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A Knockoff Nathan

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Introduction

The events of chapter fourteen don't begin here. They rise out of the long and painful story that has been unfolding ever since David sinned with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. The sword that God promised would not depart from David's house has begun to cut through every part of his family. We have seen Nathan confront the king in chapter 12 with a parable that exposed his guilt and brought him to repentance. We have seen the child die. We have seen the family fracture. We have seen Amnon violate Tamar in chapter 13, while David did nothing. We have seen Absalom take justice into his own hands and kill his brother. Then we have seen him flee from the presence of his father.

By the time we reach chapter 14, the kingdom is unsettled. There is unresolved guilt. There is unresolved punishment. There is unresolved relationship. David is a grieving father who longs for his son. He is also a compromised king who has failed to uphold justice in his own house. His heart is toward Absalom, yet he doesn't act with clarity or righteousness. His grief has hardened into distance. His affection has not produced repentance. His authority has not produced order.

Into all this mess steps Joab. He sees the king's heart leaning toward Absalom, but sees no movement toward true reconciliation. So he arranges a plan. He recruits a woman from Tekoa. He crafts a story. He sends her to the king with a parable that imitates what David once heard from Nathan, but it's not the same kind of prophetic confrontation. What follows is not the straight line of prophetic truth. It is persuasion. It is pressure. It is policy without repentance. It is a version of wisdom that stirs emotion but does not produce conviction. It moves the king but does not deal with the guilt that still lies at the center of the fracture.

The question of this chapter is not simply whether Absalom returns to Jerusalem. The deeper question is what kind of return is being arranged, and at what cost to justice and truth in the kingdom of God.

With all this in mind, I want to read our text together, where Joab creates a counterfeit version of Nathan's ministry. It is a knockoff parable. It is a knockoff confrontation. It is a knockoff attempt at reconciliation, and it's going to lead to a knockoff peace that can't hold.

Sermon Text: 2 Samuel 14

Call: *“The grass withers and the flower fades,”*

Response: *“But the word of the Lord endures forever.”*

1. Imitation and Empathy (v1-11)

1.1 A Contrived Parable (v1-3)

In **verse 1**, we see Joab watching the king. The text says that Joab perceived that the king’s heart went out to Absalom. This phrase is not as straightforward as it might first appear. The Hebrew can be read in more than one way. It may suggest longing for Absalom, or it may suggest continued hostility toward him. So I don’t think we can say from the text that Joab is responding to a softened and reconciled father. What I do think we can say is that he is responding to a conflicted and inactive king. David is thinking about Absalom, but he isn't doing anything about Absalom. So, Joab decides that inactivity must be corrected.

In **verse 2**, we see Joab move from observation into action by sending to Tekoa and bringing a woman the text describes as wise. This is the same kind of practical and calculating wisdom we have already seen at work in David’s court through figures like Jonadab in chapter 13, verse 4, where we are told Jonadab was a very crafty man. It’s clever. It’s strategic. It knows how to achieve results. But it's not governed by the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 9:10 tells us, The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. But what we see here is going to be more cleverness without any true wisdom at all.

Joab gives her instructions. She is to act as a mourner. She is to wear garments of grief. She is to present herself in a carefully controlled way before the king. Everything is arranged. Everything is staged. Nothing here comes as revelation from God, it’s a knockoff of Nathan.

In **verse 3**, we see the most “wise” step. Joab puts the words in her mouth. The entire parable is given to her in advance. Here is where the contrast between Godly wisdom and worldly wisdom becomes most evident. Nathan the prophet came in chapter 12 with a word from the Lord. He confronted David’s sin in order to awaken his conscience before God. But here in chapter 14, this woman is sent in order to move David’s emotions. Davis summarizes it well when he says that Nathan’s parable was designed to rouse the king’s conscience against his feelings, while the woman of Tekoa’s parable is designed to rouse his feelings against his conscience. That distinction is the turning point.

