

“The Law of Unintended Consequences”

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Scriptural Foundation: 2 Samuel 13:1-19 – 18

We have been looking at the life of David, and at the last study I asked you to read Chapters 13 through 18 in preparation because we are going to cover much ground and we will not cover most of the details of those chapters. The message comes from every aspect of those chapters. These are difficult chapters to read and I do not like to read them because they are filled with ugliness for the very purpose of helping of us see the ugly consequences which enter into a life, a family, a church, a nation when sin is unleashed. They are unintended consequences, but nonetheless, they are consequences directly tied.

God does not want us to miss that Chapters 13 through 18 follow immediately after Chapters 11 and 12, where David sins with Bathsheba, murders her husband, Uriah, and then is confronted by the Prophet Nathan. He does not want us to miss the connection. We are going to consider the first nineteen verses of Chapter 13. It is a horrible story, but it is a story necessary for our instruction, correction, and help to fear God and to hate sin more.

David has been confronted by Nathan. He has confessed his sin humbly before the Lord and he truly confessed and repented, leaving that sin behind. God forgives him, and yet, these consequences remain.

Amnon and Tamar

¹ Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. ² And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. ³ But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very crafty man. ⁴ And he said to him, “O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?” Amnon said to him, “I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.” ⁵ Jonadab said to him, “Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, ‘Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.’” ⁶ So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, “Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand.”

⁷ Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, “Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him.” ⁸ So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. ⁹ And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, “Send out everyone from me.” So everyone went out from him. ¹⁰ Then Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand.” And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. ¹¹ But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, “Come, lie with me, my sister.” ¹² She answered him, “No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. ¹³ As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.” ¹⁴ But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

¹⁵ Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, “Get up! Go!” ¹⁶ But she said to him, “No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me.” But he would not listen to her. ¹⁷ He called the young man who served him and said, “Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her.” ¹⁸ Now she was wearing a long robe^[c] with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. ¹⁹ And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

This Scripture sets our mind upon the Law of Sin's Unintended Consequences. This law, simply stated, says, "Sin creates grievous consequences to us and to those we love, that we cannot imagine at the time we decide to disobey God." In short, sin is an explosion in our lives that creates chaos. Sin cannot be managed. The sins we commit today send ripples into a future that devastates our lives and the lives of others whom we love in ways that seem unconnected, and yet follow.

We throw a rock into a lake and we do not consider the ripples that flow from that splash. We do not consider how the ripples will affect the shore. In sin's case, the ripples are not gentle and mild with no effect, but they are severe and they are devastating. These ripples become giant tsunamis that destroy everything that stands in their way.

On December 24, 2004, a Sunday, a undersea earthquake occurred one hundred miles off of the coast of Indonesia. As one ocean plate dropped another rose as the two converged upon each other. It created such energy that a massive volume of water, nineteen miles down on the ocean floor, shot to the surface. The energy from this shift created waves on the surface that traveled at speeds up to six hundred miles per hour. As those fast moving waves ascended toward the shore, they reached heights of one hundred feet tall.

A series of tsunamis hit the shore of Indonesia with devastating force, killing over 230,000 people. It is one of the deadliest natural disasters ever recorded in modern history. One of the amazing aspects of this disaster is the action that initiated the catastrophe occurred one hundred miles away from it and nineteen miles deep in the ocean floor. What does an earthquake, nineteen miles under the sea and one hundred miles away from a town, have to do with a hundred foot wave that smashed into that town? Everything!

To the casual observer, as one looks at a hundred foot wave smashing into a coastal town, one might say, "I cannot imagine what an earthquake one hundred miles away would have to do with this." But, the answer is, "Everything!"

David's sin, in 2 Samuel 11, cracks the base plates of the soul so there is a massive shift that sends waves in motion which would smash into his family, his Nation, and into his future. The disaster that would fallow from this sin was not anticipated by David. It was not even considered when David stepped out on the roof of his house and gazed upon a bathing Bathsheba. Little could he imagine his sending for Bathsheba would send heartache and death into those he dearly loved.

