

# A Question for the Parent of a Rebel

**Text:** 2 Samuel 18-19

**Date:** Wednesday, November 11, 2009, 7pm

**Series:** Life of David

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**Theme:** Open your Bibles to **2 Samuel 18**. We are going to talk tonight about "A Question for the Parent of a Rebel". This is a message for parents and for all those who would ever teach the Gospel children.

- I. First we come to the **question** of every born again parent's heart. It is a question we all ought to ask of every child that is being brought up in our home and in this church.

We know the story of 2 Samuel 18. It is one of the most heart-wrenching in the life of David. Here we see David's son Absalom being defeated in battle by David's army. We see him being caught, not by David's army, but God's hand providentially catching him by his hair (or head) in a tree. As he hangs there helpless and alone, Joab and his soldiers put Absalom to death. David has no idea what has happened. And so as Cushai the messenger approaches, he asks the question that is on every parent's heart.

David asks in **2 Samuel 18:32**, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

There are many parents today who are so concerned about the physical well-being and earthly success of their children, that they have lost site of what it means to be "**safe**".

At no time in Absalom's life was he safe, because he was not in Christ. He always lived with himself on the throne of his heart. It really should be no surprise that Absalom would seek to kill his father so that he could steal his throne.

Until your child is safe in Jesus Christ, they are not safe at all. We are all a breath away from eternity. My hope tonight is that you will get an unbearable burden for your children if they are not saved.

David asked in **2 Samuel 18:32**, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" I want to ask, is your child safe? Is the young man or young lady in your home safe?

- A. Why would David ask such a question? Why should he be so concerned about him? Absalom was seeking his father's death while David was seeking to spare his son's life. God has placed a natural affection in David's heart. It is even a picture of God's love. God says in **Ezekiel 33:11**, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live". It is right for a parent to seek the salvation of their child especially in the midst of their rebellion.

- B. Sadly, we often wait to late, and too long to ask this question about our children. David was asking this question when his son was already dead. "It is too late to ask questions about our children when they are dead."<sup>1</sup>
1. Are you allowing your children to hang out with friends of the devil? It is hypocrisy to attend this church and act as if you love Christ if you do not forbid your children from going where Christ would forbid them. Their friends, if they are not godly, will introduce them to cursing and fornication and drunkenness. At the very least, they will be exposed to a vanity of life that has no godly purpose but to please themselves!
  2. You say, well, it's too late. I've already allowed them. Stop them now! If they've run into the burning building and come out with smoke on them, you don't know if next time that building will collapse on them. I fear that some of the children here will fornicate and have illegitimate children unless you train them in godliness right now.
- C. I want to ask you are your children safe? How can you know?
1. Well, first, your child is not safe, if he like Absalom is **in rebellion to his parents**. A born again child, though not a perfect child, will want to love father and mother. For the Scripture says, "If a man love not his brother [or his father or mother] whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). If a child does not love his parents, then he is not safe.
  2. Is your child safe? He or she is not safe if they hang out the with **bad friends** of Absalom. Absalom hung ought with traitors because he himself was a traitor. Sadly, in our culture, the young people do more of the rearing in our families than the parents do. They have powerful tools like the TV and movies and music. Your child will not remain uncorrupted if he or she hangs out with wrong friends. Is your child safe?
  3. Your child is not safe if he or she has the **vanity** of Absalom. We read in **2 Samuel 14:25**, "But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty: from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him". We find that Absalom was obsessed with his own appearance. Those who love the world and do not have the love of the Father in them. The pride of life is often seen in someone trying to draw attention to themselves by trying to keep up with all the latest fashions, or dressing immodestly like the world.

The Bible tells us to dress plain enough so as to not draw attention to ourselves.

**1 Timothy 2:9-10**, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; 10 But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Peter says concerning women's "adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of

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<sup>1</sup> Spurgeon. "An Anxious Enquiry for a Beloved Son".

apparel; 4 But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:3-4). The focus is on your heart and spirit, not on your body. Is your child safe? Not if their focus is not the outward appearance.

4. Neither is your child safe if there are those perishing around him. Absalom was going forward in the battle and he saw most of his men dying in the fight. When you see your child around those who are perishing in their sin—who have no problem living their life without Christ's comfort, then your child is not safe.
5. Your child is only safe when they have truly come to know Christ and are born from above with the Spirit of God leading their thoughts and their life. Then your child is absolutely safe. You know that your child is safe and saved when:
  - They love the Gospel
  - They love to hear the Word preached
  - They love to read the Word
  - He doesn't care about trivial things, but is compelled to tell everyone of Christ and His coming to renew the earth
  - He doesn't care so much about his clothes, but more about his heart. He wants to put on the Lord Jesus Christ.
  - His recreation is not worldly entertainment, but the food and drink and joy of the Word of God and Christ's presence.

II. Second, we come to the **cry** of every born again parent's heart if they have a lost child.

Spurgeon said, "it is very hard for a young man to go down to hell, [jumping] over a mother's prayers. It takes a great deal of energy to damn yourself when a father and a mother are pleading for your salvation".

We come to an event that no parent ever wants to ever face: the death of a child that was unprepared for eternity.

The text is **2 Samuel 18:33**, "And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

A. A parent is miserable thinking that his child's soul is lost and damned forever. David knew that his son was lost. That's why he said, "Would God I had died for thee". In David's mind it would have been better for him to die hoping his son would still turn to God. The greatest horror for a parent would be for their child to die and go to hell.

