

## **Deal with the Minor and Avoid the Major**

### **Ready:**

"Then David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.'

Nathan replied, 'The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. But because by doing this you have made the enemies of the LORD show utter contempt, the son born to you will die.'

After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill."

-2 Samuel 12:13-15 (NIV)

### **Set**

Recently I have been listening to a radio program about the life of David. As I thought about it this week, I think God put a lesson on my heart. . .

My wife and I coach cross country, indoor track and outdoor track together. Several years ago, we had an unfortunate situation in which we had to dismiss one of our athletes from the team. We talked about it together and decided that it was the best thing to do. What was the infraction? Nothing too bad. Actually, I don't even remember, but it was definitely something we had said would result in dismissal. We knew that we would risk losing him for the next season and felt that it would be a loss for the team. He was young, new to our sport and new to us as coaches, and this was why there was discussion in the first place.

The young man was angry and disappointed. He felt that it was unfair, but we "stuck to our guns." Fortunately for the team, he did come back, and his attitude was much better. Whether it was because he was more mature or because we had dismissed him the previous season, we had no more problems with him. Because of his example, we've also had less of the same problems from other athletes since then.

What would have happened if we had not dismissed him? I don't know. But God gives us an example in David's life where his inaction in disciplining his children caused much heartache and pain. Second Samuel 13 tells the story of David, two of his sons (Absalom and Amnon) and one of his daughters, Tamar. In the story, Amnon abuses his half-sister, Tamar, who is Absalom's full sister. David got very angry, but he did nothing to punish Amnon. Whatever the reason for David not punishing Amnon, Absalom then felt that he had to avenge his sister. Two years later he had Amnon killed. Later, Absalom decided that he was going to take over as king, and there was a war between he and King David. The result was great bloodshed. "The casualties that day were great -- twenty thousand men" (2 Samuel 18:7). Absalom also ended up being killed. What if David had disciplined Amnon when he assaulted Tamar? The other events might have been prevented.

Today, what are you overlooking that may need addressing? I challenge you to think about the future and not just today. What will happen if you don't take care of the situation? Listen to God and let Him guide you in your actions.

### **Go**

1. Does sin always have consequences?
2. Should we try to protect our friends or athletes from experiencing the consequences of their sins?
3. How can we use our "influence" to prevent others from having to go through some terrible consequences?

### **Workout**

Matthew 18:15-17

James 5:16

### **Bible Reference:**

James 5



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