

Lack of Action = Lack of Leadership

This section is taken from my book, **King David and Other Kings: Life Lessons for Today**.

It is about taking action as a leader, which is another sign of leadership. Leadership is not just a position, but rather influence.

We all have influence in one way or another, although not all of us should have influence. Leaders lead. Many people who are leaders are not leading, while others who are in charge mistake that to be equivalent to leadership. **Because someone is in charge is not synonymous with being the leader.**

"But when king David heard of all these things, he was very wroth." — 2 Samuel 13:21

1. David heard that Amnon had raped his own sister Tamar.
 - a) **He was very displeased and angry, but he did not do anything about it** as the leader of his house and of Israel.
 - b) Just getting angry and not taking any godly appropriate action was no help.
 - c) David was the father and king to both individuals, and he was in a position of authority to render some sort of punishment or discipline for this gross behavior by Amnon, but David never did a thing.

2. **No action against Ammon**
 - a) He had not dealt with Amnon, so now it would require even more courage to deal with Absalom.
 - b) **Whatever we allow will only increase.**
 - c) We must put out the fire quickly and immediately.
 - d) Some could argue that this trouble was already pronounced by God upon David and his house through Nathan (2 Samuel 12).
 - It was going to come regardless of how David resisted and fought it.

3. Although David had committed terrible sins of adultery and murder, **he should have taken some action, exercised his authority, and rendered some sort of punishment to Amnon.**

➤ **Don't let your past sins or mistakes stop you from being the leader God has called you to do and be.**

a) Why did David do nothing? Could he have been fearful of how the people could have perceived his punishment of Amnon, knowing well what he had done earlier with Bathsheba and Uriah?

b) Could he have **believed that it was hypocritical on his part to do something to Amnon**, yet he had done something possibly worse?

i) (knowing his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah's murder)

c) Probably so, but this was no excuse for him not to act. **He was the leader of the home and the King of Israel**; therefore, some sort of punishment or discipline was at least expected.

4. Although morally, David had messed up significantly more than Amnon, who was in the right position to render discipline, but David?

2 Samuel 13:23 And it came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baalhazor, which *is* beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

a) **Two full years:**

For two full years from the time of the rape, David took no action, which caused things to get worse.

b) Tamar's brother Absalom took vengeance into his own hands by scheming to kill Amnon, his half-brother (2 Samuel 13:20-33), but this probably wouldn't have happened had David acted as a real leader ought to act.

5. **David's lack of action**

a) This is not to excuse Absalom's behavior, but to make the point that David's lack of action, discipline, or punishment of Amnon, eventually led to Absalom's hatred and Amnon's eventual murder.

6. **Hypocritical for David to act?**

a) Some may say, "Well, it's hypocritical for David to have acted in disciplining Amnon." **I beg to differ.**

- b) David would **have been doing the right thing** as a leader and father, regardless of how it would have been viewed by others.
- c) He was the one in authority, not anyone else.

7. **More problems will arise from a lack of action**

- a) His lack of action was even worse because it escalated lots of other problems in the family.

8. **Regardless of how many times we have failed as leaders, we should always take steps of action to solve problems, even if we have been guilty of the same.**

- a) We must repent and humble ourselves and then act.
- b) **We cannot hide our inactivity behind the fact that we have or have had flaws in a similar or certain area.**
- c) There would have been a humble way David could have approached this situation and executed punishment had he set his heart to do so.
- d) **For example**, he could have said, "I'm guilty of something like what you have done Amnon, but I repented and humbled myself before the Lord. However, as the man in authority (father and King over Israel), it is my duty and responsibility to render punishment and justice for such unacceptable behavior.
- e) When I screwed up, the Lord dealt with me. But when you do, it's my responsibility and job to discipline you."
 - **We should not let our past sins render us ineffective, especially if we are leaders in authority.**
 - i) It is not hypocritical to speak up against something you once did that was wrong. It is leadership and maturity to do so. However, as you do, make sure your current life reflects the difference you are verbally trying to achieve.
 - ii) Many have been paralyzed into never talking about an issue they once dealt with while they watch from the sidelines as it wrecks and plunders lives.
 - iii) The plan of the enemy is to silence us in those areas, while God wants us to help others avoid those pit holes. The truth is, some people will listen while others won't. **The response of the people—positive or negative, should not be the deciding factor whether we speak or not.**

- iv) If something is ungodly, we need to oppose it and speak up against it even though we once struggled with it.
- v) We need to speak up and also model that change throughout our lives. If we do not, nothing will change. People will continue to fall prey to the enemy in those areas while we quietly look on.

9. **Action is a deterrent to sin**

- a) If David acted this way, it would have been a **deterrent for sin** in the future and would have sent a message to others not to act foolishly, knowing he wouldn't shy away from dealing with them.

10. **Our lack of moral acuteness affects our influence**

- a) Although it's true that our lack of moral acuteness affects our influence (leadership):

We must **still do what is right regardless of how it could be perceived by others, especially those who know our flaws and weaknesses.**

11. If you are a **leader**, you must deal with all issues and all problems, even if you are, or once were, guilty of the same.

