

OCTOBER 25TH, 2026

KINGDOM: WHAT A KING BEHOLDS

WHEN THE HOUSE FALLS APART

STUDY GUIDE

Use this on your own or with a group. Read a section, work through the questions, and take your time before moving on. One session, roughly 75–90 minutes. If you're short on time, the starred questions (★) make a good core path.

This is one of the hardest texts in the Bible. It tells of a rape inside a family, and some of us will walk into it carrying our own story or someone else's. Every question here is about the text and about how we act, never a request to tell what happened to you. You're free to pass on any question without explaining why. And no one in a group should share someone else's story.

If this text touches your life, you can reach the church at ***info@emcaz.org****, or Denny Harkins on our staff at* ***dennyh@emcaz.org****. The National Sexual Assault Hotline answers at any hour:* ***800-656-4673****, or* ***hotline.rainn.org****. If you're in danger, call* ***911****. If a child is in danger now, tell someone who can act, today:* ***911****, or Arizona's child abuse hotline,* ***1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)****.*

Before you begin, read 2 Samuel 13:1–14:33. It's seventy-two verses. Chapter 13 and then chapter 14, in two sittings, is easier than one. Read it slowly, and don't hurry to the lesson.

OPENING — TWO WORDS OVER ONE HOUSE

Here's the study in one sentence: **a compromised king can't resolve what he's afraid to face, and restoration without truth is just a cover-up, so we need a King who isn't compromised.**

That sentence holds the whole session. David is a great king. He's also, by this point in the story, a man with a shameful past. Watch what that does to everyone underneath him.

Reflect before you go further: Think of a time a group you belonged to, a team or a company or a club, decided not to talk about something hard. What did the not-talking cost? (You don't need to say what it was.)

MOVEMENT ONE — THE TWO PROMISES (2 SAMUEL 7:14–15;12:10–12)

Two earlier words hang over these chapters. The first is from the covenant God made with David.

> **14 I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. When he commits iniquity, I will discipline him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, 15 but my steadfast love will not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you.**
>
> **2 Samuel 7:14–15 (ESV)**

The second came after Bathsheba and Uriah, 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. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives**

in the sight of this sun. [12] For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.' "

2 Samuel 12:10–12 (ESV)

Put them side by side. *My steadfast love will not depart from him. The sword shall never depart from your house.* In Hebrew it's the same verb, with the same "not."

Depart, turn aside — סוּר — *sûr* — turn aside, depart; Hiphil, remove, take away (BDB).

Both promises stand. That's the tension this whole stretch of David's life lives in. And notice how 7:14 said discipline would come: *with the rod of men.*

Rod — שֵׁבֶט — *šēbeṭ* — rod, staff, club, sceptre; tribe (BDB).

The discipline comes through human hands. That's exactly what chapters 13 and 14 show us. But read carefully, because three different things are going on in this story, and we have to keep them apart.

There's **what sin produces.** David's choices set patterns in his house, and his sons follow them.

There's **what God does to David.** The word in 12:11 is aimed squarely at him: *I will raise up evil against you.*

Evil, calamity — רָעָה — *rāʿâ* — evil, misery, distress, injury; ethical evil (BDB).

And there's **who is guilty.** In chapter 13, that's Amnon. The text never says God chose what happened to Tamar or wanted it. What Amnon does violates the heart and the stated will of God. Tamar is not the rod. She isn't the discipline. She's the one sinned against.

The narrator helps us here by what he leaves out. God isn't named once in chapter 13. The word *sword* never appears in chapters 13 or 14. And nobody says *as the LORD had said.* The story doesn't stop to explain itself. It just shows us a house coming apart.

Questions

1. ★ Two promises, one verb: *will not depart.* How do you hold God's steadfast love and the consequences of sin together without letting either one cancel the other?

2. The narrator never names God in chapter 13 and never uses the word *sword* in chapters 13–14. Why might a writer hold back like that? What's lost when we rush to say "God did this"?

3. ★ Why does it matter, especially to anyone who has been sinned against, that the text keeps "what God does to David" separate from "what Amnon did to Tamar"?

