

# 2 Samuel 16:15 - Chapter 18 • Pride Breeds Destruction

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier  
Life Bible Ministry

2 Samuel chapter 16 is where we are. What we're seeing in 2 Samuel here is just a lot of, well, we're seeing Absalom. We're seeing the son of David who is just really just overtaken with pride.

I want to start tonight by showing you actually a passage from the Proverbs that I want to put on the screen for you. And you're probably most of you aware of this passage.

## **Proverbs 16:18 (ESV)**

*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

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Most people, even in the world will quote this as, pride goes before a fall. And even among non-believers, this is a verse, a truth that is in fact quoted. And it's a great, it's a great verse. And for many of us, it's very, very familiar verse.

The problem with familiarity I've noticed, and have you noticed this too, that when you become very familiar with something, you tend to pay as close attention to it? It becomes just a regular part of what you know and you think, well, pride goes before the fall. And people say, yeah, pride goes before the fall. And yeah, well, pride goes before the fall.

And you hear it so many times, and you become so familiar with it, you really stop thinking about the implications of how it can really affect your life. How pride can really affect your life and create a situation where a fall of some kind or destruction, even as this. And it goes beyond a fall, says destruction. You can almost stop thinking about how imminent that might be because we're so familiar with the statement. It's like, well, it's just one of those things people say.

And the other thing about this passage that I think I need to address before we really get into it tonight is that Absalom is one of these larger than life characters. I mean, he looks like, well, we don't know exactly what he looks

like. We know the Bible tells us, he was extremely handsome. But he appears to us in the pages of Scripture to be so bigger than life that we look at his failure, we look at his downfall. We look at his destruction, which is going to happen just as the proverb says. And it's going to be because of what the proverb says, pride.

And we look at it and we tend to think, oh, Absalom. Whoa, oh that Absalom. And Absalom becomes almost this larger than life character that we, none of us can really relate to in any sort of a real sense. And so again, we tend to push it back a little bit from our lives and really not look at it and say, what can I learn from Absalom?

We tend to think, well, there's probably not a whole lot I can learn from Absalom because he was just, he was, Absalom, and I'm just me. And so it's like, this is an interesting story. It's an interesting mistake he made. We tend to think, yeah, Absalom, what a dope. I mean, did he really think he was going to get away with it? Did the guy really think he was going to pull it off? Well, Absalom.

There are so many things about Absalom, though, that are important for you and I to look at as it relates to understanding how pride. And pride, let's make no mistake about it, pride was the undercurrent of Absalom's life. And sure, there was bitterness, there was resentment. There were a lot of other things about his father that I think, concerning his father, that brought him to a place that there was at the base of it all this absolute arrogant, prideful attitude that just really governed his life. And it, we see him destroyed in the thing, in the chapters we're going to look at tonight. We're going to see Absalom destroyed. We're going to watch it.

But lest we miss the lessons, I wanted to just exhort you before we get into it here that we look at this and we don't say, that's Absalom over there. But we ask ourselves the question, what is it about this story that I can learn from tonight and how much of Absalom's heart is in me?

I really believe honestly people, that one of the worst things that we can do is look at people and say, oh, how could they do that? I really do. I think that's I think that's a very dangerous attitude to begin to take. Rather we should look at people and we should say, knowing our biblical understanding of how people tick. We should say, I know how they could do that because the same ingredients is inside of me.

Do you guys hear about the, was it an ESPN reporter gal who was caught on video berating this individual who worked for this tow company? Did you guys see about that? It made it on Facebook, which of course means it went viral. And poor gal, I mean. And I'm not trying to excuse her in any stretch of the imagination, what she did was wrong. And apparently her vehicle had been towed. And so she on, on video for every bit for the whole world to see, full of expletives and all kinds of colorful language. She just completely berated this individual and said some of the most cruel, hurtful, demeaning sort of stuff that can come out of a human mouth, and so forth. And, oh, did people have fun roasting her?

I don't know if you ever read news stories, online articles or news stories. They put a section at the bottom of them where people can comment. It's really interesting to me about how this woman was caught berating somebody on video, and the people who read this report were so incensed, guess what they started doing? They started berating her and they started berating her because she berated someone else. But they felt that their version of it was acceptable you see, because they're responding to her misbehavior.

