

**Drawn to God through Suffering**  
*2 Samuel 13-18*

**Introduction:** This week we are considering some of the events that are recorded in 2 Samuel 13 through 18. These chapters give an account of the ways in which David suffered over approximately a six-year period of time. He experienced all kinds of suffering and heartache, but in this time David also grew closer to God. He experienced God in the midst of his suffering. Instead of becoming hardened and bitter, David's heart was softened. May we be encouraged by David's example of how we can draw closer to God through our own suffering.

**Opening Discussion:** "If you live long enough, you will suffer." Agree/Disagree? Why?

**To Get an Overview of David's Suffering Read:**

- The rape of David's daughter (by his son Amnon) (2 Sam. 13:1-2, 7, 11-14, 20-22)
- The murder of David's son Amnon (by his son Absalom) (2 Sam. 13:23-29; 35-39)
- The return of Absalom and his estrangement from David (2 Sam. 14:21-24; 28-33)
- The revolt of Absalom and the exile of David (2 Sam. 15:6, 13-14, 30-31)
- The taunting of Shimei (2 Sam. 16:5-8, 11-12)
- Absalom's occupation of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 16:15, 21-22)
- Absalom's death (2 Sam. 18:6-9, 14-15, 31-33)

1. What strikes you about the suffering that David endured?

Steve mentioned three ways that David responded to his suffering:

**Prayer (2 Samuel 15:31, Psalm 3, Psalm 55)** . . . David prayed in the midst of his suffering. He didn't merely worry and stew over the tragic things that happened to him. He prayed prayers of petition: he asked God to intervene. He also prayed deep prayers of lament. He poured out his complaints before God (see Psalm 3 and 55).

**Humility (2 Samuel 16:5-14, 1 Peter 2:21-25)** David's humility was evident in the way he responded to the man who cursed him and threw stones at him. He was willing to consider the possibility that God was speaking to him through his enemy. Such humility was evidence that his heart was being drawn back to God.

**Mourning (2 Samuel 18:33, 19:4, Matthew 5:4)** David's mourning was good and healthy, reminding us of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:4):

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

To mourn is to grieve over some circumstance or some loss. When you mourn, you enter into your pain and allow your loss to wash over you. You don't keep a stiff upper lip and you don't pretend that everything is okay. When you mourn you grieve over the fact that things are **not** okay and over the possibility that things **won't** be okay this side of heaven. Jesus pronounces blessing on those who mourn in the kingdom because they will be comforted. Mourning is good; when we pretend that things are okay when they aren't, we're really running from God.

2. Why are these responses helpful when we are suffering?
3. Sometimes we struggle to respond with prayer, humility and mourning when we suffer. Why is that?

Steve said:

It only makes sense that we make peace with the fact that we **will** suffer and experience heartache in this world. We can't anticipate the specific types of suffering we'll experience, but we should anticipate that some type of suffering will find us. The question we need to consider is, "**When** I experience suffering, will it draw me closer to God or will it push me away from God?" When we suffer we can go either way.

4. What kinds of things make the difference between whether our suffering draws us closer to God or pushes us away?
5. If you are not currently suffering, what kinds of things can you do now that will help you respond well to the suffering when it does come?
6. Besides David, what other examples have you seen of people who have drawn closer to God through suffering? What have or can you learn from their example?
7. Is there anything that you are suffering right now that you would like us to pray together with you about?