

## **Broken Lines of Communication**

**By David Wright**

King David's household was an unhealthy place for growing children. Lax discipline, parental inattention, indulgence of spoiled conduct, and poor role modeling combined to create a monster—rebellious Absalom. After winning the hearts of the men of Israel, this handsome prince seized his father's throne and tried to kill him.

This tragic situation involved a communication breakdown. The breach occurred after the death of Amnon, Absalom's brother. Having killed Amnon for assaulting his sister, Absalom fled to Geshur, where he remained for three years (2 Sam. 13:37-38). At the end of that time, David permitted Absalom to come home to Jerusalem, but the young rebel was not to see his father's face. "Let him dwell apart in his own house," David said. "He is not to come into my presence" (14:24). This went on for "two full years" (v. 28).

Why the parent of a rebellious child can be tempted to cut off communication is understandable, but refusing to talk resolves nothing. Instead, it heightens tensions and deepens resentment. If David had talked to his son, and listened, perhaps Absalom's conspiracy never would have formed.

Open communication helps troubled children make peace with their parents. It is unwise to respond to a rebellious act by merely meting out a stiff punishment. Children sometimes need punitive discipline, but a heart to heart conversation may accomplish more. For instance, a defiant girl may feel that her parents have been unaffectionate, overbearing, harsh, partial to a sibling, or too busy to spend time with her. If they hear her out, offering apologies and reassurances of love, the anger fueling the defiance may burn itself out.

### **FAMILY WORKBOX**

Laughter is a divine gift that eases tension, brightens mood, and strengthens relationships. Whenever you hear, read, or experience something amusing, share it with your spouse--and laugh together.

[Articles by David Wright](#)

[Meigs Avenue Church of Christ](#)