And I was just I was amazed by it. I wasn't amazed by it. I was in fact, I wasn't amazed at all from the standpoint of yeah, this is human nature. But I was amazed that people so easily disconnect from the offense that somebody did over there to the offense that they're doing in here. And they don't seem to see the connection. It's like, nobody said, oh, poor gal.

It got posted on online and I actually wrote a response on a Facebook post and I just said, boy. And I'm paraphrasing here, but I just said, I hope I never get caught on tape fleshing out because that could happen. I could do that. I mean, when I say I could do that. I hope I never do. I really do. Not just so they don't get caught on tape. I hope I never do it because it's a wrong thing to do.

But given the right circumstances, don't you agree with me that we could all go there? I mean, it, we're all a choice away from going there, right? It's a choice every day. Somebody cuts you off in traffic, you've got a choice in front of you. Whether you're going to question that person's parentage or not. Or if you're going to pray for them or something like that. Whatever the case may be, we're all just a choice away, expressing something that is completely contrary to our Christian faith. Are we not?

And the reason that we have to be very careful about our choices on a daily basis is because in our hearts, in our very lives, is a sinful nature that's just waiting to take hold. It's just waiting. And the temptations for you and I to

express that sinful nature are many and varied in the course of a given day. And if I was in a hurry and I had no money to pay for my car getting towed and there were all these other inconveniences that came along. I might get pretty angry at somebody, especially if I feel like they were even gunning for me.

What's interesting about that article is, somebody actually wrote an article about this ESPN reporter saying, here's the other side of the story. This tow company is known for literally standing and watching and waiting and 60 seconds after their time expires, towing their car right out of there, and charging them all kinds of money in the end. And this person said, I did some research on this tow company, and the people of this community just hate this company because they feel like they're constantly taking advantage of people.

Well, but you don't hear about that because that's not the sensational side of the story. And it doesn't get you all lathered up about the thing, and get people feeling all self-righteous, and so on and so forth. Yeah. There's always two sides to a story, aren't there? Always.

The bottom line of this whole thing, what I'm saying to you is, when we see somebody doing something really bad, whether it's an ESPN reporter. And I don't remember if that's where she worked. Or the President of the United States, or a criminal, or Absalom, the worst thing you and I can do is say, well, I'd never do that. Because let me tell you something, there's a little bit of Absalom in every single one of us.

The basic, fundamental building blocks of what it takes to be a rebellious, evil person reside within our heart and only through faith in Jesus Christ and the power of the Gospel working through our lives, are we going to walk in any level of victory against that tide.

Is there a victory? You bet there is. Paul writes about it in Romans. Who's going to set me free from this body of death? He says. Praise be to God, who through Christ Jesus has given me the victory and so forth. (Romans 7:24-25) He is the victory. He is our victory. He is the way that we overcome those sorts of things. But the first thing we have to do, is we have to admit that this is in us. Boy, we better pray.

Father God open our hearts to the ministry of Your Spirit tonight through the Word. Teach us, fill us, give us understanding through Christ our Savior, amen.

Quickly catching you up. We're going through tonight, we're finishing here tonight, what had to have been an event in David's life that was probably the

worst of the worst for him. He is being threatened now by a coup attempt. The perpetrator of that rebellion is none other than his own son, which obviously adds insult to injury.

And David and all those who are loyal to him have now fled the city. They've fled Jerusalem on foot. They're tired. They're hungry, they're thirsty, and they're literally running for their lives. Yet some of David's friends, have been asked to stay behind in Jerusalem to provide intel that might be sent to David so that he can stay a step ahead of Absalom. And that's where we pick up the story.

We're in the 16th chapter of 2 Samuel and we're picking it up in the 15th verse. Skip down to verse 15. *"Now Absalom and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him."* (ESV) Now stop there for just a moment.

One of David's advisors was a man named Ahithophel who decided to follow Absalom in this rebellion. That is also very hurtful. It's again, the rebellion itself is hurtful. The fact that it's his son doing it is hurtful. And now some of his closest advisors have gone over with his son and this Ahithophel is one of them.

It says in verse 16, *"And when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, came to Absalom, Hushai said to Absalom, 'Long live the king! Long live the king!'"* Now remember, Hushai is there at David's request. Hushai wanted to go with David, but David said, listen, you go back to the city and you pretend to be loyal, to switch, to transfer your loyalties over to Absalom. And I'm going to put you there so that you can actually, that you can confuse the advice that would otherwise be given by Hushai. All right.