MOVEMENT TWO — THE FRIEND AND THE PLAN (2 SAMUEL 13:1–9)

[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.' "**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:1–5 (ESV)**

Start with Amnon. Verse 2 says, literally, that it was *too hard in Amnon's eyes* to do anything to her. The narrator lets us see Tamar first through Amnon's eyes, and what Amnon sees is a problem he wants solved. We become what we behold, and Amnon has fixed his eyes on what he must not have. The text calls Tamar beautiful, and it also calls Absalom handsome; it never once locates the cause of what follows in her. The problem is in Amnon's eyes.

Then there's Jonadab. The ESV calls him *a very crafty man.* The Hebrew says *a very wise man.*

Wise — חָכָם — *ḥākām* — clever, experienced (HALOT, sense 2); wise, skilful, shrewd, crafty (BDB).

That exact phrase, *very wise*, is used of one person in the whole Hebrew Bible, and it's him. **Wisdom by itself isn't a virtue. It's a skill, and a skill can be pointed anywhere.** Jeremiah has a word for it:

> **22 "For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise'—in doing evil! But how to do good they know not."**
>
> **Jeremiah 4:22 (ESV)**

James calls it a wisdom that is *earthly, unspiritual, demonic* (James 3:15).

Jonadab sees the problem clearly. He sees the people clearly. He sees a path. What he never asks is whether it's a good path, or God's. He's family, too: Tamar's cousin as well as Amnon's. He never lays a hand on her. **He just made the room possible.**

And look at what the plan needs. It needs the king. *When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come …'* It only works if David sends her.

> **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."**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:6–7 (ESV)**

Send — שָׁלַח — *šālaḥ* — Qal, to send, despatch; Piel, to let go, dismiss, send away (HALOT, I שלח).

That verb has run through David's story for chapters. David sent for Bathsheba. David sent Uriah to his death. Now he sends his daughter into Amnon's house. He doesn't know. But **David has become the unwitting sending agent of the worst things that happen to his children** (he'll do it again at 13:27).

Questions

4. ★ Jonadab never touches Tamar. What is he guilty of? Where's the line between giving advice and sharing in what the advice produces?

5. "Wisdom is a skill that can be pointed anywhere." Where do you see real intelligence and insight being used toward something God forbids, in business, in politics, in friendship, in your own life?

6. Think about the people who come to you for advice. Is there anyone you've been helping toward something you know isn't good, because it's what they want to hear?

7. The plan only worked because the king could be used. How can a person with authority, a parent or a boss or a pastor, be turned into the tool of someone else's harm without knowing it? What makes that harder to pull off?

MOVEMENT THREE — THE DOOR (2 SAMUEL 13:10–19)

Amnon has cleared the room. *Send out everyone from me* (13:9). In Hebrew it's the same order Joseph gives in Genesis 45:1, when he empties the room so he can tell his brothers who he is. One brother clears a room to tell the truth. The other clears it to hide a crime.

> **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.**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:11–14 (ESV)**

Listen to Tamar. These are her first words in the story, and every one of them counts. *No, my brother.* She names him and the relationship. *Do not violate me.* She names the act.

Violate — עָנָה — *ʿānâ* — Piel, to do violence to, to rape a woman (HALOT, II ענה, Piel 2a).

Such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. Those words echo Genesis 34:7, from the story of Dinah, where the narrator says Shechem had *done an outrageous thing in Israel … for such a thing must not be done.* Tamar reaches for the language of Israel's own Scriptures to stop him.

Verse 13 is harder. *Speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.* Was that a real option, or a way out of the room? The law elsewhere forbids marriage between half siblings (Leviticus 18:9, 11), and the commentators don't agree on what she meant. It's fair to say what the text shows: she is trying everything she can, including bringing the king in.

Then verse 14. *He would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her.* The narrator uses her own word. No euphemism. **Amnon sinned. Tamar was sinned against.** The guilt sits entirely with him.

After that, his "love" turns to hatred, *greater than the love with which he had loved her* (13:15). Hate shows up four times in one verse. And he orders her out.

