

## Why Is “Love” So Stupid?

### 2 Samuel 3:2-5

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-29-2012

#### **Introduction – why it is so important to define love clearly**

Over the last few weeks I have been contrasting David with Joab and showing how David shines in His dependence upon God. He has been a wonderful model. But one area in which I would definitely not recommend that you imitate David is in the way he loved his wives and his children. There are certain aspects of his love that were good, but there were other aspects that the Scripture says were not. I got the title for today’s sermon from a blog that Ed Welch posted last week. He titled it, “Why is Love So Stupid?” He started his short article with these words:

What was this intelligent woman thinking?! This guy was so wrong for her!  
Everyone else could see it! Why couldn’t she?

It was the first time I was asked to do premarital counseling. It was also when I awoke to the stupidity of love.

But by the end of the article he admits that it’s not really love that is stupid; it’s chemistry mistaken for love that is stupid. But I am going to call it love, because even the Scripture does. There are three kinds of love. In fact, I am very grateful that God has put chemistry into our marriages. It’s a wonderful thing. But here’s the point- if the selection of a husband or wife is based purely on chemistry, there are bound to be problems. It’s not that God’s grace can’t work around the problems when the chemistry is no longer there; it can. And once you’ve made your bed, we can teach you by God’s grace how to sleep in it and make the best of it. But chemistry is a lousy foundation for a marriage. That may come as a surprise statement to some because it is definitely counter-cultural.

But in this chapter we are introduced to David’s messed up marriages and his messed up kids. And you don’t have to read far in the book to realize that David’s polygamy had disastrous results. I don’t think anybody would want the harvest that David reaped in his life. From the time of Adam and Eve on, God intended marriage to be one man and one woman till death do them part. Though polygamy was never illegal in Biblical history, it has always been a sin. I demonstrated that in a previous sermon, so I won’t belabor that information today. But today, I want to examine the issue of why at least the Eros dimension of love can be so stupid, and why God

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deliberately made it that way (I think there are sometimes benefits to it being stupid), and how sin has distorted Eros love.

## I. David's wives – the timeline

In your outlines I have made a timetable of David's wives. Some of these dates are a bit mushy, but based on Floyd Nolan Jones' beginning date of David's birth (1085BC) and of his marriage to Michal (1066 BC), we can fairly accurately extrapolate the dates when he got married to the other wives. And I think you will immediately see the significance of doing that. Since this passage is only dealing with wives who bore David children in Hebron, it doesn't mention Michal until a few verses later. But let me start with Michal anyway.

### A. Michal – no children (1066BC) – David age 19

Chapter 18 of 1 Samuel says that for Michal, this was love at first sight. David was the hero of Israel. He was handsome, brave, an amazing athlete, and basically what some people call a stud. The text makes clear that she had a crush on David, and any time she saw David, her heart would race, and she would just feel like she could give the world for him. Her face must have glowed. And the reason I say that it was probably *that* obvious is that the Scripture text tells us that the servants could immediately tell. All they had to do is look at her. They noticed, and they told Saul that she had a crush on David before Saul had even noticed. Why are dad's often the last to see that their kids are head over heels? This was Eros love – the dangerous love that is just bubbling with chemistry.

But here's the problem: the word used for Michal's love can even be used in Hosea of an unfaithful wife who was "loved by a lover." Hosea is obviously not talking about godly love there. That particular expression of having chemistry between two individuals was immoral. Not all chemical love is. I'm glad I've got chemistry and emotion in my marriage. It's a wonderful gift when it is channeled by agape love and conformed to God's law. But if the romantic Eros love is unchained from agape love and unhinged from phileo love, it can become exceedingly dangerous. For example, this word was used to describe Samson's falling head over heels in love with Delilah. Well, if you can fall in love chemically, you can fall out of love when the chemicals don't seem to be there. That love can kind of fizzle on the frying pan and dissipate.

But while it is there it has the potential to make people do some pretty crazy things if they have not learned how to tame it. It would make David

commit adultery with Bathsheba in chapter 11, thinking that he had finally found his soul-mate. It's irrational. Some people call it crazy love, and Song of Solomon strictly warns us not to allow such love to awaken before its time. That command implies that it is possible to not let chemistry dictate your life. You don't have to fall into anything. That command also implies that if it does awaken too prematurely, it can blind you to all the red flags that are saying, "This is not the spouse for you. This is not a spouse for you." And if you allow that to grow prematurely, this Eros love has the tendency to shut down the rational side of the brain and gives you a blind optimism that doesn't worry about the incompatibilities. You will rush in where angels fear to tread.

And this is why I so strongly urge young people to kiss dating goodbye and say "Hello" to parentally involved courtship. If even some of this kind of love starts too prematurely, you won't have the objectivity to know if that is the right person to be your spouse. So whether you call this love romance, a crush, falling in love, falling head over heels, or something else, it is not the basis for a solid marriage. And before you write me off as a lunatic, let me give you some of David's examples.