David is like us. Very few of us consider our sin's far-reaching effects until it is too late. We cannot stop a tsunami once it is set into motion. The time to stop a tsunami flowing from our sin is before the sin cracks the soul. For David, he could have stopped this devastation that came upon his family. If only, as he went out on his rooftop that evening and he looked down and saw Bathsheba taking a bath, he would have averted his eyes and walked back into his house, Chapters 13 through 19 would not have been written. But, he did not.

Galatians 6 says this,

⁷ Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸ For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.

This is the Law of Sowing and Reaping. It tells us we always reap what we sow. It tells us we always reap more than we sow. If you sow one grain of corn, what do you get? You get a couple ears full of corn. It tells us we always reap in a different season than when we sow. The season, sometimes, is so delayed it almost appears there is no connection. But, to be sure, there is a connection between sowing and reaping.

Why would the Apostle Paul have to write this law for us, "Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap"? It is because it is our nature to be deceived at this very point. We believe God will wink at our open defiance of His Holy Laws. We believe we can escape the consequences of our own sin and that we can manage our sin. We believe we can sow sin and still reap God's blessing, "Surely God forgives. Surely God will bring blessing."

Please note, this law is not sometimes fulfilled, but it is always, always, always fulfilled. It is a spiritual law. The truth of this principle is illustrated so powerfully in this story. In the stories from Chapter 13 through 19, God teaches David the profound truth of Galatians 6:7.

In the context of our previous study of Chapter 12, David sinned. He committed adultery with Bathsheba. He attempted to cover up that sin by having Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, murdered. Now it seems as though life is going to go on as David intended. Twelve months pass and nothing externally happens until Nathan arrives at the palace and he asks David if he could tell him a story. In telling the story, he confronts David with his sin and David, by God's grace, recognizes the depravity of his own heart, the corruption of his own sin, and he humbles himself before the Lord. He truly repents and he confesses with a humble heart. Psalm 51 is a record of his humility and of the fullness of his confession.

God pronounces His forgiveness upon David to such an extent, David would say, in Psalm 32,

¹ Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.

David understands the joy of forgiveness, but the question we must ask, and it is an important one, is: Does the believer who has been fully forgiven by God still experience some of God's righteous consequences ordained for that sin? Does a believer who has been forgiven still suffer the God-ordained consequences of sin?

Immediately, our flesh would like to answer, "NO! That is not true. God forgives and He wipes the slate completely clean. We receive a whole new start. God would not be forgiving if He levied consequences against us for our sin, a sin He has already forgiven."

That may seem right, but the problem is, it contradicts the Bible. The Bible gets in the way of that thinking. The Bible does teach God's forgiveness completely removes the consequences of our condemnation, the consequence of being eternally judged by God, for our sin. That is what forgiveness does; it removes the judicial penalty of our sin from our soul so we can rejoice with the Apostle Paul, in Romans 8,

¹ There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

We will never be condemned because Christ suffered completely for our sins. He was condemned for us as our substitute. That is the Gospel.

On the basis of God's mercy, God listened to David's humble cry, "Forgive me!" and He extended mercy and forgiveness. He restored David to sweet communion so there is nothing between God and David in their joyful fellowship with one another.

God removes David's sins from David as far as the east is from the west. All of that is true, wonderfully true. What mercy God gives to us in the Gospel and in Jesus Christ when He offers us complete, full, thorough forgiveness and deliverance from the penalty of our sin.

David rightly cried out to God with confidence in Psalm 51,

¹ Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

God heard that prayer and He answered it. He washed him thoroughly of his sin. God offers such forgiveness for us, also. Is that not awesome? The blood of Jesus, 1 John 1 tells us, is able to cleanse us of all our sin. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and He is just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness. What a wonder that is! God does forgive completely. He restores completely our communion with Him so we can draw near to Him and know Him and love Him and praise Him and worship Him and find joy in Him and receive grace from Him.

But, the Bible also clearly teaches God's forgiveness does not remove the consequence of severe, temporal trouble that follows from our sin. These consequences are not punishments from God. They are a part of His loving plan to discipline His own. They never stand in the way of our communion and fellowship with God, but they are part of God's plan to sanctify us and make us hate sin and see its horror, its evil, and its wickedness. Temptation likes to color sin in such a way it does not look so evil and wicked to us anymore.