> **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."**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:16–17 (ESV)**

Tamar's second speech is hard for us to hear. The law of Deuteronomy 22:28–29 required a man who did this to marry the woman and never divorce her. To modern ears that's no comfort. But in her world, being put out meant carrying the shame alone, with no future anyone would recognize, and she calls that the greater wrong. He doesn't listen a second time. And in Hebrew he doesn't even call her a woman. He says, *this one.*

> **[18] Now she was wearing a long robe 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.**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:18–19 (ESV)**

The robe. Only two people in the Bible wear this garment, Tamar and Joseph. Joseph's brothers ripped his off him and dipped it in goat's blood to cover their crime (Genesis 37:23, 31–32). Tamar tears her own to show one. **Everybody in these two chapters tries to cover. Tamar is the only one who brings anything into the light.**

Questions

8. ★ Read 13:12–13 slowly. What does Tamar name? What does it tell you that the narrator uses her word, not a softer one, for what Amnon did?

9. Amnon clears a room to hide. Joseph clears a room to tell the truth. What would it look like for a family, a small group or a church to become a room where the truth can be told safely?

10. ★ Joseph's brothers used a robe to cover what they did. Tamar used hers to expose what was done to her. Where do you see the instinct to cover in the places you belong? What does it usually protect?

11. Amnon goes from "I love her" to "this one" in a single scene. What does that turn tell you about what he called love?

MOVEMENT FOUR — THE COVER (2 SAMUEL 13:20–22, 30–39)

> **[20] And her brother Absalom said to her, "Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart." So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom's house. [21] When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. [22] But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar.**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:20–22 (ESV)**

Be silent — חָרַשׁ — *ḥārēš* — be silent; Hiphil, exhibit silence (BDB).

Absalom loves his sister, and after one question (*Has Amnon your brother been with you?*) his word to her is *be quiet.* Then *he is your brother.* Then *do not take this to heart.* Three lines, and every one of them protects the family's name.

The silence in this story is the story. Absalom puts it on Tamar. David is *very angry* and does nothing. Absalom goes silent toward Amnon for two years and hates him the whole time. And Amnon himself says nothing at all, no excuse, no apology, no restitution.

Here's something worth noticing about David's anger. Back in 12:5, when Nathan told him the story of the rich man and the lamb:

> **[5] Then David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this deserves to die,**
>
> **2 Samuel 12:5 (ESV)**

In Hebrew, *was greatly kindled* in 12:5 and *was very angry* in 13:21 are the same verb with the same intensifier. At 12:5 the anger produced a verdict on the spot. At 13:21 it produces nothing. This is the king who, as 8:15 puts it, *administered justice and equity to all his people*, and now, in his own house, he acts for no one.

Why? The text doesn't say. Readers have offered several answers: that he was indecisive with his sons, that the law gave him poor options, that he favored his firstborn (the Greek translation and the Dead Sea Scrolls copy of Samuel add exactly that). But the answer the story itself points toward is this: **a compromised king can't resolve what he's afraid to face.** How does a man who took another man's wife and had him killed sit down across from his son and say, *what you did was wrong*?

And that's where it's worth naming one of EMC's four core values: **Humility.** We say it this way: *our sin has broken us from being and doing what God designed; Jesus came to restore us to that divine design and destiny. We value people living as humble apprentices in the school of life led by Christ Jesus.* David at 13:21 is what happens when the one in charge won't be an apprentice to his own confession. His unfaced sin takes his voice.

One caution. David's seat is for those who had the authority to act and didn't: parents, leaders, people who heard and had the power to do something. It isn't a seat for anyone who was hurt, or for anyone who was a child in a house like this one.

Two years later Absalom acts. He gets David to send Amnon to a feast, and then he gives his servants an order:

> **[28] Then Absalom commanded his servants, "Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not fear; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant."**
>
> **2 Samuel 13:28 (ESV)**

Do not fear … Be courageous and be valiant. That's the language of commissioning in Israel's Scriptures, an echo of what God said to Joshua (Joshua 1:9). Absalom uses the vocabulary of faith to commission a murder, much as his father once sent word to Joab, *Do not let this matter displease you … And encourage him* (11:25), after arranging Uriah's death. Like father, like son.

