

##Home Improvement: Guardrails Required
2 Samuel 13:21
June 10, 2012

This morning we jump back into our sermon series focused on home improvement. Two weeks ago we considered scripture from the book of Joshua which contained some principles on the importance of spiritual leadership in the home by demonstrating what is expected. This week we are going to define and consider the importance of boundaries in our family life. But before we do take a look at this video clip.

We want to give credit to Pastor Andy Stanley and his sermon series Guardrails. Some of the concepts for this message were inspired by his series. One image Pastor Stanley uses in his series are guardrails. Guardrails are a source of protection for us when we are driving. They might be in place to keep us from driving off a bridge, hitting traffic head-on or going off the side of a hill or cliff. Guardrails will perhaps damage our vehicle if we hit them; but if they weren't there; the damage will be far greater. Better to hit a guardrail than to experience what's on the other side of that guardrail's protection.

Guardrails could be the right image to describe what we mean about the need for Christian boundaries in our family life. Guardrails are a mental picture of what boundaries in our relationships do that honor God and protect everyone. When I say boundaries let me borrow a definition from Pastor Andy Stanley, which says **“A personal standard of behavior that becomes a matter of conscience.”** This spiritual boundary in us, this spiritual guardrail in our hearts keeps us from straying into a place and situation and way of living where the damage will be much worse than bumping into these principles or spiritual guardrails.

Introduction into David

Spiritual guardrails could be just the right mental picture about what was missing in the life of a famous hero in the Bible, King David and his leadership over his family. Let me remind you about a period of King David's life, a very tragic time. David had multiple wives and concubines/female slaves and because of that David had sons and daughters by his multiple wives and concubines/slaves. His oldest son was Amnon and Amnon was consumed with sexual lust for his half sister Tamar. Amnon and his friend constructed a scheme so that Amnon could have sexual relations with his half sister. After he had sexual relations with her he dismissed her in shame from his sight. Tamar's brother Absalom found out about this and consoled his sister, but all the time he consoled her, he planned revenge. Listen to just one verse of scripture that tells us much about David and his situation at that moment in his family's life.

Read 1 Samuel 13:21

David's Crash

King David learned about the rape, and the scripture states he knew the entire story and was angry; but does nothing. The scripture says because Amnon was his first born, David loved him and did nothing. Keep reading about this event and you learn that although King David did nothing to Amnon; Absalom decided to take matters into his own hands. About a year later, Absalom sets up a situation where he had his own men murder Amnon in revenge for the rape. Absalom then fled the scene. Some time goes by and eventually Absalom is forgiven and allowed to return but the rift between he and David is still lurking under the surface. Later Absalom overthrows David's kingdom. David and his loyal men have to fight to recapture the kingdom and in the course of the fight, Absalom was killed. It's a tragic story of David and his family going over the edge and crashing. His daughter was raped, his oldest son was killed by a brother, his kingdom was taken away

from him by another son and then that same son was killed as David fought to regain his kingdom.

Wouldn't you think that a man like David who was so well revered in scripture, that the Bible in Acts 13:22 described David as a man after God's own heart, would never had experienced all this?

Illustration: I mean David wasn't like the parents we have heard about this week in the news. He wasn't like the young mother many of us learned about this week who was smoking Pot all day long. She smoked pot into the evening until she was ready to go home with her one month old child. She placed the baby in his car seat, set him on top of her car as she prepared to leave. No one's sure what happened next other than she got in her car and drove off with the baby still on top of the car. Coming through an intersection, the car-seat slid off the car landing in the middle of the intersection. A resident at that intersection noticed the car-seat in the road, checked on it and quickly got the child out of danger. Thankfully that car-seat did its job.

David was not like that. We're not talking about a parent who was like the women who strapped her two year old son in a regular seat belt but put a gas can in the child's car-seat to go get gas and was pulled over by police. David had more going for him than that.

David was a man of substance. He was a military man. He knew something about discipline and following structure like some of you have experienced. David was a politician, a people person, persuasive and adept at getting along like some of you have that have that strength. He grew up in an agricultural setting herding sheep, doing chores and having responsibilities like many of you were raised. David was a man of faith in God like us.

But David and his family crashed and crashed hard; rape, murder, political opposition from his own family. **So the point is if a man**

like David and his family can crash so can ours if we were not more careful than he. Kind David's story is a textbook example that **to keep the Christian home life strong and Christ centered, spiritual guardrails are required, the spiritual boundaries and standards based on God's word are required to keep such damage from happening.**

What's going on in your home? Do your children and grandchildren know who is in charge in your home? Can the family rules get broken and nothing is really done about it. Can parents or grandparents talk and children; young or adult discount what is spoken to them? Are there spiritual boundaries in place that alert everyone that someone is bumping into danger before a tragedy or crash takes place? I think that one verse of scripture describes the guardrails that were missing in David's life and need to be in place in ours.