So what we see in these opening verses is Joab, the knockoff Nathan, attempting to produce a moral outcome without a word from God. The warning beneath this is not just about seeking advice from the right people, but about the danger of replacing God's spoken truth with humanly designed solutions that may feel wise but are not accountable to God’s Word.

This is where the warning begins to surface for us. Human wisdom can imitate the form of godly counsel. It can be persuasive. It can be effective. It can even move decisions forward. But when it is separated from the Word of God, it cannot produce true righteousness. It may move the heart, but it cannot cleanse the heart.

Joab is attempting to bring reconciliation without revelation, and the text shows us that this trajectory is already moving in a dangerous direction. Reconciliation does not require new revelation, but it must always be governed by God’s revealed Word. When we separate peace from truth, we may achieve movement between people, but we do not achieve the kind of reconciliation that God defines as right and just.

Now that Joab constructed the setting, we come to the woman’s approach to the king in verses 4 through 11, where the parable moves from planning to persuasion, and David is drawn into a judgment shaped more by empathy than by truth.

1.2 A Empathetic King (v4-11)

In **verse 4**, we see the woman of Tekoa step into the role Joab has prepared for her. She falls before the king and cries out for help. Her posture looks like a plea for justice, but what we are seeing is a carefully shaped performance. She is not bringing a word from God to

confront the king. She is presenting a story designed to move him.

In **verse 5**, the king responds. He asks what troubles her. David is immediately drawn in. He is a sympathetic king, easily moved by a widow's sorrow, so Joab's play begins.

In **verses 6 and 7**, she tells her story. Two sons fought in the field. One killed the other. Now the clan demands the death of the surviving son. The story is crafted to mirror David's own house, and here's the key, these two cases are not parallel. Her case resembles unintended killing, while Absalom's was deliberate murder. This story is designed to stir up emotion rather than clarify justice, and what it does is bypass real moral distinctions that matter.

In **verse 8**, David responds with immediate mercy, telling her to go home and assuring her he will act on her behalf. Yet again, David is willing to protect a stranger while remaining inactive toward his own household. David is not wrong to protect life (to stop clan vengeance). The issue is that he is acting quickly on empathy in a case he has not rightly discerned, while at the same time, having previously failed to act with clarity and justice in his own household. The result from the King is not righteous consistency, but emotional inconsistency.

So, in **verses 9 and 10**, the woman presses further. She removes every obstacle to David's emotionalism, even offering to bear any guilt herself. David then commits fully to her case, promising protection and ordering that no harm come to her son. He is now acting decisively, but he is doing it on the basis of a constructed story rather than a revealed truth.

In **verse 11**, she secures an oath from the king. David swears by the Lord that not one hair of her son will fall to the ground. The irony is sharp. He invokes the name of the living God to protect a fictional case while failing to apply that same moral clarity to his own household.

In chapter 12, Nathan spoke God's Word to awaken David's conscience. Here in chapter 14, this woman speaks Joab's words to awaken David's emotion.

And this is the warning the passage presses upon us. When leadership is guided by emotion rather than governed by God's revealed truth, it may look merciful, but it will not be righteous. It will protect what should be confronted and overlook what should be addressed.

In verses 12 through 17, the story ends, and the confrontation begins, as the woman turns her appeal directly to the king himself.

2. Manipulation and Justice (v12-17)

2.1 Turning Judgment Inward (v12-14)

In **verse 12**, we see the woman shift her approach. Up to this point, she has been telling her story. Now she asks for permission to speak a word to the king. This is the turning point. She is no longer appealing for help. She is preparing to confront David with his own judgment.

In **verse 13**, she delivers the accusation. She asks why David has acted in this way against the people of God. By protecting her fictional son, he has exposed his own inconsistency. He has ruled that a banished son should be spared, yet he has not acted to deal that way with his own banished son. This is the heart of Joab's strategy. The woman is pressing David with a kind of reasoning that appeals to fairness and consistency, but not to the law of God. This is emotional leverage rather than justice.