Then Jonadab shows up again. He explains to the shattered king that only Amnon is dead, and that Absalom had planned it *from the day he violated his sister Tamar* (13:32). He knew all along. And his advice to David is *let not my lord the king so take it to heart* (13:33), the same counsel, in a different mouth, that Absalom gave Tamar. Keep it away from the heart.

What's covered doesn't heal. It festers. For two years a brother's hate grows in the dark, and then it kills.

That is the silence other people impose, and it's the silence this text condemns. When a survivor tells, and to whom, is a different matter, and it's theirs to decide: whenever you're ready, and to whoever is safe.

Questions

12. ★ List the silences in 13:20–22 and 13:32–33. Who keeps each one, and what is each one protecting?

13. ★ Compare 12:5 and 13:21. The same anger, the same intensity. Why do you think one produced a verdict and the other produced nothing?

14. ★ This question is for those of us who have held authority over others, as parents, leaders or bosses. Has anything unconfessed in your own life ever made it hard to name a wrong you saw in someone under you? What would it look like to go first: to own your part out loud, so that you could speak to theirs?

15. Absalom borrows the words of faith, *be courageous*, to send men to kill. Where have you seen religious language used to make something wrong sound brave?

16. Jonadab and Absalom both say some version of "don't let it reach your heart." Why is that advice so appealing to the people giving it?

MOVEMENT FIVE — THE FACE (2 SAMUEL 14)

Three years pass. Absalom is in Geshur. And Joab decides to bring him home. He doesn't confront the king. He stages a play.

> **2 And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, "Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead. 3 Go to the king and speak thus to him." So Joab put the words in her mouth.**
>
> **2 Samuel 14:2–3 (ESV)**

Joab put the words in her mouth. The widow, the two sons, the feud in the field: all of it invented. David rules in her favor, swears by the LORD to protect her son, and then she turns it on him.

> **13 And the woman said, "Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again. 14 We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life, and he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast.**
>
> **2 Samuel 14:13–14 (ESV)**

God ... devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast. It's a beautiful line, maybe the most beautiful in the chapter. And it comes from a scripted mouth, in a staged scene, to get a result Joab wanted. That doesn't make it false. It's true that God brings the banished home. But this story doesn't show us how. David brings Absalom back without dealing with anything, and the chapter never asks what God's way of bringing the banished home would actually cost. Hold that question. We'll come back to it.

> **24 And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence.**
>
> **2 Samuel 14:24 (ESV)**

He is not to come into my presence. The Hebrew is *my face.*

Face — פָּנֶה — *pāneh* — face (BDB); in the phrase "see the face of the king," access to the king.

Absalom is home, but he isn't home. He's back in the city but shut out of his father's face. For two more years he lives that way, until he sets Joab's barley field on fire to get attention (14:30). And in a chapter devoted to getting a banished son back, nobody brings up Tamar. Her name shows up once, as the name Absalom gives his daughter (14:27). Some readers hear love in that, a sister's memory kept alive. Others hear something sadder: honoring her name while nothing is ever done for her. The text doesn't decide, and neither should we too quickly. (Centuries later, 1 Chronicles leaves this whole story out, but keeps one line: *Tamar was their sister*, 1 Chronicles 3:9.)

Then the chapter ends:

> **33 Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.**
>
> **2 Samuel 14:33 (ESV)**

Is that reconciliation? The text doesn't say what the kiss meant, and careful readers disagree. Some hear a father's genuine welcome, and compare the father of the prodigal son, who *ran and embraced him and kissed him* (Luke 15:20). Others notice that this father doesn't run: Joab has to go to him first, and then the king sends for his son, and the next time we see a kiss, in 15:5, it's Absalom kissing people at the gate to steal their hearts. My read is that it's a tragic counterfeit, a kiss without confession, truth or justice. Notice what the scene leaves out: no mention of Amnon, no mention of Tamar, no word about what happened. **Restoration without truth is just a cover-up.**

Questions

17. ★ Joab put the words in the woman's mouth, and then she said something true about God (14:14). Can a true thing be used for a crooked purpose? How should we weigh a true word that comes from a manipulative source?