But you'll notice Absalom, as we go on reading, is surprised to see Hushai. It says, *"<sup>17</sup> And Absalom said to Hushai, 'Is this your loyalty to your friend? (in other words, is this how you show loyalty?) Why did you not go with your friend?' <sup>18</sup> And Hushai said to Absalom, 'No, for whom the LORD and this people and all the men of Israel have chosen, his I will be, and with him I will remain. <sup>19</sup> And again, whom should I serve? Should it not be his son? As I have served your father, so I will serve you.'"*

Notice what Hushai says. He says, I'm here to serve the king, and if you're the king, then I'm here to serve you. And I served your father, and I'll now serve you. No big, no skin off my nose who I serve. I'm here to serve the king.

Now, what is Hushai doing here? You need to understand what's happening here in this exchange between these two men because it all comes back to pride.

The reason Hushai is able to do this, he's able to say to Absalom, hey I'm yours. I go with the king, is because he's appealing to Absalom.

Why is Absalom want to be king? He wants the power. He wants the power of being king because pridefully he needs it. He needs it to complete himself so he wants this power, and he's expecting people to be drawn to that power. He's expecting people to think just like him in his prideful sort of a way.

And so Hushai, is questioned. Why are you here? Aren't you loyal to my father David? And Hushai says, hey, I'm loyal to the king. I'm loyal. In other words, I'm loyal to where the power is. I'm going to go wherever the power is. Right?

And you know what? It works. It works. That's all Absalom needs to hear. You know why? Because he's a prideful man himself, and he is, and Hushai is speaking to him, and appealing to his pride, and it is going to convince him. Because Absalom is so prideful, he can't imagine why somebody wouldn't want to be on his side. You see, that's the way prideful people... They're like, of course, of course you want to be.

And Hushai speaks his language. Hey, hey, you're the man in power. I'm going to hang with the man in power. Of course you are. Right. Hey, good. Welcome to our side, Hushai. Great. Wonderful. Yeah I'm building, it's building, right? Momentum is building. Great. Wonderful. Pride. Pride goes before the fall.

<sup>20</sup> *Then Absalom said to Ahithophel, (now he's the one who really truly did betray David) "Give your counsel. What shall we do?"* Now remember, Ahithophel is a great counselor.

*"<sup>21</sup> Ahithophel said to Absalom, "Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened."* <sup>22</sup> *So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof. (that's so people can see) And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel."* And again, that was the way that they did it back then, to advance an expression of dominance.

Again, Ahithophel is speaking Absalom's language. It's like, okay, Ahithophel, here you are, you're in Jerusalem. You're in the palace. This is the palace that belongs to the king. He says to Ahithophel, what should I do first? Well, I think you should first exercise your authority. How? Well, I noticed that your dad left behind some of his concubines. Why don't you go sleep with them? And that will be an expression to the people of Israel that you have dominated your

father, that you're in charge. And what was your father's, is now yours. Great. Absalom thinks that's a wonderful idea.

And so he does. Verse 23, it says, *“Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the word of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.”*

Here's a man who has great counsel. The problem is now he's using it for really, really evil purposes. I mean, to give counsel like this, that you would take another man's wife. And truly even a concubine in a legal sense was considered a wife. And so he's now counseling immorality. Okay. So he has, this, you see what's going on in his heart.

Chapter 17. *“Moreover, (and) Ahithophel (is going to continue with his advice, he) said to Absalom, “Let me choose twelve thousand men, and I will arise and pursue David tonight. <sup>2</sup> I will come upon him while he is weary and discouraged and throw him into a panic, and all the people who are with him will flee. I will strike down only the king, (in other words, I won’t go after any other people) <sup>3</sup> and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband. You seek the life of only one man, and all the people will be at peace.” <sup>4</sup> And the advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel.”* Stop there.

Guess what? This is good advice. Good is relative to the whole thing. I mean, good for what Absalom wants to accomplish. This is really, this is sound advice for somebody who wants to conquer his enemy.

And it's a good thing that the Lord intervened here because had they gone with this advice, David could have been in serious trouble. But this is really good advice from the standpoint of, this would be very effective. Let's just go after him tonight. Right now. They're tired. They're weary. We can pounce on them. I promise I won't hurt any other people. We'll just kill David. And once everybody hears that David is dead, there's going to be no other issues. I'll bring all the other people back safe and sound and they're going to love you. We'll be good.

