

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

Sept.25

MONDAY

Absalom fled south to Geshur where his mother's side of the family lived, and three years passed by. The ache of Amnon's death gradually subsided, and the day came when David desired to go see his son Absalom in exile.

READ: II Samuel 13:38,39

He brothers fled from Absalom, and Absalom fled from his father. They fled from his malice, and he fled from David's justice. Yet David's justice feels very weak here. He eventually stopped mourning Amnon and started wishing he could be with Absalom. David is guilty for not disciplining his son. He's guilty for allowing him to escape justice. But still, God saw something in his heart that we cannot. Something that made a difference.

TUESDAY

Joab, David's wise and faithful general, sensed that David was no longer planning on carrying out justice for Absalom's crime, but rather, on restoring him. So he employed a woman to pretend to be a widow in mourning and to speak with King David. Joab told her exactly what to say.

READ: II Samuel 14:1-3

Joab shows wisdom here. He recognizes that things will not go well with David until his beloved son returns. And he also recognizes that, should something happen to David, the kingdom would be in disarray, and that Absalom would be in a position to cause trouble, maybe even civil war. Joab shows creativity in dealing with the problem. The bottom line is that he acted on David's behalf when David seemed unable to do a thing for himself. In doing so, he exemplifies loyalty. And he challenges us to look around and get busy! After all, I am my brother's keeper!

WEDNESDAY

The woman recruited by Joab approached David, bowing before him, and asking for his help. She explained that she was a widow with two sons. They fought, and one had killed the other. And now, the relatives were demanding that the other boy die for killing his brother. "But if they take him," she concluded, "I will be left with no one to carry on my husband's line."

READ: II Samuel 14:4-7

We are in the middle of an episode in David's life in which he uses bad judgment, to say the least. But even in that context, don't you love him?! The king of all Israel turns his attention to a poor widow and asks about her apparent problems! And then he listened! (later, he will take action) First, he listened. Many of the people we meet each day would give their right arm for such a listener! It's often the first step in caring, you know. The action comes later. Lord, make me a listener today! Let me hear what's really being said.

THURSDAY

The king sent her home, but as she was leaving, she added, "I am guilty of much but you, O King, are guiltless." King David told her that if anyone gives her a problem regarding her son, she should send that one to see him. She begged him not to forget his words in the days ahead and David promised her that her son would not be harmed.

READ: II Samuel 14:8-11

Again today, forget the story for a moment and think about what David did. He assured the widow that he would personally see to it that her son was safe. He doesn't just talk about taking action somehow, somewhere, someday - he personally assumes responsibility. "I will see to it." Is there any doubt that he will do it? NO! Don't we want people to feel that way about us? We want them to be able to say, "Is there any doubt that he will do what he said? When he says it, he does it. His YES is his personal guarantee."

FRIDAY

When the woman asked permission to speak again, David gave it to her. Then she asked him why he was doing the very thing he condemned others for. She told David that he was guilty of not bringing his banished son back. She reminded him that God does not treat us that way.

READ: II Samuel 14:12-14

Today, let's focus on the widow. This un-named lady has, what some call *gumption*. She faces the King and tells him what's what. And what's what in David's life in that moment was that he treated his son, Absalom, as if he were dead. David had lost one son, and now, the second one was lost to him. David had already condemned this sort of thing and had heard the widow explain that God does not treat us that way. Now she helps David apply the principle to his own life. That's a great ministry to others, isn't it? Helping them see how to apply biblical principles to everyday life.

SATURDAY

The widow who confronted King David explained that it was someone else who put her up to this. And she added that she would be "destroyed" if she did not get David to respond favorably to her. She begged David to discern good and evil, and to do the right thing.

READ: II Samuel 14:15-17

The widow is thinking that her life is on the line and she tries to wiggle her way out of her predicament. But she introduces a great truth: "King David (she probably threw in a few 'live-forevers')," she implored, "discern good and evil, and do the right thing!" Can you imagine how wonderful this very day would be if we could discern good and evil, and then do the good?! Lord, help me to be a discerner of good and evil. And then help me to turn from the evil and do the right! Teach me today. #49