Think of Michal. Like the maidens who had a crush on David in 1 Samuel 17, Michal has an overwhelming crush on David in the next chapter. The text says that she loved him. How long lasting was that? Not very long. One commentator said that it looks like they had a pretty passionate beginning. But within two years, Michal would be divorcing David and making vows to love Palti, the son of Laish. Now, even though we can understand Michal's intimidation by her dad, it was still her solemn vows before God that were broken and it was her solemn vows before God that made a new marriage with Palti. And by the time you get to 2 Samuel 6:16, it says, "**Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through the window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart.**" So she moved from crush, to breaking covenant, to despising David all in the space of 19 years. Can it happen? You bet it can. It happens all the time. By itself, Eros love is not enough. The foundation for marriage is the supernatural agape love that transforms the friendship love (phileo) and the romantic love (Eros). And when agape love, which is self-giving and enduring, is present, it will make a marriage rich even when the chemistry of Eros is not always present.

***B. Abigail – no immediate children (late 1060 or early 1059BC) – David about age 26 or 27***

What about David's marriage to Abigail? We saw in 1 Samuel 25 that because Michal had already divorced David and married another man, and was thus guilty of adultery, David was freed up to enter into this marriage with Abigail. It seems that Abigail married David for the right reasons. She didn't have children right away, but everything we know about Abigail says that she was a woman deeply rooted in God's grace, knowledgeable about God's word, and a godly woman. The Jews treated her as a prophetess, and there is evidence that she may indeed have been a prophetess, who married David with divine guidance. I should point out that there is debate on whether she married David before or after Ahinoam, I think it was clearly after, and that this was a marriage made by heaven. It was lawful.

We don't know entirely what motives *David* had for marrying her. Some think that David married her for her money and the vast tracts of land that she owned. Others think that her relatives provided huge political leverage that David would need in the future, and so they think that it was in part a political marriage. I'm not prepared to say yea or nay to that theory. I think there might be something to that. But at the least, it was a lawful marriage, and it does appear that David and Abigail sought to be godly during the one or two years before Ahinoam came along. I don't fault Abigail with the messes that came after. I put the full blame on David, since there was no excuse for David's later marriages or having *Eros* interest in more than one woman. We men must keep our hearts and eyes for one woman alone – our wife.

***C. Ahinoam – political marriage to align with Judah? Much debate on this – is she before Abigail, or after?) My view is that she married David after Abigail (1 Sam. 25:42-43), but is listed first here because he child came first. David was either 27 or 28years old, and the marriage probably happened in early 1058BC, perhaps a year or two after Abigail.***

By the time we get to Ahinoam, it is culture, not Scripture that is governing David's actions. Ahinoam is listed before Abigail here because the purpose is listing the order of the sons. But in terms of dates, Ahinoam was his first polygamous marriage. Polygamy was so common in both Israel and the surrounding nations, that most people didn't think anything about it. Within two years of marrying Abigail (and some people think it might have been within one year) David married Ahinoam. 1 Samuel 25 says,

**“Abigail... became his wife. David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel, and so both of them were his wives.”** The “also” and the “so” indicate (to me anyways) that Ahinoam came later. However, it couldn’t have been too long afterwards, because David took both wives with him into Gath in chapter 27 of 1 Samuel. But some people object to this interpretation and say, “If Abigail was married first, why is Ahinoam listed first three times?” Well, my response is threefold: First, Abigail is listed first in the *only* passage that speaks of them getting married, and that should be definitive. Second, Ahinoam is listed first in this passage because her *son* was born before Abigail’s son was born. It has nothing to do with the order of marriage; it has to do with the order of birth. In fact, David may have married Ahinoam because he was worried that he wouldn’t get an heir from Abigail. And third, it is possible that Ahinoam is listed first in the other two passages for the same reason of birth order, or because she became his favorite wife, or because of the higher status that she had as a prominent woman in northern Israel. But I am pretty confident that the marriage to Ahinoam was the first time David engaged in polygamy. I think 1 Samuel 25 is clear on that.

And the sin of polygamy that David began, many of his children duplicated. And the question comes, “How could David do this when Deuteronomy 17 explicitly forbids kings from engaging in polygamy?” Deuteronomy 17 is crystal clear. He was breaking the law. Well, he did it for the same reason that you tend to more easily rationalize the sins that are culturally acceptable today. In fact, in that day, you weren’t much of a king if you didn’t have many wives. You were looked down upon. Kings thought in terms of political alliances for most of their wives. And that is certainly true of Ahinoam and Maacah.

