

“The Leader’s Rebellion”

Fact: It’s no secret that Satan seeks to destroy unity in the body of Christ (the Church)!

Fact: It’s also no secret, that a primary tool Satan uses is pride—manifested in disrespect for delegated authority!

In studying Absalom’s recorded failure in II Samuel 15:1-15, some key phrases have jumped out of Scripture to me:

1. “Absalom stood by the gate **to greet everyone**” (v.2)
2. “Absalom said, “The king is too busy to hear you, **but I’m available.**” (v. 3)
3. “Oh, that I were made judge in the land **so people would come to me.**” (v. 4)
4. “Absalom loved to take people **by the hand and kiss them.**” (v. 5)
5. “So Absalom **stole the hearts of the men of Israel**”. (v. 6)
6. “Tell the people that **Absalom reigns in Hebron**”. (V.10)
7. “And **the conspiracy grew strong as the people increased with Absalom.**” (v. 12)

Question: Why did Absalom split the church?

Answer: Because (in pride) he wanted authority that belonged to another!!!

(Absalom Forgot This)

“He who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.” (Romans 13:2)

(It’s No Secret To Anybody)

That **Absalom, Lucifer, Korah, Jezebel** and **Diotrephes** all had the same problem (or root issue) they didn’t deal with:

1. They (out of selfish ambition) desired authority and recognition **they didn’t have**.
2. They used **malicious means** to achieve it.
3. They (out of envy and jealousy) **coveted** what God had given another - and attracted God’s anger upon themselves.
4. They tried to **create doors** where none existed.
5. They **found fault** with the leader and projected the image that if they were in charge all would be better.
6. They **lured** and **convinced** a following to oppose delegated authority.
7. They hurt people, hurt God’s cause and **eventually brought judgment upon themselves**.

(Romans 13:2 Is Scary)

“Those who rebel against authority will bring judgment on themselves.”

Question: How can we be protected against the Absalom spirit?

Question: How can we overcome, be “on guard” and conquer Satan’s attempt to divide?

Three Characteristics Of An “Absalom Spirit” (From II Samuel 15)

I. A Counterfeit Compassion (Impure Motive)

“You’ve really got a strong case here. It’s too bad the king doesn’t have anyone to hear it. I wish I were the judge, then people could come to me and I would solve their problems.” (v. 3,4)

(It’s Clear As Day)

- ◆ Absalom stations himself on the road leading to the gate of the city (to be seen).
 - ◆ People come to Jerusalem to meet with David, concerning their need for settlements.
 - ◆ Absalom shows his concern for each petitioner (acting as though he really cares).
 - ◆ Absalom then implies that the King is too busy to care for them personally.
 - ◆ Absalom then projected that if he were in authority, he would be sure they would come out as the winner in their grievance. (Yet it’s all a show!)
1. Absalom’s goal is to use his power and position to advance his **own agenda**.
 2. Absalom appears to be affectionate - all out of selfish motivation for **personal gain**.
 3. Absalom is self-indulgent, self-seeking, egotistical and listens to complaints to **undermine authority**.
- ◆ Absalom’s sole purpose is to manipulate so he can have something that God hasn’t given him!

Never Forget This:

- ◆ **Gossip** is saying behind a person’s **back** what you would never say to their **face** (and)
- ◆ **Flattery** is saying to a person’s **face** what you would never say behind their **back!**

And Memorize This:

***“They speak vanity everyone with his neighbor;
with flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.” (Psalm 12:2)***

II. A Covert Connection (Impure Method)

“While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel, one of David’s counselors who lived in Giloh...and the conspiracy gained momentum.” (v. 12)

(It’s so Detectable)

- ◆ Absalom enlists others to his cause in rebellion.
- ◆ He seeks out the advice of Ahithophel (the grandfather of Bathsheba).
- ◆ Once a wise counselor to David, Ahithophel is seduced to rebel against the King and join sides with Absalom.

(Absalom’s Spirit Is No Secret Today)

1. Discontented people will **enlist others** (rally their troops) for rebellion (and)
2. Rebellious people will **create division** to benefit their own vengeance or cause (and)
3. Rebellious people will do their best to **sow seeds of discontentment** to undermine the authority that God has placed in their lives.

Memorize This:

“Watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned; keep away from them.” (Romans 16:17)

III. A Cunning Contention (Impure Mandate)

“Strike Amnon down and kill him. Don’t be afraid, for I have given you this order.” (II Samuel 13:28).

