



**Module** : Healing the Wounded Soul  
**Session 3** : Bitterness Against Leadership (#1)

**Focus** : Potential of Bitterness to Hinder Prophetic Destiny

Bitterness against leadership, both in the church and in the world, is rampant. There is growing disgruntlement with leadership in the church as well as in traditional secular institutions of governments including the spheres of commerce and finance. Anger and resentment levelled at leaders is on the increase. In reference to our government, we are called upon to pray for all in authority. We must avoid the snare of being entrapped in bitterness towards political leadership who fail to meet with our expectations, however valid these are. Our response instead should be one of strong prayer.

**1 Tim. 2:1-4** First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for **kings and all who are in authority**, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

The danger of permitting bitterness toward leadership to gain root within our hearts is that we become more prone to succumb to the sin of dishonour. David never once became embittered against King Saul who tried to kill him and thus never dishonoured Saul. He kept his attitude toward a backslidden and demon-possessed Saul honourable, and even praised him when he died.

I have found that bitterness against church leadership in particular is rife. This stifles what God is able to do within the one embittered as well as within the context (the church) in which this occurs. While we focus on bitterness against leadership in this study, the principles could be applied to bitterness against anyone in general.

### **Case Study 1: David and His Men**

#### **1 Samuel 30:1-31**

- 1 Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown **Ziklag and burned it with fire**;
- 2 and they took captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried them off and went their way.
- 3 When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was **burned with fire**, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive.
- 4 Then **David and the people** who were with him **lifted their voices and wept** until there was no strength in them to weep.
- 5 Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.
- 6 Moreover **David was greatly distressed** because the people spoke of **stoning him**, for **all the people were embittered**, each one because of his sons and his daughters. **But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

- 7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the **ephod**." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David.
- 8 David inquired of the Lord, saying, " Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, **"Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue all."**
- 9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those left behind remained.
- 10 But David **pursued**, he and four hundred men, for two hundred who were **too exhausted** to cross the brook Besor remained behind.
- 11 Now they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they provided him water to drink.
- 12 They gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights.
- 13 David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind when I fell sick three days ago.
- 14 We made a raid on the Negev of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire."
- 15 Then David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this band."
- 16 When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the **great spoil** that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.
- 17 David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled.
- 18 **So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives.**
- 19 But **nothing of theirs was missing, whether small or great**, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; **David brought it all back.**
- 20 So David had captured all the sheep and the cattle which the people drove ahead of the other livestock, and they said, **"This is David's spoil."**
- 21 When David came to the two hundred men who were too exhausted to follow David, who had also been left at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him, then David approached the people and greeted them.
- 22 Then all the **wicked and worthless men among those who went with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away and depart."**
- 23 Then David said, "You must not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us, who has kept us and delivered into our hand the band that came against us.
- 24 And who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage; they shall share alike."
- 25 So it has been from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.
- 26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Behold, a gift for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord:
- 27 to those who were in Bethel, and to those who were in Ramoth of the Negev, and to those who were in Jattir,
- 28 and to those who were in Aroer, and to those who were in Siphmoth, and to those who were in Eshtemoa,

- 29 and to those who were in Racal, and to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to those who were in the cities of the Kenites,
- 30 and to those who were in Hormah, and to those who were in Bor-ashan, and to those who were in Athach,
- 31 and to those who were in Hebron, and to **all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to go.**

Whilst David and his men were away, they left their wives and children at Ziklag. In their absence, the Amalekites came and captured all the wives and children. David's men became angry with him and discontented with his leadership decision in leaving Ziklag unprotected. His leadership was subtly called into question. They seriously considered stoning David, i.e. to kill him. The Bible indicates that they functioned in deep bitterness.

**1 Sam. 30:6** Moreover David was **greatly distressed** because the people spoke of stoning him, **for all the people were embittered**, each one because of **his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

### **BITTERNESS BRINGS A DEGREE OF OPPRESSION AND ENVELOPES YOU IN GRIEF**

'Ziklag' means '**winding; bending; a measure of oppression; enveloped in grief**'. Ziklag represents a spiritual state where one is seriously embittered such that it results in a degree of mental oppression and abiding grief. It specifically alludes to being '**enveloped in grief**'. The embittered person has a proclivity for being encompassed by a spirit of grief that erodes their joy and contentment. This is not a good place to be as it immobilises one to actively pursue a path of obedience to God and attain destiny.