Ahinoam was from a prestigious part of Israel north of Ishbosheth’s capital, and the political alliance that this made with Jezreel aided David and put Ishbosheth at a huge disadvantage. I’m sure that David could have rationalized his compromise as being in the best interests of God’s kingdom. But based on the way her kids turned out, I don’t think so. He obviously wasn’t marrying her based for very good reasons. Her character seems to be transferred to her kid. Always keep that possibility in mind when you are looking for a marriage partner. It doesn’t matter how beautiful she is, there is a lot of her that will transfer to the kids. Do you want that?

#### ***D. David crowned king at age 30 (1055 BC)***

Point D - David is crowned king at the age of thirty, in 1055 BC. And it is from this point on that things go even more crazy.

***E. Maacah – political marriage aligning with Talmi, the pagan king of Geshur at age 30 or 31 (1055 or 1054?BC)***

Point E: Within three years, David has entered into what everyone acknowledges is a political alliance with a foreign nation. Maacah was the daughter of king Talmi, the pagan king of Geshur. From a political perspective, this was a huge coup in terms of humanistic diplomacy. It basically made David an ally of part of the Aramean empire to the north, and in the process further isolated Ishbosheth. So it was a smart move from a humanistic perspective, but it was really just the wisdom of man. Marriages were not intended by God to be leverage points for politics or for anything else.

And Solomon followed David's lead on these ungodly alliances by marrying many women from surrounding countries. Nehemiah said that these women led Solomon astray. And when we get to the children of David, we will see that some of David's women clearly led him astray. Now I'm sure that David technically got her to "convert" to his religion, just as non-Christians today can pretend to be Christians in order to marry a Christian guy or girl. I'm always skeptical if the so-called conversion happens after the chemistry of romance has started. And I think you should be skeptical too. Crazy love will make people do crazy things, including making a profession of faith. In the case of Maacah, she gives no evidence whatsoever of a heart aligned to God. And it shows in her son Absalom. If Samuel had been there, he could have told David, "Be sure your sins will find you out." But David's pastor didn't have the guts to preach Deuteronomy 17 to David. His pastor should have rebuked David and told him, "Deuteronomy 17 says that you may not multiply wives to yourself."

***F. Haggith – at age 31,32, or 33 (between 1054 and 1052 BC). She is the permissive mom of Adonijah***

But he didn't, so next comes Haggith. The only thing we know about her is that her son was awful. Her son was vain, prideful, rebellious, and deceptive. And we will get to him in a bit. We are not told if she is good looking, but from what we read, David seems to have an eye for beauty. But I can't comment on her other than the disaster that we see in her son and that she probably had something to do with the fact that David couldn't or wouldn't discipline Adonijah. It seems to suggest that she had a very permissive view of child rearing, and David passively caved because of her pressures. 1 Kings 1:6 says about David's relationship to her son: "**his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, 'Why have you done**

so?” That’s amazing. And that stands as a rebuke to David. But the implication is that both parents had permissive parenting at least of Adonijah.

***G. Abital – between age 32 and 35 (between 1053 and 1050 BC)***

Within one or two years, David married Abital. That’s all we know about her.

***H. Eglah – between age 33 and 36 (between 1052 and 1049 BC) – the queen wife (v. 5)? His favorite?***

And within one to two years he marries Eglah. I’ve got the estimated dates in your outlines. And what those dates tell me is that there is something wrong when a guy gets dissatisfied with his wife every two years and moves on to another one. It’s significant that there aren’t two kids from any one woman during these seven and a half years at Hebron. That ought to tell you something. He seems to tire of one and go on to another. And even though he is legally restricted to romance within marriage, and even though the women have some legal protections, their hearts are not protected. Their hearts are probably being destroyed by the competition for David’s affections. And you men do worse than that when you view pornography. The comparison of those photoshopped porn stars will make you more and more dissatisfied with your wife, even if she is stunning. It will distort crazy love and make it even more crazy and irrational.

But in terms of favoritism, there is something else in the text that shows that David had engaged in the pagan practice of having a favorite wife be his queen wife or his official wife. That’s what verse 5 means when it says of Eglah alone, “**Ithream, by David’s wife Eglah.**” Some commentators are mystified why it would call her David’s wife and not the others. But it is simply a statement that she was the queen; the official wife; the favorite wife; the wife that he always lived with. How would that make Abigail feel? Or any of the other wives? They had David first, yet this last one now becomes the favorite, and the one to be the queen wife. In fact, as one commentator said, “It resulted in friction, hatred, and division in his household.”<sup>1</sup> The only way to avoid failure in the home and to provide covenant succession is for the man to be totally devoted to his wife and for the wife to be totally devoted to the husband. I absolutely disagree with those who say that polygamy was not sinful in the Old Testament. Jesus

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<sup>1</sup> John T. Willis, *First and Second Samuel* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 1984), p. 299.

Himself interpreted Old Testament law as one man and one woman, and anything beyond that manifests some hardness of hearts. You've got to distinguish between sin and crime.