This is where we might also point out something about these two cases, its not true that they are parallel. Her story resembles unintended killing (manslaughter). Absalom committed deliberate killing (premeditated murder). The comparison sounds compelling, but what is being done is to blur the very distinctions that God's law requires. What feels like wisdom is actually a distortion.

In **verse 14**, she strengthens her argument by reaching for theology. She talks about death as unavoidable, like water spilled on the ground. Then she says that God devises means so that the banished one is not cast away. There is truth in what she says. God is merciful. God does restore the estranged. But she is applying that truth in a way that undermines justice. She is using the mercy of God to press for restoration without addressing guilt.

Exodus 34:6-7 tells us that the Lord reveals himself as 'abounding in steadfast love... but who will by no means clear the guilty'.

This is the error. Taking something true about God and twisting it. God is merciful, but His mercy never opposes His justice. He does not restore by ignoring sin. He restores in a way that upholds righteousness.

But here, mercy is used to weaken justice.

And this is not just David's problem. This is our problem. This is what happens when compromise is called compassion. This is what happens when grace is used to excuse sin instead of confronting it. When reconciliation is pursued without repentance.

So if we look at this text, can we ask where the woman is right? Yes, the woman is right that God restores the banished. But she is wrong about how he restores. God restores through sin being addressed. God restores through justice being satisfied. God restores in a way that upholds His holiness, not bypasses it.

So, what ends up sounding wise to David is actually dangerous. It is truth detached from God's Word. And when truth is used that way, it does not lead to righteousness. It becomes a tool of manipulation.

David is being moved toward a decision that feels compassionate, but it is not governed by the full truth of God, and verses 15 through 17 show us how emotion is deepened, and the king is led even further away from righteous judgment.

2.2 Flattery and Fear (v15-17)

In **verse 15**, the woman shifts her tone once again. She returns to her personal story to soften the force of what she has just said. She doesn't want David to feel the full weight of her accusation, so she wraps it in renewed distress. She speaks of fear. She presents herself as vulnerable. This is all part of the strategy. By pulling David back into her story, she keeps him emotionally engaged and prevents him from stepping back to examine her argument with clarity.

In **verse 16**, she turns up the heat. She tells the king that she fears the one who would destroy both her and her son. The situation is made to feel urgent and severe. The urgency is intentional. Manipulation often works this way. It creates a sense of crisis so that action is taken before careful judgment. David is being pushed to respond, not invited to discern.

In **verse 17**, the final ingredient is added. She flatters the king. She tells him that his word will bring rest, and that he is like an angel of God to discern good and evil. This is not honor, this is strategy. Scripture warns in Proverbs 29:5 that the one who flatters his neighbor spreads a net for his feet. That is exactly what is happening here. David is being praised for discernment at the very moment he is failing to discern.

Flattery clouds judgment. It feeds pride and lowers your guard. It makes a man feel wise while quietly leading him away from wisdom. And here it lands on a king who is already vulnerable. David is no longer acting with the clarity we saw earlier in his reign. He is hesitant. He is reactive. He is easier to influence. Flattery does not create weakness, but it exploits it.

So what we see in these verses is not repentance before the king. It is pressure upon the king. Fear keeps him engaged (Please, David, hurry, they are going to kill my son). Flattery keeps him unguarded (Oh David, you're as wise as the angel of God). Together, they did their work to move him further away from righteous judgment.

This is not the truth at work. This is manipulation. The woman is not calling David to obey the Word of God. She is leading him to follow his feelings. She is not seeking justice. She is seeking a decision, and David didn't see it.

3. Joab's Knockoff Barnabas (v18-23)

3.1 The Scheme Exposed (v18-20)

In **verse 18**, we see David finally stepping back from the woman's story and begins to test what he is hearing. Finally, the fog begins to lift. David might be passive and easily moved by emotion, but he is not without some discernment. He now recognizes that something has been engineered behind the scenes.