### **BITTERNESS CAUSES GREAT DISTRESS**

The people's bitterness caused David great distress.

- (1) The bitterness of one tends to result in distress to others in that sphere.
- (2) Corporate or widespread bitterness in a group, when directed at the leader, can result in GREAT distress in the leader.

Great distress can come upon you when you are the focus of someone else's bitterness. You may be the subject of intense hatred and resentment, and this naturally can lead to stress within you. This is especially true when people hold you accountable for a sense of loss they suffer because of your leadership, or the advice that you offered in all sincerity. In times like these, you need to first strengthen yourself in God. David did exactly this.

### **BITTERNESS CAN ABORT DESTINY**

David's men were planning to stone him. If they had proceeded with this action, David's death would have meant an abortion of his destiny in God with reference to him being installed as the next king. Also, the destiny attendant with all his men would have been potentially aborted, since their unique assignment in God was integrally link to David.

## ENQUIRE OF GOD

After strengthening himself, David enquired of the Lord what to do. Then God gave him strategy to rectify the situation. He sought God on whether to pursue those Amalekites. God gave him permission to do so. Would it not be the most instinctive thing to do to simply just pursue the Amalekites? But David first enquires of the Lord. Never seek to rescue or correct bad decisions simply by doing what seems to be the most obvious thing to do. Consult God and allow Him to lead you. Also, by actively seeking God, David expresses his absolute and total dependence on God.

## BITTERNESS ERODES STRENGTH TO FULLY OBEY

On the instruction of God, David, with 600 men, pursue the Amalekites to recover their wives and children and everything else they had taken. When they crossed the brook Besor, 200 of the men, too exhausted to continue, elected to stay there. David and 400 men continued with the assignment. Bitterness has the effect of causing weariness to the soul – and erodes the strength of the mind and will not to vigorously pursue the path of restoration and recovery, even after one has received a clear Word from God. Perhaps by now, they were so disgruntled with the leadership of David that even when God's word/instruction was in his mouth, they had no inclination nor willingness to obey. I want to encourage you not to allow past failure of a leader to immobilise you to obey courageously in the day when God is speaking in and through them words of encouragement and instruction designed for your total restoration.

## MOMENTARY BREAKTHROUGH LULLS THE BITTER PERSON INTO PASSIVITY AND RELUCTANCE TO PROCEED TOWARD TOTAL RECOVERY OF THE FULLNESS OF ONE'S INHERITANCE IN THE LORD.

**'Besor'** means **'fresh, cool, cold; the bringer of good tidings'**. Besor is a place of refreshment and good news, but it impedes one's journey in recovering things important in your life. The 200 men, beset by physical exhaustion, chose to camp here and prioritise their private need for personal refreshment, in a time when they needed to focus on being committed to a corporate process. Do not be shortsighted. Momentary relief does not secure total recovery. Do not stop short of what God has fully in store for you.

The 400 men continued. Possibly these were the same 400 men (or at least a major part of them) who came to David when he fled from Saul and sought refuge in the Cave of Adullam. If so, then these men knew how David's leadership previously transformed their state of distress, debt and discontentment. Bitterness can so easily cause amnesia – where you forget how through God's Word expressed through your leader, you experienced breakthrough at one level or another.

## EXPRESSED KINDNESS AND CARE

David encountered a famished Egyptian young man, a slave of an Amalekite master who had been involved in the raid on Ziglag. David had not known this, but simply showed care and kindness, giving him food and water to revive and refresh him. This young man gave David vital information as to the location of the band of Amalekites who destroyed Ziglag. David was searching for the Amalekite aimlessly, being authorised by God to pursue them. Now David was able to pin point their precise location and defeat them. AS he embarked on this path of obedience, he shows kindness to someone in need, who then became the key to bringing specificity to his search. Bitter people generally are so inwardly focused that they fail to prioritise the need of

someone else, yet concern for someone else could very well be the means by which God will orchestrate your own breakthrough.

**David also did not hold the following things against the young Egyptian (David did not allow the following to instill bitterness in him), viz.**

- **He was Egyptian** : Egypt had a terrible history of enslaving Israel for 430 years. Do not hold people's historically negative treatment of you or your family against them. Forgive and show kindness.
- **He was Young** : He was immature. Some people are harsh and hating of you simply because they are immature. Forgive them readily especially if you claim greater maturity.
- **He served an Amalekite Master** in the destruction of Ziglag. He facilitated and supported his master in the raid on and destruction of Ziglag. Forgive those who consciously or inadvertently supported someone wicked agenda against you.