***I. Gets Michal back at age 37 (1048 BC) – an unlawful act (Deut. 24:1-4; cf. interpretation in Jer. 3:1)***

But it gets worse when we go beyond this passage. I'm going to skip ahead and have you look at the heart-rending scene in verses 12-16. David misses his first wife. He's got memories of his first girlfriend that intrude into his marriage with the others. Let's begin reading at verse 12:

**2Samuel 3:12** Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to David, saying, "Whose is the land?" saying *also*, "Make your covenant with me, and indeed my hand *shall be* with you to bring all Israel to you."

**2Samuel 3:13** And David said, "Good, I will make a covenant with you. But one thing I require of you: you shall not see my face unless you first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when you come to see my face."

**2Samuel 3:14** So David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."

**2Samuel 3:15** And Ishbosheth sent and took her from *her* husband, from Paltiel the son of Laish.

**2Samuel 3:16** Then her husband went along with her to Bahurim, weeping behind her. So Abner said to him, "Go, return!" And he returned.

This is unbelievably horrible. Michal had been married to Palti for somewhere between 16 and 17 years. It is obvious that Palti loves Michal. According to God's law, when David forced Michal to leave Palti, it was a far worse sin than when Michal was given to Palti in the first place. why do I say that? Deuteronomy 24 says that the first divorce was a sin and unlawful, but it says that what David did was an abomination. And Jeremiah 3:1 indicates that David's sin made the land greatly polluted. So God is not painting a very flattering picture of David in this chapter. Not at all. God is deliberately painting a picture that should make us fear doing as David did. As 1 Corinthians 10:6 says, "These things became our examples, to the intent that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted."

***J. More wives and concubines (5:13) - (1048 BC and following)***

And we might as well fill out the rest of the picture briefly. Chapter 5:13 says, "Then David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he had come from Hebron. Also more sons and daughters were born to David."



***K. Bathsheba – at age 48 (1037 BC)***

Then there is Bathsheba in chapter 11 – a horrible stain on David’s name and reputation. And it was an even worse stain on God's name.

***L. Abishag – at age 70 (1015 BC)***

And finally, when David is too old and feeble to generate his own heat, 1 Kings 1:3-4 says, **“So they sought for a lovely young woman throughout all the territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite, and brought her to the king. The young woman was very lovely; and she cared for the king, and served him; but the king did not know her.”** That story is just disgusting to me. It shows that David used women. And when women feel used, it negatively impacts the whole family relationship.

I’m going to sum it up by saying that it all flows from an incomplete view of love. And though people look askance at romancing woman after woman only to move on, there are similar woundings and pains that people leave in the wake of the serial dating that goes on in America, and the serial divorces and remarriages. I have known women whose hearts are still linked to the man that they first dated and were intimate with, long after that man had married someone else, because they gave their hearts away prematurely. And certainly when sexual union has happened, there is a one-flesh connection of spirits that cannot be undone without consciously renouncing it, even when another marriage has happened. And I give this material to warn our young people to guard your hearts and to be very careful whom you marry. Take seriously the material we presented on courtship in the church conference this year. The whole conference is on the web. But before we look at how God’s grace can heal and deal with even such problems as *David* created, let’s look at the consequences of sin being passed on to the children and the children’s children.

**II. David’s sons*****A. Amnon, son of Ahinoam – deceit, manipulation, lust, rape of his sister, hatred, irresponsible***

Verse 2 says that the first son to be born to David was Amnon, the son of Ahinoam. Since, on my interpretation, Ahinoam was the first polygamous marriage, it is no wonder to me that God did not bless the offspring from that marriage. Secondly, when David married for political reasons rather than for spiritual reasons, we should not be surprised to find problems from

her children. Sin always multiplies exponentially when it is not repented of. And we see the horrible consequences in Amnon.

Chapter 13 gives a gut-wrenching picture of Amnon's despicable character. The text says that Amnon loved his sister Tamar. One translation tried to give the nature of this love by saying that he fell in love with her. And then it goes on to say that his inability to fulfill his love made him sick, made him obsessed with her, and despondent and depressed because he could not touch her (literally getting his hands on her). And the word for "love" is the same one for Michal loving David. It was the chemical attraction that Amnon had for his beautiful sister, not a self-sacrificing agape love. By itself this illustrates that natural love, chemical love is not a ground for marriage, because God's law forbade Amnon loving his sister in this way. So anyway, he had stupid love for his sister, Tamar. Using deceit and manipulation, and the help of a friend, he managed to rape his sister. It was a horrible sin. David had obviously not instructed his children in the difference between lust and true love. He had obviously never shown them how to control their hormonal desires, and their physical urges. And right after Amnon raped her, verse 15 records the strange phenomenon that often accompanies such lust and rape. It says, "**Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, 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, 'Arise, be gone!'**" He was an utterly repulsive and irresponsible young man. How could a hero of the faith like David produce such a poisonous and evil son? He did so in part, because his version of love was a stupid love that did not go through any of the evaluations that we have shown to be critical to a healthy marriage. And we will be seeing shortly, his love was a crazy love that refused to spank his children.