In **verse 19**, the woman confirms what David suspects. She acknowledges that Joab is the one who instructed her and shaped her words. The entire scheme is now exposed. What appeared to be spontaneous wisdom is revealed to be carefully constructed manipulation, and for David, Joab's fingerprints on this whole event are unmistakable.

Here, another contrast becomes clear. There is a kind of encouragement that strengthens obedience, and there is a kind that strengthens compromise. Barnabas, in the pattern of Scripture, encourages the people of God toward faithfulness and truth. Joab does the opposite. He urges David toward avoidance rather than obedience. He strengthens the path of least resistance rather than the path of righteousness. He is a counterfeit encourager, not a true one.

In **verse 20**, David receives full clarity. The woman even acknowledges his discernment, comparing him in flattery to an angel of God who can discern good and evil. Yet the irony is sharp. David sees through the scheme. He identifies the source. He recognizes the manipulation. But he does not act upon what he sees. David ends up with insight but can't muster up any obedience.

This is one of the recurring tragedies in David's later reign. He can still see what is true, but he does not consistently act according to what is true. In so many ways, David is a king who understands, but does not always govern according to understanding. He is a man who sees manipulation, yet allows himself to be carried along by it.

And that becomes a warning for us. David's discernment without obedience is not wisdom. David's insight without action is not faithfulness. It is possible to recognize truth and still fail to submit to it. James 1:22 talks about this exact condition and calls it self-deception, 'Be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves'.

So, in the end, Joab's scheme is exposed, but David remains passive, and that hesitation to take the right action prepares the way for what follows.

3.2 The King's Concession (v21-23)

In **verse 21**, we see David finally speak, and he tells Joab to bring back the young man Absalom. This is the moment of concession. David grants restoration externally, but he does not address guilt. He allows Absalom to return to the land, but he does not require repentance. He opens the door to Jerusalem, but he does not open the door to reconciliation. This is political reconciliation, not covenantal reconciliation. It is a decision shaped by pressure, not obedience. It is peace without righteousness.

In **verse 22**, Joab falls on his face and blesses the king. He praises David for granting his request, but notice what is being celebrated. It is not repentance. It is not justice. It is not restored fellowship with God. It is simply a successful outcome. Joab seeks Absalom's return, but not his restoration. He wants the appearance of peace, not the reality of peace.

This is peacemaking without truth, and it is the opposite of biblical reconciliation. True reconciliation requires repentance before God. It requires guilt to be addressed, not ignored. It requires justice to be honored, not bypassed. What we see here is not peacekeeping but

conflict postponement. It's like wrapping an infected wound in fresh white bandages. From the outside, it looks clean and improved, but underneath, the infection is still spreading. It is the kind of peace Scripture warns about when it speaks of wounds being healed lightly.

In **verse 23**, Joab goes and brings Absalom back to Jerusalem. The action is simple, but the reality is not. Absalom is back in the land, but he is not restored to fellowship. He is near the king, but he is not reconciled to the king. He is present in the kingdom, but still alienated within it. The freshly wrapped wound remains unhealed, and nothing in the text suggests repentance has taken place.

So, David brings Absalom home, but he does not shepherd his soul. He restores his location, but not his heart. And the consequences of this failure are already moving beneath the surface of the bandages.

4. David's Mitigation (v24-32)

4.1 A Halfway Homecoming (v24)

In **verse 24**, we see the tragic incompleteness of David's decision. Absalom is allowed to return to Jerusalem, but he is not allowed to see the king's face. David grants proximity, but he withholds fellowship. He opens the gate, but he closes his presence. This is not reconciliation. It is mitigation. It is an attempt to manage tension without dealing with the sin that created it.

Absalom is brought back, but he is not restored. There is no justice. There is no repentance. There is no clarity. The infection remains exactly where it was. The only thing that has changed is geography. This is the kind of half measure that feels safer than obedience, but it is always far more dangerous. It is like finding a snake in your well house and deciding to close the door instead of removing it. The danger has not really been dealt with. It has only been contained for the moment.

