War. Not "Civil War" like we sometimes describe our relationship with a family member, but an actual war between Absalom and his armies and David and his faithful few.*

*Remember the tension that has been building between David and Absalom over the last few years. Absalom's sister, Tamar, was raped by their half-brother Amnon. For his part, David heard about the rape but did nothing (2 Samuel 13:21). Determined to get revenge for the rape of Tamar, Absalom waited two years and then killed Amnon. Now fearing for his own life, Absalom fled to his grandfather's home in Geshur (Syria) and lived there for three years.*

*After three years, David's general, Joab, negotiated a peace between David and Absalom, and David permitted Absalom to return to Jerusalem. Still, David refused to see Absalom. Another two years passed before Absalom in desperation reached out to Joab and demanded to see his father. Absalom did not feel guilty for bringing justice to Amnon, something David himself should have done. If David still thinks Absalom is guilty, then "let him execute me" Absalom told Joab (14:32).*

*David finally agrees to see Absalom, and the Bible tells us "the king kissed Absalom" (14:33). Keep in mind that in this culture, a kiss was the same as a handshake in our culture. No emotion. In fact, the Bible doesn't record any words between David and Absalom. Just a cold, friendly greeting. While the Bible doesn't implicitly say so, as you will see in the next four chapters, this seals the relationship between David and Absalom.*

*Chapter 15 marks the beginning of the final act between David and Absalom with the words, "After this," the same words that marked the beginning of the first act starting with Chapter 13. Starting in Chapter 15, Absalom sets out to steal his father's throne. His first act is to*

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## NOTES

acquire for himself the 1000 BC version of a presidential motorcade—a chariot with horses and fifty men to run in front of him. Absalom looked every bit the king.

Next, he set out to do what every charismatic leader must do, and that is to win the hearts and minds of the people. The Bible tells us he quickly accomplished this step (15:6).

When the time was ripe, Absalom made his move. Lying to his father in order to cover his movements, Absalom went to Hebron and gathered his armies. Even David's trusted advisor, Ahithopel, joined Absalom. Once assembled, Absalom marched on Jerusalem, and knowing he would be killed if caught (15:14), David fled. David's departure from Jerusalem is one of the saddest scenes in the Bible. David is a broken and defeated man.

Absalom occupies the palace in Jerusalem, and to make clear that he has displaced David from his throne, Absalom moves a bed out onto the roof of the palace and sleeps with his father's 10 concubines for all to see.

The war itself only occupies a couple of verses. In short, the forces of Absalom are ultimately defeated, and in defiance to strict orders to save Absalom, Joab ignores David's order and kills the young man and buries him under a pile of rocks. When David hears of Absalom's death, the full weight of his sin falls upon him, and he openly weeps bitterly for his son.

### **What is the compounding factor in David's grief over his son's death?**

As we have already noted, nothing in life prepares you for the death of a child, but in David's case, his pain was magnified by his shame. David knew without question (because the Lord had told him) that all that happened to his family—the death of his infant son with Bathsheba, the rape of his daughter, Tamar, the death of his son, Amnon, and, ultimately, the rebellion and death of his son, Absalom—was all his fault. He caused this pain to fall upon his family.

David was a success at many things and in many ways, but he failed as a father. The Bible narrator underscores this fact repeatedly throughout the text.

Shame is typically associated with guilt or a public awareness of wrongdoing. We first see the concept of shame in Genesis 2 when Adam and Eve sin, and their eyes are opened and they become aware (ashamed) of their nakedness. Consequently, they hide from the Lord. This is the essence of biblical shame.

Likewise, with David, we see another perfect example of biblical shame: what David did in secret (commit adultery with Uriah's wife), the Lord vowed to expose for all of Israel to see.

*In Bible times, honor and shame played a healthy role in society. An honorable person played by the rules of society and treated others with dignity and respect. A person who violated these rules was to be publicly shamed. As an example, we see the concept of shame mentioned multiple times in Proverbs, which in many ways serves as a simple example of "rules to live by." (See Proverbs 10:5; 12:4; 13:5; 14:35; 17:2; 18:3; 19:26; 25:8; 25:9–10; 28:7; 29:15.)*

## NOTES

### **Is there a positive or negative side to shame?**

*While shame is the natural consequence when sin is exposed, we must also acknowledge that there are two kinds of shame—positive and negative. A form of positive shame is what Harvey Weinstein, Kevin Spacey, and many Hollywood personalities are facing at this time. Their actions have brought shame upon them because their actions are reprehensible. Few of us would argue that the kind of sin these men pursued over many years is indeed shameful. This kind of shame has a positive impact on society. It causes others to consider and reconsider their actions in private. While many, but probably not all, of their actions fell short of breaking the law, this does not mean that these men did not violate the rules of society. Consequently, they deserve the shame that falls upon them.*