God ordains consequences for us so we learn to love righteousness and hate sin and find glory and joy in Him.

Nathan confronts David twelve months after David sins. If we turn back to 2 Samuel 12, these words appear before David actually repents. He confronts and kills Uriah the Hittite. He has committed adultery with Bathsheba. Nathan says, and this is God speaking to David through Nathan,

¹⁰ “Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.” ¹¹ Thus says the LORD, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house...’ ¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.”

That is God's pronouncement. Then, further we read, in Verse 13, David says, “I have sinned against the Lord.” He repents. Does God removed this pronouncement of sin's consequence, that the sword will never depart from David's house and adversity will be risen up against David from within his own house? Does that consequence then fade away when God forgives David? In Verse 13, Nathan says, “The Lord also has put away your sin. He has forgiven you.” But, does that mean the consequence already pronounced is also removed? No, we will see that as we consider Chapter 13 and following.

Conflict does remain in the house and the sword does stay upon the family of David for the rest of their history. Samuel wants us to see Chapters 13 through 18 naturally flow with consequence from the events of Chapters 11 and 12. God is very careful not to have us miss this connection here. But,

^{13b} And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.” ¹⁴ However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also *who is* born to you shall surely die.” ¹

Because David has caused God's name to be thrown into the mud, among unbelievers, this is the consequence of the Lord's loving discipline upon his life. The principle we learn is: God's forgiveness does not blot all of sin's painful consequences. Indeed, if God's forgiveness did relieve us of sin's painful consequence, we would expect to read this pronouncement Nathan gave to David regarding this sword devouring his family would be rescinded and repealed and that God would bring peace to David's family. But, that pronouncement is not made or withdrawn. Instead, we find events which follow and confirm the consequences which were declared.

We will consider five specific, unintended consequences of a father's sin. I know not all are fathers, but I hope all of this is applicable to us, that we would understand sin always has a radical affect upon our life and upon the lives of others around us. Particularly, this is applied to fathers because this happens to David's sons and daughter in particular. There is a special word God has for fathers, particularly for young fathers as you start out your family. It is so precious and what a precious gift God has given to you.

David lives another twenty years after his sin with Bathsheba. These will be years during which there will be great blessing from the forgiveness offered to David. He will write many of his psalms during those twenty years. David will find great comfort and joy and communion with God over these years. But, these twenty years are also years of tremendous heartache which he would not have experienced had he not cut his soul loose to rebel against God and disobey Him.

How David must have laid awake at night wondering “what might have been”. This story is written so one does not have to wonder what might have been, so one would learn to hate sin, so one would not have to spend the last twenty

¹ New King James Version (NKJV)

years of one's life thinking, "I wonder what might have been if I had made different choices as a young man?" or even as a middle aged man. David is forty-nine when he sins.

The first consequence is: **A father's sin brings suffering to his children.** David sent for Bathsheba in order to commit adultery with her. He believes engaging in illicit pleasure would remain secret between two consenting adults. Perhaps he thought what many think today: What is the harm in that? No one is going to get hurt. We are both consenting adults. Parents are often wrong in thinking their children will be insulated from the pain their sin brings.

Two events immediately occur. First, is the story of this child dying. It is foretold this child would die,

^{15b} And the LORD afflicted the child that Uriah's wife bore to David...

Had it not been for David's sin, this child would not have been born, and he certainly would not have experienced the grief of having a child die. Then we consider our text for this study,

¹ Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her.

That word "now" wants us to connect the two stories. Here is this half-brother, Amnon, who finds Tamar amazingly beautiful. What a tender, sweet daughter Tamar is. Amnon has a cousin, and all of this is a family issue, Jonadab who told Amnon he should not be tormented every day and what Amnon should do. As we consider the details, it is truly appalling because the plan is actually for Amnon to go to David, the father of Tamar and use David as an instrument of which to violate Tamar. Think of that! How much respect did Amnon have for his father?

Here was his plan. He was going to go to his father and say, "Dad, send Tamar to me because I am sick. She can minister to me in my sickness, dad!" and dad does that. All the while Amnon knows he is using David to violate David's precious daughter. Think of that for a moment.

