

DAVID: A MAN OF PASSION AND DESTINY

STUDY EIGHTEEN

Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

If you've taken the grace of God lightly, tripping through the corridors of the kingdom like a little child, choosing sin at will, thinking grace covers it all . . . you've missed it. As a matter of fact, it's quite likely you're facing consequences, but you don't realize that you're harvesting the bitter blossoms of your seeds planted way back then.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

CHOICES have consequences. Good actions usually yield pleasant results. Hard work often provides a sense of accomplishment and success. Fulfilled promises foster loyalty.

Bad choices, however, generally produce thorny consequences. Poor attention to detail results in shoddy workmanship. Overt dishonesty damages trust. When someone sins, a whole new mess of problems entangles not only the sinner but also those close to him or her.

Because everyone yields to temptation's whisper from time to time, no one is free from sin's consequences and impact on others . . . not even the most powerful person in the land.

King David moved through his darkest season like a snake—slithering from one sin to another, avoiding those who sought to catch him and uncover his wickedness. Yet he couldn't dodge their heels forever, and the prophet Nathan eventually caught him, confronted him, and extended forgiveness.

With his sin now exposed, what consequences did David face? How did he react? What can followers of Jesus today learn from his example? This *Searching the Scriptures* study addresses these questions and more!



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1

Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25



PREPARE YOUR HEART

You may have an acute awareness that some of your poorer choices have led to quite painful consequences, and you may feel sin's effects in your life even at this very moment. Before you turn to the Scriptures today, offer this prayer of lament from David.

*O LORD, don't rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your rage.
Have compassion on me, LORD, for I am weak.
Heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
I am sick at heart.
How long, O LORD, until you restore me? (Psalm 6:1–3)*



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Although David thought he had successfully hidden all his evil choices, God saw everything David did, and He sent the prophet Nathan to expose David's sin. When David confessed his wrongdoing, Nathan extended God's mercy: "The LORD has forgiven you" (2 Samuel 12:13).

God washed David's heart clean of his sin, yet he still had to endure the aftereffects. Speaking for God, Nathan said, "Because of what you have done, I will cause your own household to rebel against you. I will give your wives to another man before your very eyes, and he will go to bed with them in public view" (12:11).

The punishment fits the crime. During the following years, David watched this prophecy gradually meet its fulfillment among his own family members. *Second Samuel 12–18* unfolds the proceeding events.



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25



Observation: Eight Consequences of David's Choices

Carefully observe the following passages from *2 Samuel 12–18* to see the natural effects of David's sin on himself, his wives, and his children.¹

The First Consequence—2 Samuel 12:14–23

According to Nathan's prophecy in *2 Samuel 12:14*, what was the first consequence of David's sinful actions? (This prophecy came true in *12:15–18*.) What reason did Nathan give for this consequence?

The Second Consequence—2 Samuel 13:1–15

David's son Amnon loved his half-sister Tamar. But this wasn't affectionate, brotherly love. In fact, it's better to say that Amnon *lusted* after Tamar. So Amnon devised a scheme to get alone with Tamar (*2 Samuel 13:1–10*). Summarize what happened between them in *13:11–15*.



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Third Consequence—2 Samuel 13:16–22

When Absalom, Tamar’s full brother, heard about Amnon’s horrific action, a storm of hatred for his half-brother raged in his heart (*2 Samuel 13:22*). According to *13:21*, how did David react to this growing tempest of domestic discord? What did he do—or *not* do—in response?

The Fourth Consequence—2 Samuel 13:23–29

Absalom waited for two years for David to bring justice to Amnon. When he realized David wouldn’t act, he took matters into his own hands (*2 Samuel 13:23–27*). What did he finally do in *13:28–29*?