***B. Chileab (also called Daniel), son of Abigail – appears to have been faithful, but also to have died early.***

The only son who seems to have turned out somewhat decent was Chileab, the son of Abigail. And Abigail was the only woman who had the qualifications to make a godly wife. We know very little about Chileab. There are two things that can be read between the lines. The first is that commentators assume that Chileab died in battle before marriage, because he is no longer around during the conflicts with Absalom and Adonijah. If so, he's better than his brothers in that they tended to stay away from the front lines of the battlefield. He at least had the boldness and courage of his father. The second hint is that he has two names. From 1 Chronicles

commentators point out that his given name, Daniel, reflects what happened to Nabal. Daniel means God is judge. But his nickname, Chileab, may reflect his character, since nicknames were almost always given to do so later in life. Chileab means, “like his father.” It may hint that Chileab was different from these other Hebron brothers. He had the heart of his father. And to me this is a tribute to Abigail’s character, and the fact that Abigail welcomed David into her son’s life early, even if David wasn’t the greatest husband. She’s an example to women who have absent husbands. If women will be like Abigail, an absent father doesn’t have to guarantee that you will have a problem child. In the New Testament, Lois and Eunice are two women who similarly raised godly children without much help from the father. Now, that’s not to excuse the father, but I mention it because even problematic families like David’s can be helped by God’s grace.

***C. Absalom, son of pagan Maacah – shows deceptiveness, demonic manipulation, rebellion, vanity, bearing grudges, murder, and lack of genuine faith***

Absalom was the next one to be born, and he was the son of Maacah. Now, I’ve just mentioned that David was an absent father. And a lot of it wasn’t his fault. He had to be gone. He was away at battle a great deal of the seven and half years during which these children were born, and so a huge burden of the discipleship of the children rested on their respective mothers. But in the case of Maacah, she clearly was not prepared to do that. There is no evidence of a genuine conversion to God. She was the daughter of a pagan king up north, and no doubt brought many of the pagan habits that she was raised with. She may have even brought with her some of the demonic attachments that she had grown up with. We don’t know any of this for sure, but it is certainly consistent with the character issues manifested in her son, Absalom’s life.

The main history that we have of Absalom spans the last eight years of his life, from 1035 to 1027 BC. We don’t know a lot before that. But throughout those eight years we see deceptiveness, demonic Machiavellian type manipulation that is astounding, and we see rebellion, vanity, bearing grudges, murder, and other signs that he was not even regenerate. And it should be no surprise that you produce an unbeliever when you marry an unbeliever. It doesn’t have to be the result, but apart from the believing parent really working at it, it often is the result. The practice of marrying unbelievers is rampant in the church of Jesus Christ, and from a Biblical perspective, it should be unthinkable. Paul says, “**Do not be unequally**

**yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?"** He said, "Do not be unequally yoked." If you yoke a living ox with a dead ox, what direction is the plow going to go? It's going to spin round and round in circles until the living ox stumbles and lies down where the dead ox is. The engine of a Fiesta in a Ferrari? Pickles and ice cream? There are certain things that simply don't go together.

On Facebook this past week, RC Sproul Junior said, "Glad Peter Enns titled his work Genesis For Normal People, so no one will confuse it with Genesis for Believers." It was a very clever way of exposing the unbelief in this so-called commentary. Enns of course is an evolutionist who believes Genesis 1-11 is myth, and who denies that Moses wrote the Pentateuch despite the fact that Jesus said he did, and said so over and over. But that initial post started a whole discussion about who is normal. Someone asked, "Believers aren't normal?" RC responded, "We are most decidedly not normal people. We are remade, reborn, indwelt by the Holy Spirit. We are seated in the heavenly places with Christ Jesus, ruling and reigning. Nope, not normal at all... We are light, they darkness. We are the ekklesia, the called out ones, a set apart people, declared Holy."

And I say, "Amen." There is a tendency in the grace movement to focus so much on remaining sin in the believer, and to downplay the differences between us and the sinful world we are trying to reach, that you get the impression that there isn't much difference. We must not miss the Biblical doctrine that we are a peculiar people or miss the glory of what God's grace has already accomplished and what it is calling us to. A believer marrying an unbeliever truly is like trying to mix light and darkness. And so it is not legalism for a church to have the courage to exercise church discipline upon a David who marries outside the faith. Marrying outside the faith should be inconceivable to us. Apart from grace, it is more likely than not to produce results like it did in Absalom.

