

Deposed
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2 Samuel 15

Opening discussion: **Is ambition a sin? When does ambition become a sin?**

- Arrogance, lust, adultery, deception, murder, loss of innocent life, rape, revenge, murder of family members, conspiracy, civil war, plotting overthrow of the “boss.”
- Those words might seem to describe the plot of the Godfather films; instead they describe the path of destruction of King David’s household.
- Let’s do a “quick recap” of that path of destruction:
 - It started with disobedience (see Deut. 17:15-17)ⁱ
 - Then arrogance and self sufficiency led to
 - Dereliction of duty (2 Sam. 11:1) then
 - Lust, adultery, deception, and murder
 - Nathan gave David God’s verdict, you are forgiven and you won’t die, but the child of your affair will and there’s more:

2 Samuel 12:10–11 (ESV) ¹⁰ ...the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ ¹¹ Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

- Then the CONSEQUENCES began to unfold:
 - David’s son rapes his half-sister
 - Her brother plots revenge and murder
 - The king refuses to deal with the situation
 - Estrangement leads to rebellion, conspiracy, and now, civil war!
- David began so well! Remember when God placed him on the throne?
- 2 Samuel 7:18 (ESV) ¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the Lord and said, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that you have brought me thus far?
- How did King David get from such humility to such dysfunction?
- UNCONTROLLED SELFISH AMBITION.
- **Described in a few words, what does selfish ambition look like?**
- For a simple example of selfish ambition - the average two year old.
- “I want what I want, when I want it, and no one is going to get in my way.”
- Ever see a young child open a gift and react with ‘is that all I get?’
- Have I ever had that same reaction to where God has placed me or what He has chosen to give me?
- **When uncontrolled selfish ambition causes us to scheme our way to our desires, what are we saying to God about the life we have?**

- Whether we admit it or not, there is a “seed” of selfish ambition in every one of us, even in followers of Christ. We’ll talk about how to keep it from sprouting in a few minutes.
- Uncontrolled selfish ambition in the heart of David’s son Absalom had reached the boiling point as we turn to chapter 15 of 2 Samuel.
- Remember, David’s first born son Amnon raped and humiliated Tamar, David was angry but swept it under the rug, so Absalom settled the score by murdering Amnon.
- Absalom fled to another city fearing the wrath of David. And though David longed to have Absalom back in Jerusalem, he refused to allow his return.
- Eventually, David is tricked into allowing Absalom’s return but “freezes him out” and for two years Absalom builds up a head of resentful steam.
- *“How dare my father the King treat me this way? I took care of a problem he refused to deal with! I avenged my sister! My father is God’s anointed King? Give me a break --- I SHOULD BE KING!”* Uncontrolled selfish ambition was boiling over in the heart and mind of Absalom.
- *“I want what I want, when I want it, and no one is going to get in my way.”*
- Absalom had the stuff to pull off a palace coup. He looked and acted the part of the perfect politician:

2 Samuel 14:25–26 (NLT)

²⁵ Now Absalom was praised as the most handsome man in all Israel. He was flawless from head to foot. ²⁶ He cut his hair only once a year, and then only because it was so heavy. When he weighed it out, it came to five pounds!

- For four years Absalom executed a brilliant plan to steal the hearts of the people of Jerusalem away from his father King David (15:1-6.)
- Then he moved into phase two: he lied to David about taking a trip to Hebron in order to fulfill a vow to God. He was actually building an army for the overthrow of David.

2 Samuel 15:10–16 (NLT)

¹⁰ But while he was there, he sent secret messengers to all the tribes of Israel to stir up a rebellion against the king. “As soon as you hear the ram’s horn,” his message read, “you are to say, ‘Absalom has been crowned king in Hebron.’”
¹¹ He took 200 men from Jerusalem with him as guests, but they knew nothing of his intentions. ¹² While Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, one of David’s counselors who lived in Giloh. Soon many others also joined Absalom, and the conspiracy gained momentum.

Meanwhile back in Jerusalem ---

¹³ A messenger soon arrived in Jerusalem to tell David, “All Israel has joined Absalom in a conspiracy against you!”

¹⁴ “Then we must flee at once, or it will be too late!” David urged his men. “Hurry! If we get out of the city before Absalom arrives, both we and the city of Jerusalem will be spared from disaster.”

¹⁵ “We are with you,” his advisers replied. “Do what you think is best.”

¹⁶ So the king and all his household set out at once. He left no one behind except ten of his concubines to look after the palace.

