

## "A CASE STUDY OF BITTERNESS"

*II Samuel 16:23*

### INTRODUCTION:

Ahithophel was David's chief counselor – *II Samuel 15:12*. It says here that he was so persuasive that he seemed to be a channel of God's very word. David, the young king, and Ahithophel, the older, wiser counselor made quite a team. Through the passing of time, not doubt they became very close.

*II Samuel 17:23* - tells of his sad end. He hanged himself. It says that his counsel was not followed.

Let's go into the Word of God and see what caused Ahithophel to go from being a friend to being a foe. There is more than meets the eye in the situation. There always is.

1. Ahithophel joined Absalom in an attempt to overthrow David's kingdom - *15:10, 12,31*.
  - a. What was going on? David's most trusted counselor had changed sides.
  - b. David wisely sent Hushai to act as a double agent to see what was happening – *15:32-37*.
2. Ahithophel developed a plan and desired permission to lead 12,000 men to come upon David and promised - "*I will smite the King only*" - *17:1-2*. Now he wants a chance to murder David.

What turned this man away from God, David, and finally away from himself? What had changed Ahithophel from the King's friend to the King's foe? NOTE - *Psalm 41:9; Psalm 55*. Notice how badly this hurt David - *V:12-14,21*.

*II Samuel 23:34* - says Ahithophel had a son by the name of Eliam who served the King. He was one of David's mighty men.

*II Samuel 11:1-3* - retells the story of David's sin of adultery with Bathsheba. Look at *verse three* - "*Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?*" Get this! Bathsheba was Eliam's daughter. She was Ahithophel's granddaughter!

We have finally found the "rest of the story". David violated Ahithophel's family.

You remember David's sin. It began with laziness and irresponsibility - David had committed adultery. Later he learned Bathsheba was pregnant, and conspired to have Uriah killed who was one of his most dedicated soldiers.

After the funeral they were married. David never admitted his sin. The baby was born, and shortly after God sent Nathan to him to expose his sin and crime. Soon the word got out that David had confessed, and that God would spare his life.

But Ahithophel, her grandfather, was deeply hurt by this great sin. Now, take note of what bitterness does to a person and how it develops unless dealt with properly.

1. Hurt soon turns to resentment (anger, disapproval, dislike, disgust).
2. Resentment soon turns to bitterness.
3. Bitterness soon turns to hatred.

4. Hatred soon turns to murder.

What led to Ahithophel's death was not a "big sin", at first it was a simple matter of being deeply hurt:

If not properly dealt with, hurt turns to bitterness.

Bitter people are hurt people.

Bitterness not properly dealt with leads to hatred.

Hatred must have a victim.

- a. If its first-choice victim escapes, hate turns and is self-destructive (suicidal).
- b. Even God is often blamed for the cause of the pain.

Turn to - *Hebrews 12:14, 15* and let's talk about bitterness. There are some simple, yet profoundly deep truths here. I found it revealing. "*Fail of the grace of God*". God's grace is always available, but we fail to avail ourselves (take advantage) of the grace of God. We act by strength of the flesh, failing of the grace of God which results in bitterness:

1. **BITTERNESS GROWS LIKE A ROOT!**  
It's underground (not seen, out of sight). It flourishes in dirt. The dirtier the dirt - the better for bitterness. Almost any kind of dirt will do. It's tough, hard to destroy. And, once it has taken root it is difficult to uproot!
2. **BITTERNESS SPRINGS UP QUICKLY!**
3. **BITTERNESS TROUBLES YOU!**  
Note "None of These Diseases" Pages 67-74.  
Dr. McMillen lists over 51 diseases which are caused by emotional stress. (Colitis - "Who has Mama been colliding with now?" It's really not so much of what you eat, but what eats you that matters).
4. **BITTERNESS DEFILES MANY!**
  - a. It cannot be contained. What is in the well of the heart comes out the bucket of the mouth.
  - b. We have often heard someone ask the question, "Have you noticed how ornery and cranky Grandpa is getting in his old age?"
  - c. What seems to be a change is not a change at all. Grandpa is just losing some of his self-consciousness and the desire to please others as he grows older. Grandpa has begun to act the way he has felt all his life.