You know why it's good advice? It really doesn't take that much effort. It doesn't take any time. It doesn't give David time to regroup, or to get himself settled, or get his battle plan organized, strategized, whatever. It doesn't give David, it just pounces immediately. It's a really good plan, honestly. It's evil, but it's a good plan.

But look what it says. Hushai has so won over Absalom with his deception, that he says. *“Then Absalom said, (in verse 5) “Call Hushai the Archite also, and let us hear what he has to say.””* He must think, yeah.

Now I want, as we read this here, people, I want you to pay very close attention to what Hushai advises. And we're going to, I'm going to stop you every so often and I'm going to talk a little bit about it. Okay. And here's why. Remember the Scripture I put up at the very beginning from Proverbs? After pride comes destruction.

Well, listen, Hushai is going to put together a plan, and it's going to appeal to one primary thing, Absalom's pride. And God is going to use his pride to trip him up and ultimately allow him to be destroyed. In keeping with the verse that we read from Proverbs.

All right, here we go. Here's Hushai. *“<sup>6</sup> And when Hushai came to Absalom, Absalom said to him, “Thus has Ahithophel spoken; shall we do as he says? If not, you speak.” (and) <sup>7</sup> Then Hushai said to Absalom, “This time the counsel that Ahithophel has given is not good.” <sup>8</sup> Hushai said, “You know that your father and his men are mighty men, and that they are enraged, like a bear robbed of her cubs in the field. Besides, your father is expert in war; he will not spend the night with the people. <sup>9</sup> Behold, even now he has hidden himself in one of the pits or in some other place. And as soon as some of the people fall at the first attack, whoever hears it will say, ‘There has been a slaughter among the people who follow Absalom.’ <sup>10</sup> Then even the valiant man, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will utterly melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a mighty man, and that those who are with him are valiant men.”* All right, stop there just for a moment.

He hasn't begun yet to really appeal to Absalom's pride. What he's doing is feeding the potential of fear first, but he's doing it by stating facts. Hey, listen, your dad ran from, king Saul for a lot of years. He knows how to do it. He knows the lay of the land. He knows how to hide himself in difficult situations. He's a warrior. Your dad is a warrior. So don't underestimate your dad because listen, if you march out tonight, like you've been told. Like a Ahithophel advised and they start to get the upper hand, people are going to hear about it and they're going to go, oh, guess what's happening? Absalom is being defeated. And everybody's going to hearts are going to melt like wax and you're going to your going to lose it all. So here's my advice. So he starts by priming the pump with a little healthy fear.



Verse 11. *“But my counsel (look at what he says) is that all Israel be gathered to you, from Dan to Beersheba, as the sand by the sea for multitude, and that you go to battle in person.”* All right, stop there. Stop there.

Please give me just let me talk to you here because this pride. It’s appealing to his pride. Here's what I think you ought to do. Absolutely. Give it time. Let's put the word out through all Israel and let's bring them forth as a mighty army. With you leading them all. Absalom, in the lead, sword drawn, raised up above your head. Absalom, the king, he's the leader of all the armies of Israel.

You can just see Absalom, can't you? Staring off in the distance as Hushai is telling him about this or advising him. And maybe a small little smile breaks out across his face as he thinks. Yeah. That's the picture of himself he wants to see. Hushai is appealing to his pride. Let all Israel Absalom be drawn to you. To you. You see, this is amazing.

He says, verse 12, *“So we shall come upon him in some place where he is to be found, (wherever he is by that time) and we shall light upon him as the dew falls on the ground, and of him and all the men with him not one will be left.”*

And this appeals to that heart of prideful vengeance. Oh, David, or oh, Absalom, let's not just kill David, let's kill them all. Aipe them all out. Pride. Strength. Yes. Yes. Let's kill them all. You see what he's doing?

Verse 13. *“If he withdraws into a city, (like runs to for his life for into the safety of some walled city) then all Israel (all Israel) will bring ropes to that city, and we shall drag it into the valley, until not even a pebble is to be found there.”*

That's his advice. He says, listen, and if David tries to get away, we'll find him out. We'll search him out. And if he hides in some city, we'll decimate the city. Nothing will be able to stop you Absalom because you are the almighty, all powerful king of Israel. You can just see how this is just, his head is just increasing in size as Hushai speaks. He's appealing to that element of pride so that he might be tripped up.