Dale Ralph Davis observes that David appears decisive here, yet he is actually caving in. He is reacting rather than ruling. He grants a return without requiring repentance. He allows

Absalom to come home without calling him to account. This is not shepherding, it's avoidance. It is leadership that hopes distance will solve what only truth can heal.

This is where the warning becomes sharp. What he refuses to kill now, will later try to kill him. Absalom's rebellion does not appear suddenly. It grows in the soil of unresolved guilt and unaddressed sin. A halfway homecoming becomes the garden bed of full scale revolt.

Awakening Church, true repentance involves turning from sin unto God. That is the path of restoration. That is the path of reconciliation. That is the path of peace. But David offers Absalom a return without repentance. He offers him a home without holiness.

David, just because he is the king, is not free to restore apart from God's revealed will. The crown does not place a man above God's law. It places him under greater accountability. A king in Israel is bound to the law of God. He cannot redefine justice. He cannot ignore guilt. He cannot manufacture peace by bypassing righteousness.

This is leadership that avoids the hard work of dealing with sin, and it will always bear bitter fruit. Absalom's halfway homecoming is not "one small step" on the path toward healing. It is the first step toward revolt.

4.2 Absalom's Beauty and Bitterness (v25-32)

In **verses 25-27**, the text shifts to describe Absalom's outward appearance. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. He is physically flawless. He is the kind of man Israel would have chosen as king if they were led by sight rather than by the Word of God. He is impressive, he is attractive, he is everything Saul was on the outside.

But this is the old warning of Samuel repeating itself. Man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. Scripture is not admiring Absalom here. It is exposing the danger of evaluating leadership by what is visible rather than by what is faithful.

In **verse 26**, we are told of his hair, thick and heavy, so much so that it was weighed when cut each year. The detail is striking because it shows where the attention of people tends to go. They are drawn to what is visible. They admire what is impressive. And if Absalom's hair can capture attention like this, it shows us how easily discernment can be replaced by admiration.

The point is not hair, I promise you hair is not a good indicator of faithfulness. The point is the danger of charisma without character. True beauty, when we biblically define it, is not outward impressiveness but inward holiness. What is truly beautiful is what reflects the character of God.

In **verses 27-28**, we see the contrast deepen. Absalom has children. He has a household. He appears stable and established. But he lives in Jerusalem for two years without seeing the king's face. He is near David, but not reconciled to David. He is in the land, but not in fellowship. So, even though we have all the trappings of normalcy, we are about to see what unresolved sin produces. It does not remain neutral. It does not remain frozen. Sin grows. Sin hardens. Sin festers. Galatians 5:9 tells us that 'A little leaven leavens the whole lump'. The longer it is left unaddressed, the more it distorts everything around it.

In **verse 29**, Absalom calls for Joab, but Joab will not come. The man who engineered his return now distances himself from him. He only ever seemed to want movement, not restoration. He wanted an outcome, not true repentance. And now the relationship built on manipulation begins to collapse under its own weight.

In **verse 30**, Absalom, the perfect, with all his hair, escalates the situation. He burns Joab's field. This is where the text shows us what unrepentant sin becomes when it is not confronted. It does not remain contained. It becomes disruptive. It becomes destructive. So Absalom uses destruction to engineer a meeting. He forces attention through a field set on fire. This is not the fruit of repentance. Instead, this is the fruit of bitterness left unchecked.

In **verses 31-32**, Joab finally comes, and Absalom presses his demand. Why have I been brought back if I cannot see the king? If I am to remain in Jerusalem, let me see his face. What he demands is full restoration without repentance. He wants the privileges of sonship without the posture of humility.

This is the tragedy of the passage. He has been returned, but not restored. And now he demands that the relationship be completed without the very thing God requires for reconciliation.