“Absalom then fled to his grandfather and stayed in Geshur for three years.” (v. 37)

(Take Over Time)

- ◆ Absalom (out of anger) takes matters into his own hands.
- ◆ He believes that he is above the law, government and his father’s authority.
- ◆ He, therefore, murders Amnon who had raped Tamar (his sister)
- ◆ Absalom flat out believes that he is accountable to no one and can get away with murder!

(What A Thought Here)

- ◆ That Absalom lifts himself above the law and feels he has the license to harm whoever he wants (and)
- ◆ That Absalom somehow believes that the ends justify the means (and reveals he has no fear of God).

Some Personal Thoughts (Discoveries) From Absalom:

1. If ever I am more concerned about my recognition than the mission - **degenerative forces are at work!**
2. If ever I seek to injure another - I have brought myself **out of the Spirit** and have forfeited Divine rest and peace!
3. If ever I seek to use or manipulate someone for personal gain - I have **sided with Satan** and lost the anointing of God!

4. If ever I dig a pit for another - I am sure **to be buried** in that very grave!
5. If ever I believe that I need what someone else has (to be happy) - I have lost sight of God, lost my security in Him and lost the joy and power of **a clear conscience**.
6. If ever I am not content with what I have - I can be sure **I won't be content with what I want**.
7. If ever I sow seeds of dissention and division (and diminish spiritual authority) I can be sure that I am operating in **the spirit of Lucifer** and not the Christ of Calvary!

IV. A Concrete Cure (Wisdom From Above)

Fact: Vine's Expository Dictionary defines envy as: "The feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the advantage or prosperity of others".

Fact: Webster's Dictionary defines envy as: "The painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage".

Question: What is envy?

Answer: Envy is the **pain** and **distress** you feel over someone else's success! (Absalom's problem)

(In Plain Vanilla)

- ◆ Envy cannot be **grateful** for what it has from God.
- ◆ Envy cannot **celebrate** the successes of others.
- ◆ Envy cannot be **secure** from the snare of comparison and competition.
- ◆ Envy cannot be **content** because of disorder on the inside.

Question: Is **envy** really that destructive?

Answer: It must be since it is listed in Galatians 5:19-21:

*"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, **envy**, murder, drunkenness, revelings...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God".*

(James 3:14-17)

*"But if you have bitter **envy** and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there."*

What Causes Envy? James Is Clear:

#1. Envy is "**Bitter**"

"But if ye have bitter envying" (v. 14)

- ◆ James reveals that envy is empowered by an embittered heart.
- ◆ Left unattended, a bitter heart will defile relationships.

- ◆ Bitterness resents the fact that God has given something to another instead of us. (Absalom's great sin)
- ◆ Envy caused Esau to become bitter towards his brother Jacob all because Jacob got the blessing that Esau deserved as the firstborn.

#2. Envy Is "Self-Seeking"

"And strife in your hearts" (v. 14)

- ◆ The word "strife" (ERITHIAN) means friction (or more accurately, selfish ambition)
- ◆ This means that envy is fueled by a self-seeking heart.
- ◆ Envy and self-seeking are brother and sister (as envy in our hearts is a sign that we are filled with impure motives and unholy ambition)

#3. Envy Is "Boastful"

"Glory not" (v. 14)

- ◆ James tells us here that envy is rooted in pride (and leads to boasting)
- ◆ Envy in the heart is revealed when we want to advertise our own merits.
- ◆ This envy is present (yet possibly hidden) as we want others to think we are something special.

Question: What is the fruit of envy?

Answer: James (and God) are unmistakably clear:

"For where **envy** and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there"

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Strife is motivated by **envy**! (It occurs when envy is present.)
- ◆ Strife is the fruit of **envy** in the heart! (It means flesh is present!)

Check Out The Following

(See how strife and envy shadow each other)

#1. *"Being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of **envy**, murder, **strife**". (Romans 1:29)*

#2. *"Lest there be debates, **envyings**, wrath, **strifes**, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults". (II Corinthians 12:19)*

#3. *"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in **strife** and **envy**" (Romans 13:13)*

#4. *"Some indeed preach Christ even from **envy** and **strife**" (Philippians 1:15)*

#5. *"He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come **envy**, **strife**, reveling, evil suspicions" (I Timothy 6:4)*

The Cure

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle at all times, willing to yield to others, full of mercy and good fruit, without partiality and hypocrisy.” (James 3:17)

Question: How is it possible to be content in God, live free from envy?

Question: How is it possible to avoid the snare of James 4:1-3?:

“What causes conflict among you? Isn’t it evil desires within the heart? **You want what you do not have – so you scheme and quarrel to take it away...** You want only what will give you pleasure.”