<sup>14</sup> *And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, (oh, oh) “The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.”* (because now we feel more like men. Isn't this, yeah, oh, this is good) *For the LORD* (look at this last sentence in verse 14, this is really important) *had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the LORD might bring harm upon Absalom.”*

I want you to stop for just a moment. I want you to think for just a minute about Hushai's advice and what it would entail. It would take a lot of time and a lot of effort because they got to take time to get the word out to all the cities in Israel and gather and amass that army. That's time. It's never, it's not usually a good thing to let your enemy have time. That's why Ahithophel's advice was really better. Just pounce on him right away. But Hushai says, no, let's gather this big army. There'll be like the sand on the seashore. Well, that takes time to do.

What is Hushai doing? Is giving David time. Precious time to get himself rested, to get his people gathered, to get his strategy formed. Hushai is providing time. And then Hushai actually is suggesting something that is going to take a lot more effort and frankly presents a lot more risk. But of course it appeals to Absalom because it sounds so glorious. It's going to be glorious, Absalom.

Okay, having done that now, look at verse 15. *"Then Hushai said to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, 'Thus and so did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel, and thus and so have I counseled.'<sup>16</sup> Now therefore send quickly and tell David, 'Do not stay tonight at the fords of the wilderness, but by all means pass over, (that means, pass over the Jordan) lest the king and all the people who are with him be swallowed up.'"*

So Hushai goes to these priests and he says, all right, send the word to David that he needs to move quickly. Why is he saying that? He just told Absalom to take all kinds of time? Well, he doesn't know if Absalom is going to take his advice for sure. And he doesn't know if Absalom might even change his mind later on, so he's not taking any chances. And he says, go tell David, do not stay where you are basically on the bank of the Jordan. Cross over the Jordan, get over onto the other side, and get yourself safe. Okay, get out of harm's way.

Do you remember what they were going to do? The idea was Zadok and Abiathar had sons who then would be told whatever message came from Hushai and then they would take it to David. Remember that? So we've got this succession. Hushai is there, Zadok and Abiathar are there, and their sons are going to receive this information.

It says in verse 17 that their sons, *"...Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at En-rogel."* Okay, very near, just outside of Jerusalem. All right. Two young men lying in wait to get the information, the intel, if you will, and take it to David. And we're told here, in the middle of verse 17, that *"A female servant was to go and tell them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they were not to be seen entering the city."*

Do you guys see how careful they are in this situation? Hushai has the information. He gives it to the priests. The priests tell it to a woman. And this woman goes to En-rogel to tell it to their sons, that they would run and tell David. And the reason they had to do it this way is they can't be seen talking to one another or people are going to suspect and so forth.

Well, as it turns out, they almost lose it here. Look at it says in verse 17. *“But a young man saw them (meaning the sons of the priest) and told Absalom.”* He said, hey, the sons of Zadok and Abiathar, I saw them. I saw them at En-rogel. They're just hanging out there.

*“So both of them went away quickly and came to the house of a man at Bahurim, who had a well in his courtyard. And they went down into it. (alright, they are hiding literally in a well)<sup>19</sup> And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth and scattered grain on it, and nothing was known of it.<sup>20</sup> When Absalom's servants came to the woman at the house, they said, “Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?” And the woman said to them, (well) “They have gone over the brook of water.” And when they had sought and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.*

*<sup>21</sup> After they had gone, the men came up out of the well, and went and told King David. They said to David, “Arise, and go quickly over the water, for thus and so has Ahithophel counseled against you.”<sup>22</sup> Then David arose, and all the people who were with him, and they crossed the Jordan. By daybreak not one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.”*

So they got the word, and they made good their escape.

*“<sup>23</sup> When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city. He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father.”* Stop there.

I think Ahithophel basically the writing on the wall. And I think he knew. He knew that he gave the sound advice and he did. Ahithophel gave the best advice, but he knew that his advice wasn't taken. And I think he knew that the Lord had frustrated his advice to the king. And I think he knew that God was going to thwart his plan. Oh, and Absalom's plan.