A father's sin brings such suffering upon his children. By the evidence before us, Tamar is a beautiful, young, modest, righteous woman who willingly obeys her dad when her dad sends her to be an instrument of mercy to her half-brother. She appeals,

." ¹² She answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing."

Tamar argues four things with her brother. First, it is disgraceful before the Lord; had he not considered God at all? Second, had he not considered her at all? She would live a life of shame the rest of her life. Third, Amnon would be considered a fool and his name would be written and recorded in the family's history, and throughout time, so people in 2013 would hear his name and understand what a fool he was and what this did to his reputation. Fourth, if he really wants to marry her, he should go to her father, David.

Does God allow children to suffer as a result of their parent's sins? The answer is both "Yes" and "No". Let us, first, consider the "No, God does not punish children for the sins of their fathers." This is not in the sense of the penalty of the Law being placed against them. In Deuteronomy 24, we read,

¹⁶ "Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin."

In other words, God is just and His justice rests upon the basis of an individual's conduct and response to Him. He does not judge one person for another's wrongdoing. Ezekiel 18 says the same thing,

¹⁰ "If he fathers a son who is violent, a shedder of blood, who does any of these things ¹¹ (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, ¹² oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, ¹³ lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? He shall not live. He has done all these abominations; he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.

¹⁴ “Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; he sees, and does not do likewise: ¹⁵ he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife, ¹⁶ does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, ¹⁷ withholds his hand from iniquity, ^[e] takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes; he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live. ¹⁸ As for his father, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother, and did what is not good among his people, behold, he shall die for his iniquity.

¹⁹ “Yet you say, ‘Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?’ When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. ²⁰ The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Interestingly, in Ezekiel’s day, the Nation of Judah was experiencing the Judgment of God and they had been exiled into Babylon. Many were believing the reason why all this was happening to them was because of their fathers and God was punishing them for what their fathers did. But, God comes, in Exodus 18, and says,

²⁰ The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son.

In other words, stop blaming the parents. If this is God’s judgment, it is because of the sins of the sons. Instead of blaming the parents, they should humble themselves before God and acknowledge their sin.

Some, today, wonder whether or not God is judging them for the sins of their fathers. The answer is, “No”. The Word of God is clear on that. Our fellowship with God and our connection to His blessing in our life is not cut off as a result of our parent’s disobedience. But, there is another way of considering this question and it is the way 2 Samuel has us address it: Does God allow children to suffer as a result of their father’s sin? The answer is “Yes!” as well. It is “No” in the sense of judicial penalty, but it is “Yes” children clearly suffer from grievous harm as a result of the sins of their parents. That is true in Scripture, we read about it in the text, but it is also true by anyone’s observation of life.

If we talk with a grade school teacher and ask if they observe the sins of their student’s parents cause the student to suffer in all kinds of ways, the teacher will say, “Of course! I can tell you story after story after story of how I have seen this happen.”

David’s sin brought the pain of death upon his infant son and the pain of rape upon his sweet daughter Tamar. What pains children bear because of their parent’s sin. Little could he imagine this would be the suffering his own children would bear when he was on that rooftop.

The second consequence is: **A father’s sin brings deluding temptation to his children.** Again, what a brazen act Amnon followed. How did he believe he could get away with using David as an instrument in his plan to violate one of David’s own daughters?

We do not know because the story does not tell, but I believe the connection is clear: Dad took something not his own. He violated God’s Law. Why cannot I? He would have no right to approach me and stop me. I believe David’s sin caused Amnon to be deceived in reference to sexual sin in particular.

Parent’s sin open the door to all kinds of temptation for their children. That is no excuse for children to sin. We cannot say, “My parents were this way, so that is why I am this way.” No, each will stand before God to give an account of our individual life, but parents do not escape blame when their sin opens the door to deluding temptation for their children.

Jesus addresses the seriousness to bring temptation into a child's life when He warns, in Matthew 18,

⁵“Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ⁶but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

In other words, whomever, through their sin, brings a deluding temptation into the lives of one of these little ones, what do we say to such a person? It is better for them to get a rope with a big rock tied around it and be thrown into the sea. Fathers and mothers, do not let this happen. Do you understand the gravity of the responsibility God has given to you? Jesus goes on to say,

⁷“Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes!”