So now you see why David's tears are so bitter. He was a man after God's own heart, but he did not raise his children right. Take heed to this. Don't you want to see your child in glory with Christ?

Do all that you can. Pray on their behalf with Spirit empowered prayers. Show them a life of love for Christ and consistent joy in Him.

- B. We all need to ***prepare our children for death***. The sad thing is, most parents are more concerned about preparing their children for life rather than death.
- C. Understand that if your child dies without Christ, you are not only separated, but **separated forever!** When David's son with Bathsheba died, he comforted himself and said, "he shall not come to me but I shall go to him". There was hope. But David knew Absalom died in his sins! There was no hope for him, and so we hear his bitter weeping!

**Application:** The only remedy is that you will pray for your children daily, and live before them the love of Jesus, and keep their feet from the way of transgressors. Sadly most parents are encouraging their children to be in the way of sinners!

- III. Finally, I want to give both young people and parents here a **challenge** so that your life will count for eternity. I want to challenge you to build the walls of safety. The Lord is a high tower. He is able to protect your children. Sadly, many homes do not have this protection. How can we do it?

- A. Parents: **REDEEM** THE TIME! To parents I want to give you **Ephesians 5:15-17**—and tell you to "**redeem the time**" you have with your children "because the days are evil"!!

The Scripture compares our life to a "passing shadow" (**Psalm 144:4**) and to a "vapour that appears for a little while and then vanishes away" (**James 4:14**).

- B. Children: **REMEMBER** YOUR CREATOR in the DAYS OF YOUR YOUTH. **Ecclesiastes 12:1**, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them".

- C. How can you do this?

1. ***Aim for the new birth and every day to be growing in Christ.***
  - For **parents**, this means that peace and quiet so that you will not be disturbed or annoyed is never your goal. Your goal at all costs is to see your children saved.
  - For **children**, this means that you may know all the right words, and say all the right things, but if you do not know Christ, you are lost.
2. ***Devote yourself to the study of God's Word.*** Most people have philosophy that you just "live and learn". God commands us to "learn from Him and live!" We are to study His word and meditate on it "day and night" (**Psalm 1:2**).
  - **Parents**, life is busy, but do what you must do to get God's Word into your heart. You need to be stirred by God's Word every day, or you

are not going to stir your children. Get into God's Word. Read at least a chapter a day. You may need to read the same verse several times until the Spirit of God breaks through to your heart.

- And **children**, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (**Psalm 119:9**). *Hide God's Word in your heart*<sup>2</sup> now while your hearts foundation is fresh. If the foundation is cracked, the whole house will be crooked. Keep a journal of what you read.
  - **Parents**, encourage your children to be in the Word every day. Ask them what they are reading. Teach them to keep a journal.
3. ***Give yourself to prayer.*** This is a command from Scripture found in **Colossians 4:2**, "Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (NASB). Jesus said that we "ought always to pray and not to faint" or lose heart.<sup>3</sup> How do you learn to pray? Studying the Spirit inspired Scriptures will move you to cry out to God. The more you are in God's Word, the more you will be praying. ***Prayer is really you asking God to bring His Word to pass*** in every aspect of your life and in the world.
4. ***Fellowship with godly people.***
- You must separate yourself from evil influences.
  - You must fellowship with those who inspire you to be more like Christ
  - You ought to open yourself up to older men and women who have walked with Christ. **Proverbs 13:20** says, "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools [USUALLY OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE] shall be destroyed [SUFFER HARM]".
5. ***Flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness.*** Paul told the young pastor at Ephesus to "flee youthful lusts" (**2 Timothy 2:22**). If Timothy as a pastor was tempted, we can be sure that all of are tempted. This tells us that the temptation to be sexually immoral is overpowering and debilitating and must be avoided at all costs.

If you do not fear this sin you will fall.

**MARRIED Parents**, Paul tells us that if you want to keep your marriage together then you must enjoy the intimacy of marriage often. Paul says, **1 Corinthians 7:5**, "Do not deprive one another [of marital intimacy], except *it be* with consent for a limited time...[WHY DOES HE SAY THAT?] so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control".

Both young people and parents need to especially avoid two things:

- internet use without accountability and
- unchaperoned fellowship with the opposite gender.

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<sup>2</sup> Psalm 119:11

<sup>3</sup> Luke 18:1

6. ***Don't waste your life on trivial pursuits.*** You are a child of God, destined to live forever in God's presence, and you are redeemed by Christ's blood in order to carry out His orders. Don't put a great amount of time into shallow things. Don't throw away the precious moments of your life on an undue amount of entertainment, movies, YouTube, internet, and video games. Though some of these things can at times have a limited place in our lives, we must understand that media is addictive. They make it that way, because they make a lot of money from it. Don't waste your life! Don't spend your precious time on things that will amount to nothing before Christ's judgment seat!
  
7. ***Finally, seek to be used of God in the lives of others.*** When you were born again, God made you a part of His body—He gifted you to serve Him. Paul told Timothy "Stir up the gift of God which is in thee" (**2 Timothy 1:6**). The idea is to kindle or fan the flame. Your knowledge of God and His Word is set on fire when you go out and serve others. Learn to minister God's Spirit and God's presence to others.

**Conclusion:** David asked in **2 Samuel 18:32**, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" I want to ask you, are your children safe?