And you got to think about it. If that's what happens, if there's a battle and David wins, guess what Ahithophel is for all time and eternity? A traitor. And he knows he would probably be executed as a traitor. And so seeing the writing on the wall, this thing is gone. He just goes ahead and commits suicide, hangs himself.

*“<sup>24</sup> Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. <sup>25</sup> Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. <sup>26</sup> And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.”*

And that the land of Gilead is that area across the Jordan, okay. On the other side of the Jordan. That's that area that was never really meant to be Israeli territory. It was never meant to be a part of Israel but do you remember when Moses came to the border of the promised land? Some of the tribes, two and a half tribes actually asked if they could stay on that side of the Jordan. And they were given permission as long as they crossed the Jordan and fought with their brothers to open up the land.

So this area of Gilead was again, never meant to be part of Israel, but it is. And that's where they've crossed over to. That's where David has gone. That's where Absalom has now gone to find his father and so forth.

*“<sup>27</sup> When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, <sup>28</sup> brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, <sup>29</sup> honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”*

Chapter 17. *“Then David mustered the men who were with him and set over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.”* There's quite an army that is following David, but it not nearly the size of the army that is following Absalom. He has the bigger of the two armies.

*“<sup>2</sup> And David sent out the army, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite.”*

Now this is an aggressive move. This is an aggressive move that David is doing here that I don't think Absalom really anticipated. Do you remember the advice that Hushai gave him? Gather all Israel unto you, go and attack him, and fall on him. In other words, Hushai characterized David as hiding. Right. David's going to be hiding somewhere and wherever you find him, even if it's in a city. If he hides in a city, we'll just tear down the city, and we'll kill him, and it'll all be good. Right. So Hushai, Absalom's got this in his mind. David's hiding. He's running. He's on the run. He's scared of me pride, right?

Pride, it blinds people, keeps them from understanding what's really truly going on. David is taking an aggressive posture. He gets his men together and instead of putting them under one commander, he puts them under three. Great strategy. And he sends them out as an attacking force to meet Absalom's army.

This is wonderful. This is David at his best. He is a commander. He is a warrior. And David is not cowering in fear somewhere, just waiting for this whole thing to come down. He's going to go out and he's going to face this situation head on. And Absalom doesn't expect that. And it gets even better as we go on.

And it says. And I ended it before we got to the end of verse 2. The very last sentence of verse 2 says, *“And the king said to the men, “I myself will also go out with you.”*

Verse 3. *“But the men said, “You shall not go out. For if we flee, they will not care about us. If half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us. Therefore it is better that you send us help from the city.”*

<sup>4</sup> *The king said to them, “Whatever seems best to you I will do.” So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands.”*

So the men appealed to David. David's willing to go out into battle. Not for pride, but because he wants to stand alongside his men. Now, Absalom is being completely governed by pride that's why he's going out with the army as the big leader.

Notice that David is humble enough that when his men say to him, David, listen, that's just not smart. If you got wounded, it would all be over. It would all be over. If one of us gets wounded, if half of us get wounded or even killed, the battle can go on and you can still emerge a victor. But if you lose your life in battle, it's all lost. We're fighting for nothing.

So David and David, is he this prideful man that, no, I'm going to go out there and teach that brat a lesson? Is there any of that going on in David? No! David's like, you know what whatever you guys say. That's just that humility. So refreshing to see that.

And here he says, verse 5, *“And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom.” And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom.*

*<sup>6</sup> So the army went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. ”*

Now stop there for just a moment. David, and then I believe this is part of David's strategy. Remember, he doesn't have as big of an army as Absalom does, because Absalom has the official Israel, Israelite army. David just has the guys who are loyal to him so you've got a smaller army than your enemy. Strategically, is it better to face that army in an open range or in a place where that big army has to split up? Yeah, I think that's a lot wiser.

David says, all right, here's what we're going to do. We're going to engage the enemy in the forest of Ephraim and because of this forested area, heavy, dense forest, they're going to be forced. First of all, we can hide. We've got a smaller army. We can hide.

Instead of just coming out and doing a frontal attack, which I've always thought was the dumbest thing in the world. How would you like to be the first row on the frontal attack? I always thought that was like the dumbest strategy in the world for engaging an enemy in battle. It's like, no, I want to climb a tree and pick people up without him even seeing me there. It's like, I'm a coward. Let me, let's do this thing. Right. Anyway, enough about me.