18. ★ "He's home, but he's not home." What's the difference between being brought back and being reconciled? What has to be told before reconciliation is real?

19. All of chapter 14 goes into getting Absalom back, and nobody goes to Tamar. Why does it matter who gets brought home and who gets left out of the conversation?

20. Read 14:33 next to Luke 15:20. Which way do you read the kiss, and why? What would have had to happen first for it to mean what the kiss in Luke means?

MOVEMENT SIX — THE UNCOMPROMISED KING (ISAIAH 53; LUKE 22–23; 1 PETER 2; 1 JOHN 1)

The story needs a King who isn't compromised. David can't help because David has something to hide.

> **22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**
>
> **1 Peter 2:22–24 (ESV)**

He committed no sin. Jesus has nothing of His own to cover, so He can look straight at ours. And notice who Peter is writing to in that passage: servants suffering unjustly (2:18–20). *By his wounds you have been healed* is said first to people who have been wronged.

Centuries before Jesus, Isaiah saw a Servant who would do what nobody in David's house would do.

> **[3] He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. [4] Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.**
>
> **Isaiah 53:3–4 (ESV)**

> **[12] Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and makes intercession for the transgressors.**
>
> **Isaiah 53:12 (ESV)**

Two verbs carry that last verse. He *bore* the sin of many, and He *makes intercession* for the transgressors.

Bear, lift — נָשָׂא — *nāśāʾ* — lift, carry, take; Qal, bear, carry; take away (BDB).

Make intercession — פָּגַע — *pāgaʿ* — Hiphil, cause to entreat, make entreaty, interpose (BDB).

He doesn't cover sin, manage it, or wait two years to avenge it. He takes it on Himself, and then He steps between the guilty and the judgment and pleads. Jesus claimed this chapter on the night He was arrested: *this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: 'And he was numbered with the transgressors.'* (Luke 22:37). And at the cross He does the second verb out loud:

> **[33] And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. [34] And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.**
>
> **Luke 23:33–34 (ESV)**

Read that slowly, and notice three things.

First, look at the footing. In this story Amnon and Tamar are not on equal footing. **Amnon sinned. Tamar was sinned against.** And what Jesus offers is hope for both sides. He intercedes for the transgressors, and He takes the pain and shame of the ones sinned against onto Himself and brings it into the light. Whatever seat you find yourself in today, the guilt of what you've done or the pain of what was done to you, the answer is the same King.

Second, this is where forgiveness comes from. *Father, forgive them* is Jesus' prayer to His Father, prayed over the very people who were killing Him. That prayer is the foundation that makes it possible for us to forgive those who have sinned against us. We don't forgive out of our own strength. We forgive out of His.

And Jesus commands it. *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors* (Matthew 6:12). *As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive* (Colossians 3:13). He tells of the servant forgiven a vast debt who would not release a small one (Matthew 18:21–35). Take the command at its word, then let the text say what it does not mean. Forgiveness is not the kiss of 14:33, a restoration with the truth left out. It is not the silence Absalom put on Tamar. It is not the authority's decision to do nothing, as David did. And it is not a walk back into the room where it happened. The word in Matthew 6 and 18 is *aphiēmi*, to release (BDAG, sense 2; the full entry is below): the one who was wronged lets go of the claim to repay and puts it into God's hands. *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath*

of God (Romans 12:19). That is what Jesus did, as Peter says above: He *continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.*

Third, when Jesus bears sin, He isn't standing with Amnon. He's standing under Amnon's sin, bearing it, carrying it. And He's standing beside Tamar's cry, hearing it. He doesn't pretend it didn't happen. He names it as sin, and then He carries it.