But at the same time, we will be seeing shortly that God's grace can even pick up the pieces of a horrible relationship like this, and bring good out of it. Though it is inconceivable that Christians would do this, they do it all the time, and it is not the unpardonable sin. Let me repeat that: it is not the unpardonable sin. And once the marriage happened, by God's grace you seek to make the best of it. So even though we should not make light of this sin, once they repent of it, we should welcome them back into the church. David should have repented of his foolishness and done everything in his power to apply God's grace to Maacah and her son, Absalom. David

definitely loved Absalom, but he seemed unable to give the tough love needed. Instead, he went along to get along.

***D. Adonijah, the pampered and undisciplined (1 Kings 1:6) son of Haggith – shows rebellion, pride, vanity, deceptiveness***

He did the same with Adonijah. I've already read 1 Kings 1:6, which says, **“And his father had not rebuked him at any time, by saying, ‘Why have you done so?’”** This is another form of stupid-love that flows from emotion and not from Biblical agape love. From one perspective, David loved Adonijah dearly. He didn't want to hurt Adonijah's feelings. He cared about him. But when David never spanked Adonijah, never contradicted him, and never rebuked him, Scripture would say that David was engaging in at least the actions of hatred – that his love for him was a stupid love; a chemical affection that animals have for their offspring, and *not* a spiritual love.

And what did this kind of stupid-love produce? It produced rebellion, pride, vanity, and deceptiveness on a grand scale. In fact, Adonijah eventually tried to overthrow David's kingdom, just like Absalom had. If David had had the Proverbs to work with, this would have been no surprise to him. David's stupid love guaranteed the ungodly character traits that became so ingrained in Adonijah that they became normal. Let me read some Proverbs that show that what happened to Adonijah will ordinarily happen to your children if you don't quickly start the process of demanding that your children not run wild, not dominate the conversation at the table, not make the world revolve around them. These are the things that will happen if we do not consistently work at producing first time obedience and/or spanking whenever first time obedience is not given. Permissive parenting produces monsters, not cute kids. Their disobedience may seem cute when they are little, but kittens grow up to be cats, and disobedient kids grow up to be even more disobedient adults. And that is ugly. So if you are a permissive parent, listen to these Scriptures:

**“Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his destruction” (Prov. 19:18)**

**“Blows that hurt cleanse away evil” (Prov. 20:30)** Which implies what? It implies that the evil remains and festers when there are no blows of the rod.

Here's another one.

**“Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.” (Prov. 22:15)**

**“Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you spank them. Physical discipline may well save them from death” (Prov. 23:13,14 NLT)**

**“My son, do not reject the discipline of the LORD, or loathe His reproof. For whom the LORD loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.” (Prov. 3:11-12)**

The bottom line is that the kind of love that CPS often mandates is stupid-love that allows emotions to dictate. The love that David exhibited to these children was often stupid love, which unwittingly guaranteed their doom. And I believe that some of the Proverbs written by Solomon specifically had his brothers in mind. When your children run wild, you might think you are doing a good thing by letting them freely express themselves, but the Proverbs say otherwise. Left to themselves, what they freely express exhibits depravity. Of course, God’s covenant grace promises to work with us even when we are not perfectly consistent if we will by faith seek to raise them in the fear and nurture of the Lord.

***E. Shephatiah, son of Abital – we know nothing about other than that descendants of David named their children after him.***

We know next to nothing about Shephatiah, the son of Abital, other than that later descendants do name their children after him. So, he may have turned out half decent. But we don’t know.

***F. Ithream, son of Eglah – we know nothing about him.***

And we know nothing whatsoever of Ithream, the son of David’s favorite wife, the queen mother. But I think we learn from the sons born in Hebron, and later in Chronicles, from the sons born in Jerusalem, that the only ones that turned out well (as far as we know) were ones that David and the mother invested godly discipline in. The rest were almost a total loss. And God later gives reminders to us to not imitate David in his parenting. For the most part, he was a doting, but lousy parent, because he did not take the time to invest in his children the spiritual seed that would last, and godly discipline that would shape. He stands as a warning to all Davids today.

### **III. God’s grace & the consequences of bad choices**

***A. The wonder of God’s love and grace (2 Sam. 7)***

But I don’t want to end on that sour note. I want to point out that despite David’s failures, God loved David and made a sure covenant with David in chapter 7. And if you are a David, I want you to not only take comfort from that, but to use that as a foundation from which to begin change right now.

Chapter 7 of this book shows the security David had in God's grace. It's wonderful. Though he failed God on many levels, God never failed him. Amen? In chapter 7:13, God promised to bring the Messiah through David's seed, and promised that this Messiah would help His people do what they cannot do in their own strength – including building a faithful household. It was a turning point in David's parenting. God told David, **“I will be his Father, and he shall be My son. If he commits iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men and with the blows of the sons of men. But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul.”** Hmmm! God disciplines the children whom He loves. By that time it was almost too late for David to exercise similar discipline with his Hebron-born children. They had grown up. But he could at least try to make a difference with the children that were growing up in Jerusalem.