But David decides they're going to, they're going to engage the enemy from the forest. And this turns out to be an incredibly smart thing to do. Look what it says.

Verse 7. *“And the men of Israel (and that means the men of Absalom's army) were defeated there by the servants of David, and the loss there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. (it says) <sup>8</sup> The battle spread over the face of all the country, and the forest devoured more people that day than the sword.”*

Bringing people into the forest was just this hugely effective strategic move on David's part.

*“<sup>9</sup> And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak, and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was suspended between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.”*

Now you remember last week we talked about how pridefully Absalom used to cut his hair once a year and he would measure it, or weigh it, rather. And it would weigh right around five and a half pounds. That's a lot of hair. I don't care how you slice it. That's a lot of hair.

First of all, who even weighs their hair? I don't know the last time you weighed your hair after it was cut. That's a little weird, and you got to figure somebody's got to have a little pride going on if they're doing something like, hey, let's weigh that. And see how much it weighs. This hair of Absalom becomes for us this symbolic picture of his pride, right?

And this forest that he's going through, these dense branches and so on and so forth. Absalom is, he sees some of David's men, and he's on his donkey, and he's trying his best to get away. But his hair gets tangled in these branches to the point where... I'm not, I'm, I don't get the picture of him hanging by his hair necessarily. His hair is tangled, so he's, great... The first thing you do is you grab onto the branch to pull yourself up so that you don't. You're not literally being suspended by your..., so he's holding onto the branches. But his hair, he can't get it loose and he apparently doesn't have anything on him to cut it or something like that. So he's hanging there trying desperately to get his hair uncaught from these branches.

And it says, <sup>10</sup> *And a certain man (obviously on David's side) saw it and told Joab, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."* (that's a little weird, and) <sup>11</sup> *Joab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt."* (but this guy is no idiot, listen to him) <sup>12</sup> *But the man said to Joab, (listen buddy) "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not reach out my hand against the king's son, for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake protect the young man Absalom.'* <sup>13</sup> *On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof."* In other words, he's telling, he's calling Joab on this and he's saying, yeah, right.

He says, first of all, number one, I and everybody else in the army heard David tell you guys, deal gently with the boy Absalom. And second of all, had I decided to kill him on the spot, you wouldn't have even known my name when the question came up, who killed him? And you would not have stood by my side. So he knows Joab. I mean, he's got his number. Right?

And <sup>14</sup> *Joab said, (and of course, this is what people say when they are completely defeated in the argument) "I will not waste time like this with you."* (you know what that means? You're right, but I don't want to listen. A little pride going on there, too) *And he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in the oak.* <sup>15</sup> *And ten young*

*men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him."*

Boy, makes you wonder how much does it take to kill a guy anyway? I mean, I thought the three javelins would have done the job nicely, but these ten guys come along and it's like, what's there to finish? Man alive.

But don't you see here that again, the pride of Absalom, or at least the picture of Absalom pride. This hair, he was so good looking and everything, it becomes this again, this source of his demise.

And *"<sup>16</sup> Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained them."* He basically, that trumpet was meant to say, it's done.

*"<sup>17</sup> And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest and raised over him a very great heap of stones. And all Israel fled every one to his own home."*

And then one note, one final note the writer wants to give us on Absalom's pride. Check this out. *"<sup>18</sup> Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar that is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's monument to this day."*

Doesn't this remind you of shades of Saul who was into making monuments too? And again, who makes a monument to be remembered? Only someone who is governed by and consumed in fact, by their own pride. So the writer is giving us one final character glimpse.

You think it's completely beyond us to build monuments unto ourselves? I know I, I could do that. I could build a monument given the right circumstances I suppose. Who doesn't want to be remembered, admired. Oh Absalom. It's called the pride of life.

You know don't you, that there are three ways that we can be tempted. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. Those are the only three ways. And that thing called the pride of life is a very strong thing because it takes into consideration how people see us. How they think about us and how they remember us.



And there's not one of us in this room. I don't care what you say, who doesn't want to be admired. Who doesn't want people to admire us. And when we walk by to have them just go, wow, there's a great person. We all think that would be pretty sweet. Pretty nice. Yep, there's a little bit of Absalom in all of us.