*There is another kind of shame, however, that has a negative consequence upon us, and that is misplaced shame. Too often, we find friends and family members who live in shame because of past actions or sins that have been forgiven, but we can't forgive ourselves. Misplaced shame can immobilize us and keep us in bondage.*

*Worst of all, there are those among us who feel great shame for things that are not their fault. Many women (and men) who are victims of past sexual abuse are still suffering from the pain, confusion, and shame that has plagued them for years. If you struggle with this kind of misplaced shame, many times the pathway to freedom is to begin sharing the hurt that has kept you in the darkness of shame...perhaps for much of your life. The power of misplaced shame is often in the secret, and when this is brought out into the open, misplaced shame loses its power over you.*

### **What can we learn about parenthood from the example of David and Absalom?**

*I find it somewhat ironic that throughout the entire scope of the Bible, there really are very few good, positive examples of what we would call godly husbands or fathers. In the case of David and Absalom, what we do learn is the result of David's poor example as a father.*

- **The Sadness of Parenthood.** *It is difficult to read this week's text and not come away feeling a deep sense of sadness for the family tragedy that engulfed David's family.*



## How can we build the foundation of a godly home and family?

## NOTES

*Parenting is tough. In fact, raising children may be one of the most difficult tasks we face in this lifetime. It is easy to come away from a lesson like this with a tinge of guilt hanging over us. No parent is perfect. We all make mistakes. And, truthfully, recognizing your own imperfections may be one of the best parenting tips you can take away from this lesson. Our kids are not perfect, but neither are we. Start by acknowledging this reality before your family. When you make a mistake, confess it to your kids, ask for their apology. Let them see that you are both human and humble. But don't take your imperfection as an excuse to become passive.*

*Secondly, never forget we are raising human beings, not robots. Like us, our kids have a free will and must ultimately respond to God's calling on their life just like any other person. Even the best parents can have an Absalom as a child.*

*One of the godliest kings to rule in David's line was King Hezekiah, yet he had a horrible father. King Ahaz was a man who literally burned his own son as a sacrifice to Canaanite gods (2 Kings 16:3). Still, out of this reprehensible family came King Hezekiah, the complete opposite of his father, Ahaz. The only king worse than Ahaz was King Manasseh, more appropriately known as "Evil King Manasseh." Manasseh was the son of one of Israel's most godly kings, Hezekiah.*

*We can't guarantee that setting a godly example before our children will lead them to become godly adults. Children are free under God to choose their own way. This should not stop us, however, from giving our kids the best home possible to launch from. Here are three foundational building blocks to build your home upon:*

- 1. Reflect Christ as best we can in our ways and even ask our children's forgiveness when we don't.*
- 2. Give them relationship-building time that leads to deeper, meaningful conversation as they grow.*
- 3. Set limits, but love unconditionally. Teach them right and wrong, and punish and forgive and love and hug and hold our children.*

### **CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

*These questions are given to prompt both reflection and learning on a personal level, and should likely be completed individually and apart from your regular group time.*

**Looking back at this week's teaching and study, what's the most important thing to remember?**

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## BECOMING A HOUSE OF PRAYER

*“Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices; Will be accepted on My altar; For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations.” – Isaiah 56:7.*

### Prayer Focus for the Week of November 12

We are in the midst of our 40 Days of Prayer at First Family. Make a commitment to lead your family in a focused time of prayer each day between now and Thanksgiving.

If you are not receiving the daily prayer prompts, you can request to be added to the list by simply sending an email to [info@ffclife.com](mailto:info@ffclife.com) with “Prayer List” in the subject field.

## NEXT STEPS

Questions to consider as you continue to reflect on what you learned this week:

- **Take Action:** Proverbs 20:5 “The purposes of the human heart are deep waters, but those who have insight draw them out.” So it is with your children. Let your prayer this week focus on asking the Lord to reveal to you the purposes of your son or daughter’s heart. Study your children, and draw them into deep conversation. What makes him or her unique? How has God intricately wired them to reflect His glory?
- **Take Courage:** Parenting is a messy business. Hope begins when parents recognize how complex it is to raise a child to become a healthy adult, and how confused all parents really are about how to do it. Most parents know there are no simple answers. Hope grows when parents bring their confusion and questions to the Scriptures and find direction.

Work to memorize this week’s memory verse: Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart-- These, O God, You will not despise.”

Our Core Practice this week is Authenticity (John 13:33-34): I know and understand biblical truths and transfer these truths into everyday life. Who I am on the inside and outside is a pure reflection of Christ and His Word.

Remember to use the daily Bible reading plan as part of your walk with Christ, taking the time to reflect on each passage and what it means for your lives.

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