

Proverbs 24:30-34 I went by the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of a man lacking sense. Thistles had come up everywhere, weeds covered the ground, and the stone wall was ruined. I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction: a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, and your poverty will come like a robber, your need, like a bandit.

Neglect has a cumulative effect.

Relationships rarely cry out for immediate attention and are therefore prone to neglect.

The effects of neglect are cumulative but the "crisis" of neglect is often immediate.

2 Samuel 13:1-2 David's son Absalom had a beautiful sister named Tamar, and David's son Amnon was infatuated with her. Amnon was frustrated to the point of making himself sick over his sister Tamar because she was a virgin, but it seemed impossible to do anything to her.

1 Kings 1:6 (NLT) Now his father, King David, had never disciplined him at any time, even by asking, "Why are you doing that?"

Agreement without action = NEGLECT

The situation: →→unhealthy AND unaddressed

The solution:

1) Pay attention to the heart (Proverbs 4:23)

Do I really listen?

Listening is more about discovering than deciding.

Is everything OK in your heart?

Did anyone hurt your feelings today?

Are you mad at anyone or about anything?

Did anyone break a promise to you?

Is there anything I can do for you?

Amnon rapes Tamar

2 Samuel 13:20-23a Her brother Absalom said to her: "Has your brother Amnon been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister. He is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart."

So Tamar lived as a desolate woman in the house of her brother Absalom. When King David heard about all these things, he was furious. Absalom didn't say anything to Amnon, either good or bad, because he hated Amnon since he disgraced his sister Tamar.

Two years later ...

2) Resolve to do the small things consistently and the hard things occasionally.

... IF NOT = small things become BIG things and the hard things become harder and more frequent.

Absalom murders Amnon.

2 Samuel 13:37-14:1 Absalom had fled and gone to Geshur where he stayed three years. Then King David longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon's death. Joab son of Zeruiah observed that the king's mind was on Absalom.

Warnings:

a) Time does not heal the heart.

2 Samuel 14:23-24, 28-31 So Joab got up, went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. However, the king added, "He may return to his house, but he may not see my face." So Absalom returned to his house, but he did not see the king ... Absalom resided in Jerusalem two years but never saw the king. Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king but Joab was unwilling to come. So he sent again, a second time but he [Joab] still wouldn't come.

Then Absalom said to his servants, "See Joab has a field right next to mine ... Go and set fire to it!"

b) Know the warning signs: inappropriate expressions of emotion; misdirected anger; withdrawal & isolation

2 Samuel 14:33 ...David summoned Absalom, who came to the king and bowed down with his face to the ground before him. Then the king kissed Absalom.

Absalom becomes a usurper; 4 years later he declares himself king.

c) In areas that matter most, a burst of energy & attention is not enough to reverse the effects of neglect.

Neglect is not undone in a 'one.'

Civil war
20,000 casualties
Absalom killed

2 Samuel 18:33 The king was deeply moved and went to the gate chamber and wept. As he walked, he cried, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you ..."

This Story:

An explanation ...?

A warning ...?

An invitation ...?

Consistent investment is the opposite of neglect.

Small Things:

- Family time with God
- Acts of kindness
- Acts of reassurances & reminders
- Everyday teachable & worshipful moments

Hard Things:

- Ask deep/probing questions
- Ask vulnerable questions
- Practice selective investment (vs. strategic neglect)
- Sacrifice together

Jesus succeeds where David (where we) fail ...