And then there's *they know not what they do.* You might think, wait, Amnon knew exactly what he was doing. Tamar named it. She named him, she named the sin, she even reached for Scripture to stop him. But that's a wooden reading of what Jesus said on the cross. The people at the cross knew exactly what they were doing. They knew they were crucifying a man. What they didn't understand was the fuller picture: who He was, and what was really happening on that hill. Peter says it to the crowd in Jerusalem: *I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers* (Acts 3:17). Paul says it too: *None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory* (1 Corinthians 2:8). And that's true of all of us. Amnon knew exactly what he was doing, and so do we when we sin. We just never see the whole of what our sin does. Those are exactly the people Jesus prays for. It's Isaiah 53:12 in real time: He *makes intercession for the transgressors.*

Remember the Tekoite woman's line, *God … devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast*? Here's the means. It's not a kiss that skips the truth. It's a King who carries the whole truth, so that the banished can come home at His cost.

Last, 1 John 1:9.

> [8] **If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.** [9] **If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
>
> **1 John 1:8–9 (ESV)**

Confess in that verse means to admit, to agree that something is true.

Confess — ὁμολογέω — *homologeō* — to concede that something is factual or true, admit, confess, with sins as object (BDAG, sense 3).

Forgive — ἀφίημι — *aphiēmi* — to release from legal or moral obligation or consequence, cancel, remit, pardon (BDAG, sense 2).

In John's letter the sins being confessed are our own. That's where Humility comes back in. The apprentice's first lesson is to agree with God about what we've done, with no "but." I also apply this verse to the sins done *to* us, bringing their pain and their reality into the light before God. That's an application, and its home in Scripture is the lament psalms, which bring wrongs suffered straight to God (Psalm 55:12–14; Psalm 10), so that a person who was sinned against is never asked to confess what was done to her as if it were her own sin.

> [14] **But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, that you may take it into your hands; to you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.**
>
> **Psalm 10:14 (ESV)**

Questions

21. ★ "We need a King who isn't compromised." Why does it matter that Jesus has nothing of His own to hide? What does that free Him to do that David couldn't?

22. Isaiah 53:12 gives the Servant two jobs: to bear and to intercede. Which do you find yourself needing more right now?

23. ★ Jesus prayed *Father, forgive them* over the people who were killing Him. How does His forgiveness make ours possible? What changes when we forgive out of His strength instead of our own?

24. Read Acts 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 2:8 beside Luke 23:34. What did the people at the cross know, and what didn't they understand? How is that true of us when we sin?

25. ★ For the sins we've done: what keeps you from agreeing with God about them out loud? What would it look like this week to confess without a "but"?

26. Psalm 10 asks God, *Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?* (10:1) and then says, *But you do see* (10:14). If you were to write your own lament, which line would be hardest to say? (You can keep the answer between you and God.)

CLOSING REFLECTION

David never went to Tamar. He never confronted Amnon. He never named what Absalom did. He brought his son home without bringing the truth home. It cost him, and it cost everyone under him.

Jesus is the other kind of King. He faces sin at its worst and takes it into Himself. He hears the cry nobody in David's house would answer. And He can do both of the things this story needed: intercede for the ones who did wrong, and carry the shame and pain of the ones wronged. **He's the only one who can do both.**

So if you're covering something, He already knows, and you can bring it to Him. The light won't kill you; He took on Himself what the light exposes. And if someone told you to keep quiet about what was done to you, He has already heard.

Pray together, or alone: Lord Jesus, You had nothing to hide, so You could look at everything. Show us what we've covered. Give us courage to go first. Hear the ones who were told to be quiet, and make us people who listen. Amen.

Notes

1. **Sources and format.** Scripture is quoted from the ESV. Hebrew definitions follow BDB (Brown, Driver and Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*) and HALOT (Koehler and Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*); Greek definitions follow BDAG (Bauer, Danker, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed.). Commentaries consulted for this unit: A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel*, Word Biblical Commentary 11 (Dallas: Word, 1989); Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, New American Commentary 7 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996); Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, Interpretation (Louisville: John Knox, 1990); David G. Firth, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Apollos Old Testament Commentary 8 (Nottingham: Apollos; Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); David Toshio Tsumura, *The Second Book of Samuel*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019); Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles*, Old Testament Library (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1993); Gary N. Knoppers, *I Chronicles 1–9*, Anchor Bible 12 (New York: Doubleday, 2004).