- David quickly concludes he should flee rather than fight.
- It's obvious he was trying to protect the city and the people.
- If God's anointed King was leaving then the Levites assumed the Ark of the Covenant should go with him. But David sees it differently because he trusts God's will.

2 Samuel 15:25–30 (NLT)

²⁵ Then the king instructed Zadok to take the Ark of God back into the city. "If the Lord sees fit," David said, "he will bring me back to see the Ark and the Tabernacle again." ²⁶ But if he is through with me, then let him do what seems best to him."

- While David trusted God with his future, he was also doing his part.

²⁷ The king also told Zadok the priest, "Look, here is my plan. You and Abiathar should return quietly to the city with your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son Jonathan. ²⁸ I will stop at the shallows of the Jordan River and wait there for a report from you." ²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar took the Ark of God back to the city and stayed there.

- David's trusted advisers would help him to execute a plan to restore order, but for now things looked bleak for God's anointed king.

³⁰ David walked up the road to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went. His head was covered and his feet were bare as a sign of mourning. And the people who were with him covered their heads and wept as they climbed the hill.

- David had a lot to cry about. Because of his own disobedience his family was in shambles and his reign as king seemed to be over. It all started with UNCONTROLLED SELFISH AMBITION.
- For David, it was arrogance and self-sufficiency giving way to lust, cover-up, and murder. Another case of, "*I want what I want (Bathsheba), when I want it (NOW), and no one is going to get in my way (Her husband.)*"
- When Nathan confronted David with his sins in the Bathsheba affair, he said: "*The Lord, the God of Israel, says: I anointed you king of Israel and saved you from the power of Saul. ⁸ I gave you your master's house and his wives and the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. And if that had not been enough, I would have given you much, much more.*" 2 Sam. 12:7–8 (NLT)
- "*David, I gave you EVERYTHING you could desire but it wasn't enough!*"
- Uncontrolled selfish ambition is basically throwing everything God has given us back in His face and saying, '*It's not good enough, I want more!*'

- Then we see Absalom’s uncontrolled selfish ambition. He didn’t care about God’s plan for who would be king of Israel. Absalom had his own plan – HE should be king not his father.
- Another case of, *“I want what I want (to be king), when I want it (NOW), and no one is going to get in my way (David or God.)”*
- How did it all turn out? You’ll have to come back next week (or at least read ahead in chapters 16-18.) Let’s just say all that beautiful hair of Absalom’s would work against him before his story was over.
- So what does this all mean for you and me? It’s unlikely that any of us will be plotting murder or the overthrow of a king this week.
- James 3:16 (NLT) ¹⁶ For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind.
- **How can selfish ambition show up in the hearts of people like us?**
- We’ve said that UNCONTROLLED SELFISH AMBITION looks like this:
 - Uncontrolled selfish ambition is saying, *“I want what I want, when I want it, and no one is going to get in my way.”*
 - Uncontrolled selfish ambition is throwing everything God has given us back in His face and saying, ‘It’s not good enough, I want more!’
 - Uncontrolled selfish ambition is throwing aside God’s plan and provision for my life and going after MY PLAN because I believe MY PLAN is better than God’s plan.
- **What is God’s “antidote” to keep selfish ambition from growing from a small seed to a deadly, choking vine?**
- Turn to Philippians 2:3-4. What does it have to say? What did Jesus model for us based on Philippians 2:5-11?

So, What’s the Takeaway?

- If we apply the truth of what Paul wrote to the Philippians and follow the example of Jesus, we can spray the “weed killer” of humility on the seeds of selfish ambition and reverse our three symptoms above.
- If I count others more significant than myself and have the mind and humility of Jesus then:
 - I will want what God wants for my life, when He wants it, and I’ll stay out of His way trusting Him for what is best.
 - I will be a grateful child thanking God for what He has for me, trusting Him to bless me with more if He chooses.
 - I will trust God’s plan for my life knowing that His plan is always better than any plan I could come up with.
- We all need a dose of “Peter’s prescription for selfish ambition in 1 Peter 5:6 (NLT) So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.
- This week, will I try to manipulate the circumstances to get what I want, or will I be happy with what God has given me and trust His plan?

ⁱ Deuteronomy 17:15–17 (ESV)

¹⁵ you may indeed set a king over you whom the Lord your God will choose. One from among your brothers you shall set as king over you. You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. ¹⁶ Only he must not acquire many horses for himself or cause the people to return to Egypt in order to acquire many horses, since the Lord has said to you, ‘You shall never return that way again.’ ¹⁷ And he shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away, nor shall he acquire for himself excessive silver and gold.