Lead by example "David heard of all these things" v.21

The first guardrail or boundary David lacked was his failure to lead by example. This is a bit of repeat from two weeks ago but bares repeating. David did not lead his family by example. He was not out in front leading by obedience to God. A sexual sin such as rape occurred among his adult children and yet David did nothing. He has knowledge about it; but didn't take initiative to investigate it and resolve it.

Maybe David balked on this because of his own previous moral failings. Remember David took a big fall himself. He had once committed a sexual scandal that made recent stories about Republican and Democrat politicians look like child's play. David seduced another man's wife and then had him killed in battle to cover up his sin. Maybe that is the reason in his response to Amnon, he gets angry but does nothing. He didn't address the wrong because on sexual integrity he had not always led by example.

One guardrail to strengthen the home is lead your family by example. If we claim our home is to be Christ-centered than leaders of the family live a life where Jesus is the center of your life; not an interest if nothing better is going on. Your family is watching and they know the difference.

Correct to teach and protect: “When King David heard of all these things he became angry...“But he would not punish his son Amnon” v.21

The Bible says David became angry, very angry but would not punish his son Amnon. I wonder if this was one of those moments where there was great emotional display from David? David might be the classic case of the parent who gets so worked up about how their children young or adult are behaving badly, but all they do is get emotionally frazzled but do nothing about the situation. Some parents and caregivers are the like clouds that thunder, have lightening but produce no rain.

I want to suggest that when David’s response lacked punishment **his response also lacked teaching and protection for his family.** There was no boundary/no guardrail there to say this is what is acceptable under our roof and this is how we protect and look out for one another.

- If he would have punished Amnon he would have taught that Amnon’s behavior was wrong. It showed disrespect to a young woman and it was wrong in God’s eyes as well.
- If he would have punished Amnon he would have lead by example that he was there to protect his daughters and his family.
- If he would have punished Amnon he would have taught Absalom that his revenge was unnecessary and wrong.

I believe one application for us is correction in the home needs to happen to teach and protect. Correction or punishment isn't just whether you are willing to do something that will make your child uncomfortable because you spank or send them to the room, or take away the car keys. Correct and teach consistently especially about the little things to avoid the little things moving over into major issues.

Pastor Andy Stanley writes how he has tried to teach the importance of spiritual boundaries to his family that include a time of correction. He says to his children;

“In order to keep you out of the real danger zone, I want to set up some protective barriers. And if you and I are going to have conflict in our home, I want to have conflict with you here. I don't want to have conflict with you there, (meaning jail a police, drug rehab, pregnancy center) because the conflict here is much easier to resolve.”

Non-negotiables of right and wrong are need to be reinforced by those who lead the home.

Love genuinely; not selfishly: “He would not punish Amnon because he was his first born.” V.21

The Bible is honest about the flaws of its heroes and tells us that David didn't punish Amnon because Amnon was his first born and he loved him. The Message Bible says David “doted on Amnon.” David some how put aside all the teaching of his faith that was handed down from men like Moses and decided, “you know he is my first born, I just cannot bring myself to punish him.” I have to believe who David really loved was David.

I was reading a devotion the other day that used an example about how cancer works. A doctors described cancer as cells that turn selfish; they refuse to serve the rest of the body and demand that the rest of the body serve them. Selfish love works like cancer in

the family. It's a selfish love that weakens and sickens the family. It's possible David didn't want to confront Amnon; not because he was afraid of hurting Amnon, but because David didn't want to hurt David.

Make sure as you lead in your home that you are leading in such a way that true love leads; not a self-serving knock off of the real thing. Parents and grandparents, or whoever the spiritual leader in the home might be can sometimes say they cannot bring themselves to correct their kids, to say no because they don't want to hurt their kids but who we are really protecting is ourselves. Our excuse might be the same as David's, or we feel sorry for our children, or they have some exceptional talent, looks or they have been through a divorce or they have been through extended illness.

The guardrail of true love as defined by scripture is essential. **1 Corinthians 13:4 reminds of a true picture of love including that love "does not insist on it's own way or rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in truth.** David didn't have the New Testament to go by but we do. Love those who you parent and guide seeking God's truth to be expressed in how you love them.

I like something Pastor Stanley says, that some of the greatest regrets we have in our lives could have and probably would have been avoided if the spiritual guardrails were in place to alert us of how close were to the danger zones.

Conclusion: There are three things David's story tells us we can do.

We can decide to make sure we lead by example in our families. The way you make sure you lead by an example is seek to live as follower of Jesus, not an admirer but a disciple.

We can ditch the word punishment and instead be willing to correct

because correction is about teaching and protection. Correction is about instilling values in our family so when they get close to the dangerous edge of action, a warning comes to their consciousness.

We need to love with actions that help move those in our care forward toward the character of Christ; not protect ourselves.