- ◆ James uses the vocabulary of war to express bad feeling among Christians.
- ◆ He speaks of the horror of strife, controversies, quarrels and animosities.
- ◆ He exposes the fact that Christians who fight among themselves are in reality at enmity with God.
- ◆ So much so, that, “You do not have, because you do not ask,” or, the supply from God becomes blocked and our prayers rendered ineffective – all because of internal disorder.

(In Plain Vanilla)

There is the outward symptom of bad relationships among believers – which in reality is an inner flawed relationship (or **conflict**) with God.

In Other Words

People who are contentious on the **outside** (with people) reveal that they are at war on the **inside** of themselves (against God)

Question: So what is it that crucifies envy and strife (and creates contentment?)

Question: What are the root characteristics of true wisdom that give birth to a healthy Christian who has healthy relationships? (**Wisdom from above that is...**)

#1. **Pure**

“Wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure.”

- ◆ The word “pure” (HAGNE) means: Holy, pure and free from defilement.
- ◆ It means to be set apart unto God and totally separated from any impurity.
- ◆ Compared to light, this wisdom dispels darkness, illumines everything but is not influenced by anything around it.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ The first quality of a healthy inner man is the one quality that provides the secure foundation for all others. (“First of all Pure” means):

- ◆ The first (and most important) ingredient of a spiritually healthy heart is integrity, wholeness, purity and cleanness of heart.

Fact: Moths that investigate burning candles singe their wings for **life**.

Fact: No clever arrangement of **bad** eggs ever made a **good** omelet.

Fact: My progress in God will go no further than my **obedience** takes me.

#2. "**Peaceable**"

- ◆ The word "peaceable" (EIRENIKE) means: to bind or weave together.
- ◆ It means that a healthy person will seek to join together and weave people to one another. (It doesn't defile by giving evil reports.)

(In Other Words)

- ◆ A wise and healthy person reconciles people and never sows **discord**.
- ◆ A person operating under the wisdom of God refuses to whisper or slander (which discredits and damages someone else's reputation.)

#3. "**Gentle**"

- ◆ The word "gentle" (EPIEKES) means: Courteous, considerate and patient.
- ◆ It is the opposite of critical, censorship and harsh.
- ◆ This quality stands for justice – but stands with a gracious gentleness.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ A gentle person is someone who interacts with other people in a spirit of **respect** for human dignity.
- ◆ It refuses to act (or react) out of anger, frustration or retaliation. (Remember)

Fact: No provocation ever **justifies** an unchristian response.

Fact: Blessed are the boiler-makers for they shall always be in **hot** water.

Fact: If you have a short fuse, you can be **sure** that someone will light it.

#4. "**Teachable**"

- ◆ The words "**easy to be entreated**" (EUPEITHES) mean: Being willing to listen to reason and appeal, and willing to change (flexible).
- ◆ The opposite of stubborn and rigid, this wisdom from God allows you to be open to suggestions and willing to accept admonition and correction.
- ◆ It is an inner condition of heart that welcomes dialogue, input and advice.

Fact: Instead of bending other people out of shape, bend a little yourself!

#5. "**Merciful**"

- ◆ The word "merciful" (ELEOUS) means: To offer compassion to those in distress (with feelings of affection and kindness)
- ◆ The merciful person understands how much God has been merciful to them.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ How can we not pass on to others what God has passed on to us?
- ◆ Maintain justice? Yes, 1,000 times yes! – But maintain it in a spirit that communicates your love and care for that person.

#6. "**Impartial**"

- ◆ The words "without partiality" (ADIAKRITOS) mean: To show no favoritism or prejudice and to be unwavering and undivided in convictions.
- ◆ It means to offer help to others without being influenced by their dress, position, title or rank.

(In Other Words)

- ◆ Wisdom from above (operating in you) will motivate you to **serve** for the benefit of the one you are serving.

Fact: Merchandizing is when I empty other people to enrich **myself**; Ministry is when I empty myself to enrich **other** people.

#7. "**Transparent**"

- ◆ The words "without hypocrisy" (ANUPOKRITOS) mean: To be free from playacting, insincerity and wearing a mask.
- ◆ It means we never claim (or appear) to be one thing – yet live something else behind the scenes.
- ◆ Wisdom from above is genuine, sincere and never tries to **fake** people out.

(Remember this)

When there is any difference between my sincerest moment before men and what God knows to be the reality – to that degree I am a hypocrite, not transparent, insincere and not walking in fear of the Lord!!!

- ◆ So let's forget all the hype (which is energy without sincerity) and live transparent before God and one another!
- ◆ Let's protect ourselves at all times from the **Absalom spirit!**

Amen!
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