*<sup>19</sup> Then (verse 19) Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run and carry news to the king that the LORD has delivered him from the hand of his enemies."*

*<sup>20</sup> And Joab said to him, "You are not to carry news today. You may carry news another day, but today you shall carry no news, because the king's son is dead."*

*<sup>21</sup> Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed before Joab, and ran. <sup>22</sup> Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the news?" <sup>23</sup> "Come what may," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, (fine) "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite." Yeah, that's why he wanted to do it, he knew a shortcut.*

*<sup>24</sup> Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. <sup>25</sup> The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." And he drew nearer and nearer. <sup>26</sup> The watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the gate and said, "See, another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings news." <sup>27</sup> The watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man and comes with good news." Ever the optimist.*

*<sup>28</sup> Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "All is well." And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth and said, "Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king."*

*<sup>29</sup> And the king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz answered, (and I'll throw in, wisely) "When Joab sent the king's servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was." <sup>30</sup> And the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.*

*<sup>31</sup> And behold, the Cushite came, ...* And he said, how did you get here before me? You got to just figure he probably said something like that, don't you? I mean, he took one look at him as and went, dude, you need to be in the Olympics. No, he just knew a shortcut.

Anyway, *"...the Cushite came, and (he) the Cushite said, "Good news for my lord the king! For the LORD has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you." <sup>32</sup> The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young*

*man Absalom?” And the Cushite answered, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man.”” That’s a way of saying, not so good.*

*“<sup>33</sup> And the king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!””*

As we close off this chapter, and we'll pick it up in the next chapter Lord willing. We really see the final conclusion of what we saw in our very first Scripture, that *“pride goes before destruction.”*

And we see how Absalom's pride was not just an initial issue. It was a constant issue. It blinded him from seeing things as they really were. It blinded him from seeing the best advice. It blinded him from doing what was strategically best. It blinded him unto his own death. Let me share with you one more proverb that just reiterates the same thing.

**Proverb 29:23 (ESV)**

*One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.*

*One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.*

The reason I share this Scripture with you is because what you see in this verse, is really son, father and son. You see Absalom and you see David. And Absalom is the one whose pride brought him low. And David is a man who was lowly in spirit. He was the king, but he knew the Lord had made him king. And he was not a prideful man and he received honor from the Lord.

And there's a New Testament Scripture from the New Testament book of wisdom, which is the Book of James that I want to show you too where we find this simple Scripture.

**James 4:10 (ESV)**

*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

*Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.*

And here's why I share this. It's one thing to say pride is an enemy. We can say that all day long, pride is an enemy. Pride is an enemy. Pride is an enemy. Pride

will lead you to a fall. Okay, we can say that all day long, but we need to look at the other side of that coin because on the other side of that coin is the exhortation. So therefore humble yourself. Notice it says, "*Humble yourself.*" Do you know that the idea there is not being humbled by somebody else? It's doing it yourself.

Here's why we need to humble ourselves. If we don't do it our self, it'll get done for us. God will do the humbling. He will do it. Graciously as a work of discipline, a loving hand of a very loving Father, but He will do it. And so He gives us the opportunity from the Scripture. Hey! "*Humble yourself.*" Don't think of yourself more highly than you ought, Paul says. (Romans 12:3) And there are many other passages.

Our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who didn't consider His equality with God something to be held on to, but in fact, He sent it off. He didn't grasp it. He let go of it so that He might humble himself, taking on the very nature of a servant. And being humbled even unto death on a cross. Jesus is our example. Humble yourself.

Now what you have the responsibility of doing is asking the Lord, how does that apply in my life? Where can I put that into practice? Where can I humble myself? The Bible is full of examples. Now, some of them aren't necessarily examples that you and I might use today.

Remember Jesus talked to His disciples once about it? He said, when somebody asks you over for dinner, this is just a great example. He says, don't fight your way up to the head of the table and sit right next to the master. Don't do that. That's exalting yourself. He said, go sit at the lowliest spot on the table then when the master of the banquet sees you down there, he'll say, hey friend, come up here into this better seat.

Now you may not get all the way up to the front of the table, but you're going to make progress. And everyone is going to see that you have been exalted in front of everyone.

But if you move and advance yourself to the front of the table, the master is going to see someone else who should be sitting there and say, oh, hey, you come sit up here. You go back down there. And then you're going to be humiliated in front of everybody. Why? Because you exalted yourself. So what are we to do? Humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord. Humble yourself in the sight of the Lord, and then he will exalt you.