The Fifth Consequence—2 Samuel 13:30–39

According to *2 Samuel 13:34, 38–39*, what did Absalom do when David discovered what he had done to Amnon?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Sixth Consequence—2 Samuel 14:1–15:15

Despite the wise counsel around him, David remained indignant against Absalom and refused reconciliation (*2 Samuel 14:1–33*). What did Absalom do in response in *15:1–4*? According to *15:5–6*, how did the Israelites view Absalom after these events? How did David respond to these events in *15:13–15*?

The Seventh Consequence—2 Samuel 16:15–23

According to *2 Samuel 16:21–22*, what else did Absalom do to spite his father at the urging of his turncoat advisor Ahithophel?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The Eighth Consequence—2 Samuel 18:1–33

To stay safe from Absalom, David handed to Joab command of the campaign against Absalom, and he gave his trusted friend one order: treat Absalom gently (2 Samuel 18:1–5). But Joab stumbled into an opportunity he simply couldn't resist. According to 18:9–15, what happened to Absalom, and what did Joab do in response?

In response to these events, “The king was overcome with emotion. He went up to the room over the gateway and burst into tears” (18:33). Even though God forgave David, the king's arms still carried the full burden of the consequences of his choices, and in the process, he lost three children. Was the moment of pleasure worth the lifetime of regret?

Surely, David would say no.

Grace means that God forgives you. It doesn't mean the consequences are automatically removed. If I sin, and in the process of sinning, I break my arm, when I find forgiveness from sin, I still have to deal with a broken arm. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: Finding God's Grace through Consequences

David's children didn't start making wicked choices arbitrarily. Rather, they simply followed their father's example. How do you see David's own sinful tendencies in his children?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

Even though God forgave David’s sin, He didn’t stop the consequences of David’s choices from assaulting him and his family. How does this seemingly contradictory idea help you better understand the complexities of God’s grace and how it touches the lives of His people?

We’ve told ourselves that grace means sin’s consequences will be removed rather than believing that we don’t have to sin. You have the power in the Holy Spirit to say no to sin at every turn in your life. If you choose to say yes, you can be certain you will live in the backwash of the consequences. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: You Reap What You Sow

One of the most common platitudes you hear today is, “You reap what you sow.” This is not simply conventional human wisdom. Rather, it comes from God Himself! The apostle Paul discussed the importance of this truth in [Galatians 6:7–10](#).

In what ways did David sow “to his own flesh”? How did he consequently “reap corruption” for himself and his family ([6:8 NASB](#))? Review Nathan’s prophecy in [2 Samuel 12:7–12](#).

The pain of the harvest eclipses the pleasure of the planting. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

What could David have done differently throughout this sinful season of his life to sow to God rather than to himself (*Galatians 6:8*)? How would David's circumstances have turned out differently as a result?

If only Paul had lived in ancient Israel as one of King David's advisers! Then, David may have made some different choices. Thankfully, followers of Jesus Christ have David's example and Paul's words to guide them as they consider the consequences of their choices today.



Application: Sowing Wise Choices, Reaping Welcome Consequences

David's example teaches a hard lesson. Have you—like David—ever reaped the difficult consequences of sin you previously had sown? What thoughts or feelings do you have as you look back on the decision you made? What can you learn from this experience about yourself, God, sin, or grace?



Trouble at Home

2 Samuel 12:7–25

The best way to guard against the storm of consequences created by sin is to flee as soon as you feel the winds of temptation blowing. What temptations typically feel most alluring to you? What consequences await on the horizon if you were to yield to these temptations?

This difficult season of David's life proved Paul right: you do indeed reap what you sow. Yet because of God's grace, those who believe in Christ have the freedom to resist the urges of the flesh. By the power of the Spirit, you can choose to sow seeds of righteousness and goodness that will reap an eternal harvest of God's blessing. You have hope beyond your sin.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I confess that I have willingly sinned against You, and I accept the consequences of my actions. I also embrace Your grace and know that You have forgiven me of my sins. I ask You to remind me of David's example the next time I feel tempted so that I might run from sin into Your loving embrace. In Jesus' gracious name I pray. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