But what a marvelous promise. Though we may fail in our parenting, God will not fail us in His parenting. Covenant succession does not rest on our perfection. It rests in faith on God's promise, and by His grace attempts to faithfully live out our calling. But at the heart of it we have the security that His grace will take us safely through time and through eternity. That's the light at the center of this tragic story of a messed up family. And David did learn from God's theology of parenting in chapter 7.

### ***B. Yet the reality of the laws of harvest (1 Sam. 11ff)***

But in chapters 11 and following God also showed David that though he was forgiven of his sins, the reality of the laws of harvest cannot completely be undone. Where point A gives us hope, point B keeps us from lazy presumption. We will look at some of those laws of harvest when we get to them in future weeks. But the only point we need to make here is that forgiveness for any sinful expression of stupid love does not undo all the disasters that can flow from stupid love. And we all know it. We see it all around us. Even though God can help us to put together some of the messed up wreckage, it is better to use preventative medicine and guard our hearts from stupid love in the first place *before* we select a spouse and to guard our hearts from stupid love in the raising our children.

## **Conclusion**

I want to end with two stories that contrast stupid love with the enduring love that many waters cannot quench. The first story is something I clipped from a Dear Abby column. A man wrote to Abby saying,

Dear Abby, I am in love and I am having an affair with two different women other than my wife. I love my wife but I love these other women too. Please tell

me what to do, but don't give me any of that morality stuff. Signed: Too much love for only one.

Here was Abby's response:

"Dear Too much love for only one. The only difference between humans and animals is morality. Please write to a veterinarian."

In effect she was saying, "If all you care about is chemical love, then look to a person who gives advice to animals. Humans should be above being dictated by a love that does not transcend the level of the natural. God has called us to put off the natural man and to be renewed in the new creation that Christ is progressively making. Don't be governed by Eros; be governed by agape.

Now let me read you the story of a counseling case that Chaplain Cunningham had a few years ago. This illustrates that God's call to us goes way, way beyond stupid love and into agape love in our family relationships. This tract is written by Jay Adams. Here's how it begins:

Phil and Emily had not come for help in solving the problem in their marriage although they called the chaplain to ask for marriage counseling. Actually, their minds already were made up – they had decided to get a divorce. Yet, they were Christians and they knew that a divorce was wrong since they had no biblical grounds for it. There had been no adultery, no desertion; only untold misery. "If we can only get him to agree that going on in this marriage would be an impossibility," they thought, "then perhaps he will be able to show us how in our case God will make an exception to His law." That was how they were reasoning inwardly when they first told their stories to Chaplain Cunningham.

"So you see," Emily concluded, "there is simply nothing left to our marriage. I don't feel a thing for Phil anymore; there is nothing to build on." Phil ended his remarks in a similar vein: "Well, I suppose that it has been a long time since you've heard a story like that chaplain. And, while we don't agree on many things, I must say that Emily is absolutely correct when she claims that there is nothing left to our marriage – every drop of love that I once had for her has drained away." They both sat back in an uneasy confidence, knowing down deep that divorce was wrong, but sure that they had spoken the last word on the issue. After all what else could the chaplain advise if there was no more feeling, no more love, nothing left? They waited, hoping that he, rather than they, would pronounce the final verdict: "If there is nothing left to your marriage, I supposed there is nothing you can do but get a divorce." They hoped that hearing him utter these or similar words would somehow remove the bad feelings triggered by their guilty consciences. What they really wanted was salve for their souls."

"I am truly sorry to hear about your difficult times and the sorry state in which you find yourselves at present. I can understand why you have come for help. When a marriage has gone sour and you find that all of your own efforts to try to



sweeten it again fail, then you do need help. You say that there is no love and no feeling left? That's serious. If you don't love each other, there is only one thing to do. ("Here it comes" they thought; "He will advise a divorce.") "You will have to *learn* how to love one another."

"*Learn* how to love?" They retorted almost simultaneously. "What do you mean *learn* how to love?" asked Phil as soon as he was able to regain some measure of composure. "Yeah," offered Emily, cynically, "How can you *learn* it? You can't produce feelings out of thin air."

"I was not talking about feelings" said Chaplain Cunningham. "I was talking about love. The two are not identical even though Hollywood, the T.V. and *Playboy* might say otherwise. Love is not feeling first. Before all else it is the determination to do good for another person because God has told you to do so. Love begins, therefore, with a desire to please God. Love toward another is a willingness to give to him whatever you have that he needs, because you know that God wants you to. Where true love exists, the feeling follows soon enough."

"Well, that certainly isn't what I thought you would say," Phil replied. "Nor I," echoed Emily. "As a matter of fact," she continued, "I'm dubious about the whole thing; how can you teach someone to love? And what does it mean to learn to love?"

"Let me begin by explaining a bit about biblical love and how it can be learned. First, notice that everywhere in the Bible God *commands* us to love. You don't command people to have certain feelings do you?"

"Well...?"