**I. BITTERNESS IS A CHRISTIAN SIN!**

- A. As A Christian, I Don't Feel Comfortable With Adultery, Murder, And The Like. Yet, We Are Not All That Uncomfortable With Bitterness.
- B. Bitterness Is A Sin. It Is One Of The Marks Of The Unbeliever. *Romans 3:14 - "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness."*
- C. I Have Seen Bitterness Continue For Two Or Three Generations. *Deuteronomy 5:9* - Warns That The Sins Of The Parents Are Visited To The Third And Fourth

Generations Of Those Who Hold Hatred In Their Hearts.

- D. *James 3:10 Says - "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."*
- E. When A Bitter Person Is Out Of Fellowship With Another, They Are Automatically Out Of Fellowship With God - *Matthew 5:23-24.*

## II. BITTERNESS IS A CHURCH SIN!

- A. A Young Preacher Was Told, "You're The First Pastor That Both Sides Like."
- B. *Ephesians 4:31 – "let all bitterness be put away."*
- C. *Job 7:11 - "I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."* One Of The Fruits Of Bitterness Is Complaining.

## III. BITTERNESS IS A HOME SIN!

- A. *Colossians 3:19 – "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."*
- B. The Fires Of Divorce Are Being Fueled By Bitterness.
- C. When A Child Is Bitter At The Parents Or The Parents Bitter With The Child There Is No Happiness Because Of Not Being In The Will Of God.

### BITTERNESS IS NOT SMALL AND SIMPLE IT IS HUGE AND HORRIBLE!

#### I. ITS' RUIN

There are many examples of the ruin of bitterness.

1. Ahithophel
2. Esau -- *Hebrews 12:15-17*
3. Haman -- The Book of Esther
4. The Elder Brother – *Luke 15:25-32.* Bitterness is reserving the right NOT to forgive.  
*Philippians 2:3*  
*I Corinthians 13:5*  
*I Corinthians 10:24*

#### II. IT'S REMEDY

Praise God there is a remedy.

*Exodus 15:23-25* - Israel came upon some bitterness. A bit of bitterness may be in your system. Everyone who tastes of you comes away spitting and disgusted.

If you take note of this passage of scripture, it was a time of testing for God's people. It was permitted by God to enable the children of Israel to learn to live by faith not by sight. How could they defeat the habitants of the promise land if they had not learned to depend on God's power to over come the enemy?

If you would take note of what happened, they complained and blamed Moses for the problem. Instead of learning the lesson God wanted them to learn they got angry and bitter.

How often do we as a child of God get angry and bitter because of things God has permitted to come into our lives? Instead of availing ourselves of the grace of God and leaning on Him, we become bitter. Unless faith is exercised in a sovereign God, the flesh can miss out on the lesson He has for us to learn. Our spiritual growth is hamper and perhaps even cause one of God's children to be put on the shelf of service.

But there is a Tree. Only the Cross can make the difference.

1. Not the counselor's couch.
2. Not Time (coffee overnight, coffee is gone, but the stain is still there. Time doesn't change it).
3. It's the Cross. If any man had a right to be bitter it would be Jesus: Yet in His death He said, "*Father, forgive them*".

COMPARE YOUR HURT TO HIS – *Romans 5:8*

CONFESS YOUR BITTERNESS – Dig up the root.

CLAIM THE BENEFITS OF THE CROSS –The blood cleanses - *I John 1:7, 9; Hebrew 9:14*, the blood purges the conscience.

CLEAR THE RECORD

### **CONCLUSION:**

The only way to overcome bitterness is to COMMIT TO DO EVERYTHING GOD REQUIRES – *James 5:16; Matthew 5:23-24* as the boss of the whole house.