

## Natural and Logical Consequences

**Scripture:** While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone. <sup>25</sup>The watchman reported it to the king. The king said, “If he is alone, he must have good news.” <sup>26</sup>Then the watchman saw another runner, and he called to the gatekeeper, “Look, another man running alone!” The king said, “He must be bringing good news, too.” <sup>27</sup>The watchman said, “The first one runs like Ahimaaz.” “He’s a good man,” the king said. “He comes with good news.” <sup>28</sup>Then Ahimaaz called to the king, “All is well!” He bowed down before the king and said, “Praise be to the Lord your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their hands against my lord the king.”

<sup>29</sup>The king asked, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” Ahimaaz answered, “I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king’s servant and me, your servant, but I don’t know what it was.” <sup>30</sup>The king said, “Stand aside and wait here.” So he stepped aside and stood there. <sup>31</sup>Then the Cushite arrived and said, “My lord the king, hear the good news! The Lord has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you.”

<sup>32</sup>The king asked the Cushite, “Is the young man Absalom safe?” The Cushite replied, “May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man.” <sup>33</sup>The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: “O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!” 2 Samuel 18:24-33 (condensed)

### Discussion Questions

1. Absalom was David’s 3rd son. He was very handsome and he had a beautiful sister, Tamar. Amnon, their half-brother, fell in love with Tamar, then raped and rejected her. That made Absalom extremely angry and he arranged for Amnon to be killed. He hid for years until David allowed him to return to Jerusalem. Absalom then assembled an army to take the kingdom for himself. When the two armies clashed 20,000 men died, including Absalom. 2 Samuel 18:24-33 focuses on the news of Absalom’s death and David’s reaction to it. What’s your impression of the way David reacted to the death of his rebellious son? Compare his reaction to the expected reaction of a king whose throne has just been secured.
2. David had previously instructed his generals not to harm Absalom. Nevertheless, Joab hadn’t hesitated to kill him. Why would Joab disobey a direct order and was he right or wrong to do so?
3. Contrast the victory in battle with the personal loss in this event. How does this contrast relate to the complexities of victories in our own lives? Examples?
4. How would you handle a situation where a family member or close friend betrayed you as Absalom betrayed David? What difference would your faith make in how you dealt with it?
5. The consequences experienced by David and Absalom aren’t surprising. They illustrate what’s been called “The Principle of the Path,” which is “**Direction—not intention—determines destination.**” In other words, as Christians we may intend to live lives that honor Christ, but the decisions we make can take us in an entirely different direction. Absalom’s story is a great example of someone who ended up somewhere they never intended to go. What are some other examples?
6. Why do people tend to choose paths that lead away from where they want to go? How can you tell ahead of time if a particular path will lead to a destination you desire? What process do you use?

**Wrap Up:** Absalom had it all—looks, privilege, opportunities—but he made one bad decision after the other and went in a direction that led to disaster. David also made his share of mistakes, but every time he changed direction to follow after God. That’s what the Principle of the Path is all about—choosing to live life His way, following His lead in every decision. So what direction will you choose? Following Jesus is not always comfortable, but it’s so rewarding. Surrendering our direction to Him can be disorienting, daunting, and downright terrifying. Still, true adventure and a life worth living are worth the surrender to follow Jesus.