Clearly, every sin of the child is rooted in the sin's of the parents. Some sins spring up because of the child's pride and fleshly desire in tandem with Satan and this world. But, I believe this happens more often than we, as parents, like to believe it happens. When our children sin, I believe it is right to humbly seek the Lord and ask, before we go off on the child, “Has any sin of mine opened the door to temptation for my son or daughter?” If the Holy Spirit should reveal something, we must ask, “What do I do, Lord?” Usually it will mean we humble ourselves before them and ask their forgiveness, and in so doing we invite God's grace back into our family.

The principle we learn is: Children are more influenced by our example than by our instruction. I believe we see this, as well, with Solomon when he took seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. I believe he was being influenced by the sin of his father David, both for David's polygamy as well as David's sin with Bathsheba. David's sin was an example even wise Solomon did not escape.

The third consequence is: **A father's sin forfeits his positive spiritual influence with his children.** David lost all spiritual influence with Amnon. He lost all spiritual influence with Absalom. He possesses no spiritual authority with which to speak into their lives. He lost it and he recognizes this.

When Amnon violates Tamar, do you know what David does? He is furious and he does nothing! Why? He recognizes he has lost all spiritual authority to speak into this son's life and he backs away. Again, I believe, God would have him still humble himself first, seek forgiveness, and then speak, because our authority does not come from our own personal righteousness, but it comes from the righteousness of God.

When a father or mother sins, what do they do? They begin to back away from spiritual leadership in the home because they do not feel right about it and they begin to forfeit that which is most precious for a Christian father or mother to possess in relationship to their children – their spiritual authority and spiritual influence.

The principle we learn is: The sin in a father's life paralyzes us from righteous actions in the face of our children's sin. When Absalom sins against Amnon by taking vengeance and killing Amnon, David does not say a thing and he becomes passive. For two years Absalom is outside the palace and he flees. Finally, there is a woman from Tekoa who comes to David and convinces him to bring Absalom home. But, do you know what David does for the next two years? He says, “Absalom can live in his house but he may not come to the palace and may not talk to me.” David is passive and withdrawn. He removes himself from his spiritual influence, and I believe it is all rooted back to his sin.

David fails to connect with his son to help his son to see his actions are sinful against the Lord and corrupting. He does not attempt to lead his son to the repentance he enjoyed and had come to know. He does not help his son to find communion with the Living God. He lets his son blow in the winds of anger and resentment. Ultimately what happens is Absalom leads a coup against David and David has to flee from his own palace because Absalom is successful.

The fourth consequence is: **A father's sin brings conflict to his family.** As we read Chapter 15, we read of Absalom's skill in plotting this coup against David. He is undermining his father's popularity and authority, even while he is living in the palace complex. He is winning the hearts of the masses and when it is time, he jumps. David recognizes Absalom has won the hearts of the people, he must leave, and David flees.

Why did Absalom rebel against his father, David? Why was there such conflict in the home? In 2 Samuel 16, David uses a worthless fellow named Shimei to help us to understand the fundamental reason why. David is leaving his own castle and he is leaving behind ten of his concubines. He has some of his family and some of his warriors with him.

There was a man of the House of Saul when they come to Bahurim named Shimei. He is of the family of Saul, a worthless fellow. He has been mad that David took the place of his relative Saul the Benjamite. He is throwing stones at David, spitting at David, and kicking up dust. As he sees David, and he knows what is happening, he says, mocking,

⁷ And Shimei said as he cursed, “Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! ⁸ The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood.”

So, Abishai, one of the strongmen of David, says, “Let me go and chop that guy’s head off. I am tired of hearing him curse you.” David says,

¹⁰ “...he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David,’ ... ^{11b} Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to.”