- a) **True hypocrisy.**

- i) If we are in a position of authority and we do not do something about such things, then that is the definition of **true hypocrisy.**

- b) **Doing the right is not hypocritical**

- i) It is not hypocritical for me to do what is right based on my position of authority, even if I struggled in the same area before.

- c) However, it is wisdom that a leader **should repent first and have a clear conscience** while dealing with a problem in which he was once involved. It is necessary to repent as soon as possible and not take nine months or more, like David.

12. **We should not be intimidated into inaction by those who might be watching.**

➤ **We must do what is right, and a lack of action means a lack of leadership.**

- a) We will be respected by those who want to respect us and disrespected by those who have never respected us.

13. Confront problems

- a) Leaders must always confront problems because if they don't, they will not just go away.
- b) Instead, the problems will just multiply down the road. Time cannot heal all wounds; some just get worse over time.
- c) **"Hand of the Lord?"**

2 Samuel 24:14 And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the LORD; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

- i) **"Hand of the Lord?"** Was he thinking that because God had prophesied tragedy in his house, this was part of it, and therefore took no action against it, believing it was the **"hand of the Lord?"**
- ii) I truly believe that David was "paralyzed" (I'm using this word loosely) from action and good discernment from the day he went into Bathsheba. He lived in denial for so long (imagine two full years of no action).

Example: For instance, if God said you will die, do you go ahead and kill yourself? Do you do things to destroy your life? After all, God said you will die someday! If God said you will be rich, do you steal and make it happen through ungodly ways? After all, God said you will be rich. But since we know well that evil doesn't come from God (James 1:13-17), we should resist the devil (James 4:7) and let it not prevail because of some prophecy.

Another example of this lack of action from David.

2 Samuel 2:17-23 And there was a very sore battle that day; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David. And there were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel: and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe. And Asahel pursued after Abner; and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him, and said, *Art* thou Asahel? And he answered, *I am*. And Abner said to him, Turn thee aside to thy right hand or to thy left, and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour. But Asahel would not turn aside from following of him. And Abner said again to Asahel, Turn thee aside from following me: wherefore should I smite thee to the ground? how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother? Howbeit he refused to turn aside: wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth *rib*, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place: and it came to pass, *that* as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still.

- i) Abner kills Asahel
- ii) First, I believe this killing of Asahel by Abner was in self-defense as Asahel pursued after Abner on the day they had "sore battle" (2 Samuel 2:17). He asked Asahel to back off, and he refused.

a) **No action against Joab**

2 Samuel 3:24-30 Then Joab came to the king, and said, What hast thou done? behold, Abner came unto thee; why *is* it *that* thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone? Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner, that he came to deceive thee, and to know thy going out and thy coming in, and to know all that thou doest. And when Joab was come out from David, he sent messengers after Abner, which brought him again from the well of Sirah: but David knew *it* not. **And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth *rib*, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother.** And afterward when David heard *it*, he said, I and my kingdom *are* guiltless before the LORD for ever from the blood of Abner the son of Ner: Let it rest on the head of Joab, and on all his father's house; and let there not fail from the house of Joab one that hath an issue, or that is a leper, or that leaneth on a staff, or that falleth on the sword, or that lacketh bread. **So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner, because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle.**

- i) David not dealing with Joab, who had killed Abner (captain of Saul's Host—2 Samuel 2:8). Joab killing Abner was wrong, even though Abner had earlier killed his brother Asahel. This was premeditated murder, and he should not have gotten away with it.
- ii) Joab was not the one to render this punishment.
- iii) This problem of not dealing with Joab returned to David and stung him. Joab enabled his sin of killing Uriah, and later he joined Adonijah to rebel against Solomon.
 - Had David dismissed, disciplined, or dealt with Joab, his future could have had fewer problems.

b) **No action cost him his throne**

- i) Later, this pattern of lack of action on David's part continued. It cost him his throne, at least temporarily.
- ii) **Absalom**
David knew the dealings of Absalom; how he stole the hearts of the people away from the King (deceptively, of course) and how he planned treason against David (2 Samuel 15), but he again did nothing.

- iii) I am not convinced that David knew nothing about all of this. There is no way David could not have known. Imagine if it were someone else besides his son who had plotted this treason, how would he have responded?
- c) **David could have stopped Absalom**
- i) Besides David knowing about it, David had all the might, forces, and ability to extinguish this treasonous plan.
 - ii) David had conquered bigger and stronger enemies than Absalom, like the Philistines (2 Samuel 19:9).
 - Surely Absalom was no match for David if he chose to stop this foolishness. He could have crushed Absalom.
- d) **Death of people due to the war with Absalom**
- i) His inaction led to the deaths of many people due to the war that later broke out between Absalom's army and David's men.
 - ii) David had become passive in his general dealings and behavior.
- **Leaders confront problems; they don't shy away, hide, or run from them. Be the leader God has called you to be.**