2. **Movement One.** *Lōʾ-yāsûr* (7:15) and *lōʾ-tāsûr* (12:10) share the verb and the negative (checked in the Hebrew text). At 12:11 the object of the calamity is "against you" (*ʿālêkā*). The divine name does not occur in 2 Sam 13; *ḥereb*, "sword," does not occur in 13–14 (counted in the Hebrew text). The study does not use 12:11b ("I will take your wives") to say that the LORD ordered anything Amnon did. Whether the narrative itself draws the line from 12:10 to ch. 13 is answered differently by the commentators: Bergen, Firth and Tsumura read the events as the working out of 12:10–11 through the free acts of David's family; Firth rejects a reading in which the events are divinely manipulated; Anderson raises the question without answering it.

3. **Movement Two.** At 13:2 the Hebrew is *wayyippālēʾ bĕʿênêʾ amnôn*, "it was too hard in Amnon's eyes." *Yāpâ*, "beautiful," is used of Tamar (13:1), Absalom (14:25, *yāpeh*) and Absalom's daughter (14:27). *ʾîš ḥākām mĕʾōd* (13:3) occurs only here in the Hebrew Bible (checked against the full Hebrew text); Bergen notes the uniqueness, and HALOT files the use under its sense "clever, experienced." Jer 4:22 and Jas 3:15 are cited by Bergen at this verse. *Šālaḥ* with David as subject at 13:7 and 13:27.

4. **Movement Three.** *Hôṣîʾû kol-ʾîš mēʿālay* at 13:9 and Gen 45:1, identical in the Hebrew. Tamar's words at 13:12 allude to the language of Gen 34:7, which is the narrator's description of the brothers' anger, not a commandment; the study calls it an echo. **13:13 is a crux.** Whether the king could have given her to Amnon is disputed: Lev 18:9, 11 and 20:17 forbid such unions; some read her words as a real legal possibility in the period, others as a way out of the room; the text does not settle it. At 13:14 the narrator repeats her verb *ʿānâ*. The four hate-tokens of 13:15 (verb twice, noun twice) were counted in the Hebrew text. The opening of 13:16 (MT *ʾal-ʾôdōt*) is textually difficult and has been called untranslatable; the sense of her argument is clear in every reading. HALOT's Piel of *šālaḥ* includes dismissing a woman from marriage (Deut 21:14; 24:1). At 13:17 the Hebrew is *šilḥû-nāʾ ʾet-zōʾt*, "send this one out"; the ESV supplies "woman." **Correction to a common reading:** *kĕtōnet passîm* occurs only at Gen 37:3, 23, 32 and 2 Sam 13:18, 19. Joseph's robe was stripped and dipped in blood, not torn; the garments torn in Gen 37 are Reuben's (37:29) and Jacob's (37:34). Tamar tears her own (13:19). The study draws only the contrast of covering and exposing. The study does not adopt the minority readings of this chapter that set aside the narrator's "being stronger than she, he violated her."

5. **Movement Four.** *Wayyiḥar … mĕʾōd* at 13:21 and *wayyiḥar-ʾap … mĕʾōd* at 12:5: the same verb with the same intensifier (checked in the Hebrew text); the link is the study's own observation and is not drawn by the commentators consulted. **The plus at 13:21:** the Greek and the Qumran text of Samuel add that David would not grieve Amnon "because he loved him, since he was his firstborn." Anderson treats the addition as original; Tsumura and Firth treat it as a later explanation; the Masoretic text, which the ESV follows, gives no reason. Firth: "We are not told why." The explanations reported in Movement Four come from Brueggemann (compromised by his own sin), Tsumura (indecisive with his sons), Bergen (the law's limited remedies) and Anderson (the plus). EMC's value statement for Humility is quoted from *Our Gospel* (2017 remix) and *Gospel, Values, Vision, Identity*. The language of 13:28 echoes commissioning texts (Deut 31:6–7; Josh 1:9); Brueggemann compares David's instruction to Joab in ch. 11. Absalom's *ʾal-tāšîtî ʾet-libbēk* (13:20, verb *šît*) and Jonadab's *ʾal-yāśēm … ʾel-libbô* (13:33, verb *śûm*) share the idiom with different verbs (checked in the Hebrew text). **13:39 is a crux:** whether David's spirit longed to go out *to* Absalom or his anger *against* Absalom was spent is disputed (the ESV takes the first; Tsumura and Anderson lean toward the second; Firth keeps both open), and nothing in this guide is built on it. The time markers are two years (13:23), three years (13:38) and two years (14:28); the text does not total them.