Were Shimei’s motivations pure? Not at all! Was Shimei absolutely true in everything he said? Not a all! But, David said God had sent him, who hates and despises him, to give him a message to humble David so he might receive more grace. What a guy! At this point, this is the exact way we need to respond. What a lesson this is when people come against us. Is God sovereign over the people who say all kinds of evil against us? Yes, He is. What is His purpose? That is a question we need to ask. David clearly brought conflict into his family.

The fifth consequence is: **A father’s sin forfeits future family blessing.** Of all families in the history of Israel, this family, the family of the House of David who would be given the Covenant by God we discussed in 2 Samuel 7, to have a king on the throne forever and ever, this family should have known future joy, future peace, and future prosperity.

It would have, and that is the horrible thing about this. But, because of the passing pleasure of sin, this is a family that is now filled with heartache, difficulty, and strife. The sword does not depart from David’s house. What peace David forfeited for his children and for his children’s children on that rooftop, in that evening, during a time when men went out to war.

The lasting joy and blessing of David’s family is stolen from him the day he stole Bathsheba from Uriah. What a cautionary tale this is.

Do you realize your actions today effect the future blessing of your children, your grandchildren, and your great-grandchildren? God wants us to see that so clearly and to have a clear picture of our future, what righteousness brings, what sin brings, and for us to live with eternity in view.

This is not what I would call a “fun message”. It is not one of those to which I can say I am geared up and one I cannot wait to preach. Why would I preach about the law of sin’s unintended consequences? First, it is because God teaches His message and it would be wrong to withhold from you anything God has given for your good. Secondly, we still need to be warned about the eternal consequences of sin. We are so prone to being deceived and we need to know God is not mocked; whatsoever man’s sows that he will also reap.²

Sin hides from us the ugly future sin brings. Sin deceives us into looking at it and saying, “So what? Surely there is no harm. What consequences could possibly come from that?”

This story asks us to stop, be still, and consider the righteousness and holiness of God and the ugliness and deadliness of sin.

² Galatians 6:7

Finally, and much more importantly, because we parents need to bring the Gospel to bear in our families. A healthy family is not built upon the Law of God, it is built upon the Gospel of God. The Law is a part of it, but it is only a part. There is no power in the Law to rescue our family and rescue our soul. The Gospel alone delivers us and our family sin's penalty and from sin's power. There is no power within ourselves to keep us from the sins David succumbed to. It is only the Gospel and that is the reason why we, as believers, are called to breath, to inhale and exhale, the Gospel throughout our lives and to have a heart for the Gospel.

The Gospel simply says God loves us even though we are sinners. He loved us so much He sent us a provision to take care of the greatest problem of our very soul, our sin, and He sent us His own Son. It is the most wonderful provision He could possibly give to us, the living person of Jesus Christ, who lived for us and then who died as a substitute for our sin, to declare victory over sin's power and penalty in our lives so that everyone who believes in Him would not perish and suffer under God's condemnation, but who would have eternal life.

This Gospel is not something to be enjoyed once and then we move on in our Christian life away from the Gospel, but it is something Christians enjoy everyday. This is our center and this is who we are. We always bring ourselves back to the Gospel and that is the place from which we parent. God, through the Gospel, keeps us from sin. God, through the Gospel, helps to respond in humility when we sin.

As you are facing temptations, bring the Gospel to bear upon that temptation. Understand what the Gospel says about that sin, about sin's future, about the power of God to rescue you, about the provision of God in Jesus Christ, and cling to Christ so your future might be glorious. That is the Gospel message.

You may ask, "What if I have already blown it?" The Gospel calls you to humble yourself. We are all sinners. We have all blown it. We must humble ourselves, first, before the Lord and say, "God, deal with me according to my sin. I tremble when I say that, Lord, but I know You are good and loving. Whatever it takes to rid me of this sin, deal with me according to my sin and according to Your grace and mercy.

That means we go to our families and we talk with our children and we live out the Gospel for them. We tell them we are a sinner and share with them how we have sinned, "I want you to understand there are things in my life, as you are growing up, or as you have grown up, I failed to do what God told me to do. I need to ask your forgiveness for that. There are some things I did God told me not to do and I need to ask your forgiveness for that. I want to begin with humility with you." That is where the Gospel takes us and that is the hope.

David, tell me, was it worth it?