This entire section is a warning. Outward beauty can hide inward corruption. Charisma can mask rebellion. And when sin is not confronted, it does not stay still. It escalates. It burns relationships. It burns homes. It burns churches. It burns anything it touches.

The text tells us that Absalom is impressive to look at, but Awakening, we need to see that he is bitter at heart. And David's kingdom is quickly moving toward the moment when the inward reality will finally break through the outward appearance.

5. The Crux Of The Matter (v33)

5.1 Restoration Without Repentance

In **verse 33**, we arrive at the climax of the chapter. Absalom is brought before the king. He bows himself before David, and David kisses him. On the surface, it looks like reconciliation, it looks like peace, it looks like the relationship has been restored.

But look more closely.

There is no confession.

There is no repentance.

There is no justice.

There is no atonement.

And yet the king kissed Absalom.

Right here, the question presses in on us...

Aren't we supposed to always forgive? Every time, without fail? Isn't that what David is trying to do? Or are we supposed to hold forgiveness back until we see real repentance?

We have to answer that carefully.

Because Scripture does command us to forgive, it commands us to be tenderhearted. It commands us to put away bitterness.

So is David doing the right thing?

No.

And if we get this wrong, we will either lower God's standard and excuse sin, or we will raise our own standard and withhold forgiveness. That is exactly what we see all around us. We either make peace with sin, or we make war on people.

But God does neither.

Because God's forgiveness is never detached from justice. God does not declare peace while guilt remains. He does not reconcile sinners by ignoring sin. He reconciles sinners by judging sin in Christ, and that forgiveness is received through repentance and faith.

But we are not God.

And that distinction matters.

Because when Scripture commands us to forgive, it is not calling us to sit in God's place as judge. It is calling us to live as those who have been forgiven.

It is commanding a heart that releases vengeance.

A heart that refuses bitterness.

A heart that stands ready to forgive.

But it is not commanding us to declare reconciliation where there is no repentance. It is not commanding us to pronounce peace where truth has not been dealt with.

And that is exactly where David goes wrong.

He is not too forgiving. He is overreaching.

He steps into the role of judge and declares peace without righteousness, reconciliation without truth, restoration without repentance.

And that is something God never does.

So this is not a model of forgiveness to imitate.

It is a warning of forgiveness distorted.

That is the tragedy of this chapter.

Scripture is clear that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. David kisses without sacrifice. God never forgives without blood.

Hebrews 9:22 tells us that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins.

There is no blood in this chapter. No atonement. No dealing with guilt. And yet there is a declaration of peace. This is not biblical reconciliation. This is the appearance of reconciliation without its substance. It is peace that has not passed through truth. It is forgiveness that has not passed through justice. It is restoration that has not passed through repentance.

And all throughout this chapter, we have seen the same pattern...

Imitation without revelation - we saw this in Joab and the woman of Tekoa.

Mercy without justice - we saw this in David's response to the woman's case.

Reconciliation without repentance - we saw this in Absalom's return.

Peace without truth - we saw this in the entire chapter, doing everything to reduce political tension.

Forgiveness without satisfaction - we saw this most clearly at the end. David kisses Absalom.

This is why it can't hold.

We talked this week about Ephesians 4 and the unity of the church and how we are to strive for it. But what we see here is the opposite. Unity is pursued by avoiding truth instead of being established by it.

"I'll tell you what, if you don't mention Tamar, I won't mention Amnon." This is the Thanksgiving dinner time peace. Get everyone together, and NOBODY talks about politics or religion, and maybe we can get through this turkey...

This is the crux of the matter. This is the heart of the tragedy. It's the kind of peace Scripture warns about, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. Any peace that bypasses truth will collapse. Any reconciliation that ignores repentance is not real.

So what does God do?

Where do we find reconciliation that is not imitation, mercy that does not ignore justice, and peace that is actually real?

6. Application And Call To Christ

This entire scene cries out for a greater King than David.

