

The Tactic of Manipulation

2 Samuel 14

➡ The scheming continues from chapter 13

- The scheme to get Tamar to come to Amnon
- Absalom's scheme to murder the crown prince, Amnon.
- By Absalom fleeing to Geshur and not one of the cities of refuge, he was admitting his guilt of murdering Amnon.

➡ This chapter divides into two parts:

1. Joab's manipulation of David to receive Absalom back (14:1-28)
2. Absalom's manipulation of Joab to get him to appeal to David (14:29-33)

Manipulation is a ploy use to control people (the control game).

Puzzling language of 13:39-14:1:

- David's heart was "*toward*" Absalom (13:39; 14:1), but not necessarily for good (cf. Dt. 28:54; Ezek. 4:7; Hosea 5:1).
 - "*And the soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom*" (13:39) could be interpreted two ways: (1) David desired to see his son again, or (2) David wanted to go after Absalom and deal with him. The second interpretation seems to be correct. This is apparent by David's refusal to see Absalom (v. 24). If David was longing to be reunited with Absalom, Joab's manipulating strategy would not be necessary. When Absalom finally did come home, David kept him at a distance for two years (v. 28)! It was five years before father and son saw each other face-to-face (13:38; 14:28). David knew his son deserved punishment, but David was known for being lenient.
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I. Joab's Manipulation of David (vs. 1-17). Bring Absalom back.

- A. Joab's **PLAN** (vs. 1-3). He concocts a plan using a woman who is quite an actress. He gives her the script to act out before the King—He put words in her mouth.
- B. The woman's **PERFORMANCE** (vs. 4-17).
 1. The woman's distress caused by her family (vs. 5-11). One son killed another son and the family wants the killer exe-

cuted. Her concern is that her coal will be quenched, meaning if her son is killed no one would be left to carry on the family line (v. 7).

2. Israel's distress caused by David's rejection of Absalom (vs. 12-17).

- v. 13—She was saying in effect, “David, why don't you practice what you preach—You're inconsistent. You're willing to restore my banished son, but you will not restore your own son, thereby denying Israel of an heir to the throne.”

NOTE: v. 14—*“For we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again...”* “Life is short, David—you best set your house in order (Jas. 4:14; Ps. 39:5; 78:39; 89:48; 102:3; 144:4; Prov. 27:1). God is no respecter of persons, are you?” (Acts 10:34; 2 Chron. 19:7; Rom. 2:11; Col. 3:25; Jas. 2:1; 1 Pet. 1:17; Eph. 6:9).

C. David's **PERCEPTION** (vs. 18-20).

- David smells a rat. He sees Joab's name written all over her story.

D. David's **PERMISSION** (v. 21-24).

1. He acquiesces—He reluctantly consents to Absalom's return. David doesn't act—He has been acted upon. David relents rather than rules.
2. v. 24—It appears that David was less than enthusiastic about Absalom's return. David only half-heartedly accepts Absalom. Evidently he had not fully forgiven him.
 - Absalom returns home after a three year absence while living among the heathen. There is no joy in Absalom's homecoming. Absalom is not a repentant prodigal, but a scheming murderer intent of getting his way.
 - There is no restitution—No retribution—No resolution.

II. Absalom's Manipulation of Joab (vs. 25-33).

- Absalom is a man who is accustomed to getting his way.
 - A. Israel's INFATUATION with Absalom's charm (vs. 25-26). Like many so-called leaders, Absalom is high on image, but short on substance.
 - B. Joab's IGNORING of Absalom's call (vs. 28-29). The question is "why?" Why go to all the trouble to get Absalom back to Jerusalem and then not answer Absalom's calls?
 - C. Absalom's IGNITING of Joab's crops (v. 30). Absalom again gets his servants to do his dirty work (cf. 13:28).
 - 1. He will not go to Joab—He wants Joab to come to him (v. 32)
 - 2. Absalom will do anything to attention. He has no respect for the property of others.

➤ verse 32— Absalom's dare to David to either receive me or execute me was another manipulative tactic. He knew if his father was intent on executing him, David would have never permitted his safe return in the first place (vs. 21-23).

This kind of ultimatum is a ploy of manipulation. It would be like a guy saying to a girl, "Either give me your body, or we're done."

SUMMATION: After a little groveling (v. 33) Absalom is on track to make his move to take over the throne (chapter 15).

Absalom should have been nominated for "comeback player of the year"—Went from murdering the crown prince, Amnon ➤ to a fugitive living in exile ➤ to the threshold of the throne.

Lessons to be learned.

1. Manipulation is a poor tool to achieve your objectives or manage people.
2. Halfhearted forgiveness is not forgiveness.
3. If God is calling you about something in your life, don't wait until He burns your barley field to get your attention!