"For instance, if I gave the order "Emily, be angry" you couldn't turn on anger, just like that, could you?"

".... I suppose not."

"Then, listen to these verses in the Bible: "*Love* the Lord your God.... *Love* your neighbor as yourself!" Those are commands. God *commands* love. If love were feeling first, it could not be commanded. Do you see that?"

"I think that I do," said Phil. "But what does that have to do with us?"

"Everything, Phil. You see, God orders you to love your wife. Listen to what He wrote through the apostle Paul: 'Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her' (Ephesians 5:25). Remember, Christ died on the cross for the Church."

"Do you mean that I have to learn how to love Emily enough to be willing to die for her?"

"Exactly!"

"Then, forget it; I could never learn to love *her* like that."

“No, we can’t forget it because God commands it. But perhaps you could begin at a lesser level. The Bible also commands “love your neighbor – she’s the closest one that you’ve got. You eat with her, sleep with her...”

“I couldn’t even love her that way!”

“Well, I’m sorry to hear that, but there is still hope. The Bible also insists upon love even at what for you would be the lowest level. God commands: “Love your enemies.” You see, there is no way out. You must learn to love each other; God commands it.”

“Oh, no!”

“No!”

“Yes. And, as a matter of fact there is great hope since God commands love; He never commands anything of His children that He does not supply both the directions and the power to achieve.”

“Oh my! We came to you to help us find a way out of this miserable marriage and you have tied us into it even more tightly. Thanks – for nothing!”

“Yeah, nothing.”

“Hang on, I haven’t finished. If you really want to get rid of the misery, I can help you do so. But you will never find a way out by breaking up the marriage. As a matter of fact, you are only heading for greater troubles if you take that route...”

And for the rest of the story, I would encourage you to read this tract by Jay Adams: *What Do You Do When Your Marriage Goes Sour?* But for purposes of this sermon, I urge you to never let stupid-love trump God’s command for agape love. I enjoy chemistry and emotion in my marriage. But I can assure you, I am still enjoying it only because Kathy and I from the time that we were courting refused to allow love to be only stupid, chemical, natural love that any animal can have. Instead, we pledged each other agape love, and we have kept renewing our agape love in the Lord. God’s grace was intended to bring joy, and to bring the kind of love that many waters cannot quench. The moment your love makes you want to do stupid things with spouse or with kids, run to God and ask Him for the grace to exercise wise love; agape love; a sacrificial love that has faith to try to do the impossible. Amen.

# Why Is “Love” So Stupid? 2 Samuel 3:2-5

By Phillip G. Kayser at DCC on 7-29-2012

Introduction – why it is so important to define love clearly

## I. David’s wives – the timeline

- A. Michal – no children (1066BC) – David age 19
- B. Abigail – no immediate children (late 1060 or early 1059BC) – David about age 26 or 27
- C. Ahinoam – political marriage to align with Judah? Much debate on this – is she before Abigail, or after? My view is that she married David after Abigail (1 Sam. 25:42-43), but is listed first here because he child came first. David was either 27 or 28 years old, and the marriage probably happened in early 1058BC, perhaps a year or two after Abigail.
- D. David crowned king at age 30 (1055 BC)
- E. Maacah – political marriage aligning with Talmi, the pagan king of Geshur at age 30 or 31 (1055 or 1054?BC)
- F. Haggith – at age 31,32, or 33 (between 1054 and 1052 BC). She is the permissive mom of Adonijah
- G. Abital – between age 32 and 35 (between 1053 and 1050 BC)
- H. Eglah – between age 33 and 36 (between 1052 and 1049 BC) – the queen wife (v. 5)? His favorite?
- I. Gets Michal back at age 37 (1048 BC) – an unlawful act (Deut. 24:1-4; cf. interpretation in Jer. 3:1)
- J. More wives and concubines (5:13) - (1048 BC and following)
- K. Bathsheba – at age 48 (1037 BC)
- L. Abishag – at age 70 (1015 BC)



“Michal Watching David from a Window”



## II. David’s sons

- A. Amnon, son of Ahinoam – deceit, manipulation, lust, rape of his sister, hatred, irresponsible
- B. Chileab (also called Daniel), son of Abigail – appears to have been faithful, but also to have died early.
- C. Absalom, son of pagan Maacah – shows deceptiveness, demonic manipulation, rebellion, vanity, bearing grudges, murder, and lack of genuine faith
- D. Adonijah, the pampered and undisciplined (1 Kings 1:6) son of Haggith – shows rebellion, pride, vanity, deceptiveness
- E. Shephatiah, son of Abital – we know nothing about other than that descendants of David named their children after him.
- F. Ithream, son of Eglah – we know nothing about him.

## III. God’s grace & the consequences of bad choices

- A. The wonder of God’s love and grace (2 Sam. 7)
- B. Yet the reality of the laws of harvest (1 Sam. 11ff)

Conclusion