Because God never reconciles sinners the way David tries to reconcile Absalom. God does not declare peace while guilt remains. He does not restore by overlooking sin. He reconciles sinners through a Mediator, by the satisfaction of his justice in the death of Christ.

God never offers peace apart from the blood of his Son. In his world, there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood, and that forgiveness is applied to sinners through repentance and faith.

In chapter fourteen, we were overloaded with all kinds of mediators. There was sin to be dealt with, and sin requires a mediator. In a human and broken sense, this chapter was full of them.

David mediates sentimentally.

Joab mediates manipulatively.

The woman mediates deceitfully.

But only Christ mediates righteously.

1 Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,”

Where David offers proximity without purity, Christ offers reconciliation through his own blood.

Where David brings a rebel near without addressing his guilt, Christ brings sinners near by bearing their guilt.

Where David produces a fragile knockoff peace, Christ produces a finished peace, purchased, secured, and sealed.

Where David cannot produce repentance, Christ grants repentance and gives a new heart.

Every failed mediator in this chapter, Joab, the woman, and even David himself, points us to the One Mediator who never fails, Jesus Christ the righteous.

He does not reconcile by overlooking sin.

He does not grant peace by bypassing righteousness.

He brings peace by dealing with sin.

Romans 3:26 “It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

He restores sinners in a way that upholds his holiness, satisfies his justice, and magnifies his mercy all at once.

Awakening Church, David’s kiss could not save Absalom. But the cross of Christ can save YOU.

1 Peter 3:18 “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,”

7. Questions for Reflection and Discipleship

Please be encouraged to use these questions for reflection throughout the week and Awakening discipleship group discussions.

1. The chapter showed how David pursued peace in his household while avoiding truth and justice. Where in your own life are you tempted to pursue “peace” by avoiding hard conversations, avoiding repentance, or ignoring sin rather than dealing with it biblically? What would obedience look like this week in those areas?
2. Chapter 14 exposed the danger of emotional decision making shaped by manipulation rather than the Word of God. In what areas are you most easily moved by emotion, empathy, or pressure rather than by Scripture? How can you mature in letting God’s Word govern your responses more than your feelings?
3. David eventually recognized manipulation in the story, but still did not act in full obedience to what he knew was right. In what ways do you struggle with recognizing truth but failing to act on it? What is the danger of discernment without obedience in your walk with Christ?
4. Absalom experienced proximity to the king without reconciliation to the king. Are there areas in your spiritual life where you are close to religious things (church, language, knowledge) but lacking real repentance and fellowship with God? What would true restoration look like?
5. This chapter warned that unaddressed sin does not remain static but grows, hardens, and eventually bears fruit. Is there any sin in your life that you are currently managing rather than mortifying? What practical steps of repentance, accountability, or confession do you need to take this week?
6. Chapter 14 ultimately points us to Christ, the only true mediator who deals with sin fully and righteously. How does seeing Christ as the only faithful mediator reshape your understanding of forgiveness, reconciliation, and peace with God? How does it give you confidence when you feel the weight of your own sin?
7. How should the reality of true reconciliation in Christ shape the way you pursue reconciliation with others in your family, church, or relationships? Where do you need to

move toward truth, repentance, and restoration rather than avoidance?

Questions for small children during family devotion:

Please be encouraged to use these questions in family devotion throughout the week, especially for young minds learning about Christ.

1. Who was sent to help David think about his faraway son Absalom?

Parent guided answer: Joab sent a woman with a story to try to influence the king.

2. Did David always make the right decisions when he listened to the story?

Parent guided answer: No. He was often led by his feelings instead of God's Word.

3. What was missing when David brought Absalom back home?

Parent guided answer: There was no real repentance or true reconciliation.

4. Why is it dangerous to only look at how someone looks on the outside?

Parent guided answer: Because God looks at the heart, not just outward appearance.

5. Who is the only perfect Mediator who brings us to God?

Parent guided answer: Jesus Christ, because he died for our sins and brings us to God.