

Teaching Plan  
EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Date: July 15, 2018

Lesson Title: "Grieved"

Lesson Passage: 2 Samuel 13:15-20,31-39

ABOUT THIS LESSON

The prophet Nathan's pronouncement of judgment upon the house of David, following David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 12:1-12), eventually became a reality when David's son Amnon violated his half-sister Tamar, and their brother Absalom then avenged Tamar's honor by killing Amnon. As the king and his remaining sons and members of the royal court mourned the death of Amnon, Absalom fled to Geshur, where his maternal grandfather was king. Meanwhile, David became reconciled to his loss of Amnon and longed to see Absalom again.

TEACHING/LEARNING GOALS

(1) Compare Saul's relationship with Jonathan to David's relationship with Absalom. (2) Explain how Amnon, Tamar and Absalom were related to David and to one another.

BEGINNING THE LESSON

*To introduce the lesson, recall something David said in his lament over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan: "In life and in death they were not divided" (2 Sam. 1:23). COMMENT: It is paradoxical that Saul, who was weaker in character and less devoted to God than David, had a closer relationship with his son in life and in death. With all of his weaknesses, Saul had what David never had; he died with the priceless possession of his own son's loyalty secure. David's family, on the other hand, seems to have been perpetually fragmented by suspicion and jealousy. The subject of this lesson, the sad episode involving three of David's children (Amnon, Tamar and Absalom), illustrates the troubled relationships in David's family.*

TEACHING PROCEDURES

*1. Use the following outline to guide your treatment of the lesson. (Note that 2 Sam. 13:21-30 has been added to the Lesson Passage, since these verses are essential to the continuity of the story):*

- I. AMNON VIOLATES HIS HALF-SISTER TAMAR (13:7-19)
- II. ABSALOM KILLS AMNON, THEN FLEES JERUSALEM (13:20-37)
- III. DAVID LONGS FOR ABSALOM, BUT DOES NOTHING (13:38-39)

2. *Summarize the story of Amnon and Tamar (13:7-19)*: (1) David's son, and heir-apparent to the throne, became obsessed with lust for Tamar, his half-sister (13:1-2). Pretending to be sick, he lured her to his quarters and assaulted her (vv. 6-11). NOTE: Amnon's words, "Lie with me," (v. 11) are the same seductive phrase used by Potiphar's wife when she tried to seduce Joseph (Gen. 39:7,12). (2) Tamar protested, because their family kinship made sexual relations between them unthinkable (v. 12). In desperation, she proposed that Amnon ask permission to marry her (13:13). (3) But Amnon raped her (v. 14). His passion then turned to contempt, and he threw her out (vv. 15-19). COMMENT: Had he truly loved Tamar, the honorable thing would have been to marry her (such marriages were permitted at this time); but, instead, he allowed her life to be ruined.

3. *Recount the story of Absalom's plot against Amnon (13:20-37)*: (1) David was angry at Amnon, but did nothing (13:21); and Absalom hated Amnon, but said nothing (13:22). His hatred smoldered for two years (13:23) then erupted in a plot to kill Amnon (13:23-29). He invited the king's sons to a sheep-shearing festival (v. 23), and, there, he had his men kill Amnon (v. 29). (2) Knowing that his crime against his brother could result in the death penalty, Absalom fled to Geshur (v. 37). (3) David had a dual responsibility, as both father and king, to deal with Amnon's sin against Tamar. (The *Septuagint* adds to v. 21, "Yet he did not punish Amnon his son, for he loved him because he was his first-born.") APPLICATION: Is non-punishment always the loving way? David's inaction forced Absalom to take it upon himself to avenge the wrong done to Tamar. Had David acted responsibly as father and king, he might have averted Absalom's crime and Amnon's death.

4. *Deal briefly with the third point, DAVID LONGS FOR ABSALOM, BUT DOES NOTHING (13:38-39)*: (1) Knowing that he could be sentenced to death for planning the assassination of Amnon, Absalom fled to Geshur, where his maternal grandfather, Talmai, was in the royal court. (2) Meanwhile, David was in a dilemma. He could neither condemn nor forgive Absalom. Because of his own moral lapse (his tryst with Bathsheba, and his complicity in the death of her husband, Uriah, 2 Sam. 11:2-15) he was hardly in a position to discipline his son. But to forgive Absalom without punishing him would betray a lack of moral principle and violate the law. So, rather than choose between these two undesirable alternatives, he did nothing.

#### CLOSING THE LESSON

*Closing thoughts*: The Bible characterizes David as a "man after God's own heart" (1 Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22). But his family history was less than ideal. According to the listing in 2 Sam. 3:2-5, David's sons were half brothers, each with a different mother, each devoted to the interests of her own son.