Be generous and benevolent, showing great kindness to your greatest enemy today, and watch how God will provide you with direction and detail concerning the restoration of your inheritance in Him.

### **BITTERNESS MAKES ONE SELFISH, INDIVIDUALISTIC, STINGY AND LACKING IN GENEROSITY**

Some of the 400 men refused to share the spoil with the two hundred who remained at Besor. Their bitterness made them selfish, self-centred and stingy. You see, the bitterness in David's 400 men, whilst originally levelled at David, who had just recovered all that was lost, was still resident and manifested in some of them now as a spiteful spirit. They deemed the 200 men ineligible to share in the blessing and reward because they regarded them as unfaithful, lazy, uncommitted, etc. Some argue that if God will breakthrough materially for them, their bitterness will end – but this is not true.

If, because of your submission to God-directed leadership, in the hour when God starts to redeem to you things you have lost and starts to heal your bitterness over that issue, do not allow residual bitterness - due to your expectations of others who have not met those expectations - to entrap you in **marginalising them to some degree**. David exhibits great generosity. **Only a truly bitter-free person can function in a spirit of great generosity.**

When you are enveloped in grief, you are prone to great attack. You make yourself susceptible to oppression. This could also start to manifest in respect of murmur and complaint against God-ordained leadership. I feel a prophetic unction for those reading this that if you change your heart of subtle bitterness towards your leader, whom you regard as having previously made some mistake, but whose heart you know is pure and after God, that God will recover to you all that you lost because of a position of honour you have adopted. When God does bless you with blessings because of your changed heart position, deliberately hold a position of generosity, sharing, kindness and forgiveness with all in your sphere.

David recovered all that was taken and more. The additional spoil he recovered was called 'David's spoil'. He distributed this in generous measure to the people living in every city he was accustomed to frequent. From having lost everything to having recovered all and more, David uses the blessing to bless others within his sphere of relationships. Bitterness potentially threatened this. But once it was overcome, through restoration

of the credibility of leadership, the corporate bitterness of David's men was healed and there was great prosperity. DAVID became a 'distribution centre'. Note that he is not yet king, but is distributing spoil to all the elders of Judah in thirteen cities – cities that marked his migration and movement up to that point. I see this as a sowing of seed into the realm in which he would first rule (David would first rule over Judah for 7 and a half years from Hebron, before ruling over all Israel from Zion for thirty three years). An embittered person does not see the need to sow into a realm in which his/her prophetic destiny lies, but which has not yet materialised. Sow into your future. Do not allow your bitterness to hinder you.

### **BITTERNESS HEALED ACCELERATES THE MOMENTUM TOWARD PROPHETIC DESTINY**

In the next chapter, 1 Samuel 31, Saul, David's greatest enemy and hindrance to his prophetic destiny, is killed in warfare. David is made king of Judah and laments Saul's death praising him for his contributions to the nation of Israel. The moment corporate bitterness is unearthed and removed from David's men, David's destiny is propelled. I prophetically perceive that as you comply with the principles indicated in this study, the greatest impediment to your advance in God's purposes will be supernaturally removed without your having to fight against it. Be expectant today.

### **BURN AWAY BITTERNESS**

The Amalekites burned Ziklag with fire. May the place of envelopment with grief, oppression and bitterness in your life be burned with the fire of God! May we never again revert back to that place. May destiny and kingship potential be realised! In fact, David returned to Ziklag, only to stay two days (2 Sam. 1:1). He could not have abided in that inaccurate location. After Saul's death, he inquired of the Lord as to where he should go. God directed him to Hebron, from where he ruled over Judah for seven and a half years.

### **PURSUE, OVERTAKE, RESCUE/RECOVER ALL**

In 1 Sam. 30:8, David is told by God to ...

1. **"Pursue, for you will surely ...**
2. **Overtake them, and**
3. **You will surely Rescue all."**

**No** pursuit will result in **no** overtaking, and **no** recovery. Position yourself in 'pursuit' mode by obediently observing the principles highlighted in this study and the recovery of all that God has intended for you will be your portion.

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