6. **Movement Five.** "Put the words in her mouth" at 14:3 and 14:19. 14:14 is spoken inside Joab's staged scene and is not taken here as a promise in its own right; its textual form is also debated (the Greek

reads differently at "God will not take away life"). *Pānîm* in "see the king's face" is court language for access to the king (HALOT, on *rāʾâ pānîm*). The name of Absalom's daughter (14:27) is read as a memorial by Tsumura, Bergen and Firth; the reading of it as a further hurt is mine; both are inferences from the text's silence. 1 Chr 3:9 is the one detail Chronicles keeps from 2 Sam 13; Japhet and Knoppers give no reason for the omission of the narrative, and none is supplied here. **The kiss at 14:33 is a crux:** Brueggemann, Bergen and Tsumura read reconciliation; Firth reads it as perhaps only a greeting and notes 15:5; Firth and Brueggemann both bring Luke 15:20 to the verse and reach opposite conclusions. My reading (a counterfeit reconciliation) is marked as mine.

7. **Movement Six.** 1 Pet 2:22 quotes Isa 53:9; 2:24 draws on Isa 53:4–5, 12; the letter addresses household servants who suffer unjustly (2:18–20). *Nāśāʾ* at Isa 53:4, 12; *pāgaʿ* (Hiphil) at 53:12. The shared vocabulary between Isa 53 and 2 Sam 12–14 (the root *str* in *mastēr*, 53:3, and *bassēter*, 12:12; *pānîm*; the root *ḥlh*; *ḥāšab*; *ʿānâ*, in Isaiah in the Pual and Niphal and without the sexual sense; *nāśāʾ*) is the editor's own observation from the concordance; Isaiah 53 does not allude to this story. Luke 22:37 quotes Isa 53:12. **Luke 23:34a, textual note:** the prayer is absent from a significant group of early manuscripts (among them P75 and Codex Vaticanus) and present in others (among them the first hand of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus); the standard critical edition prints it in double brackets as early but probably not original to Luke's first copy. It is read here, as the church has received it, as Scripture. On "they know not what they do," Movement Six follows my reading (the crucifiers knew the act but not its full meaning), which Acts 3:17 and 1 Cor 2:8 state directly; compare the Law's distinction between unintentional sin and sin "with a high hand" (Num 15:22–31). "Centuries before Jesus": Isa 1:1 sets Isaiah son of Amoz in the eighth century BC; many scholars date Isa 40–55 to the sixth century; the study does not give a figure. **1 John 1:9:** in the verse the sins confessed are the confessor's own (compare 1:8, 10). Applying it to sins suffered is an application, and its scriptural home is the lament tradition (Ps 10; 55:12–14). No one is asked here to confess a wrong done to them as their own sin. **The command to forgive:** Matt 6:12 and 18:27, 32 use *aphiēmi* (BDAG, sense 2, as in Movement Six below); Rom 12:19 and 1 Pet 2:23 place the judgment with God. The four exclusions (cover, imposed silence, the authority's inaction, a return to the room) are drawn from chs. 13–14 and from Ledger 2d.4, not from the command texts themselves. Isaiah 61:3 ("a beautiful headdress instead of ashes") uses the same word for "ashes" as 2 Sam 13:19, and Isa 54:1 calls Zion "the desolate one" with the word used of Tamar at 13:20; both are addressed to Zion, and the study draws no conclusion about Tamar's later life, which the text does not narrate.