

Issue 6 - Is Resentment Quietly Growing in Your Marriage?

Contempt rarely comes out of nowhere. It grows from hidden wounds — but God can help couples face the roots and find healing together.

Scripture Focus: 2 Samuel 6:16–23

Theme: The Roots of Resentment in Marriage

◆ Messy Story of the Week

Anna and Mark had been married for 15 years. On the surface, they looked like a solid couple — church every Sunday, family dinners, showing up at school events. But behind closed doors, Anna carried a sharp edge. Little things set her off: the way Mark loaded the dishwasher, the way he talked to the kids, the way he laughed with friends at church. Mark often thought, *Where is this even coming from?* To him, it felt like she just didn't like him anymore.

What neither realized was that Anna's resentment had been building for years. A comment he made early in their marriage about her being "too emotional." The years she felt alone in parenting when his work was all-consuming. The anniversary he forgot. The unspoken disappointments piled up until contempt leaked out in sideways remarks, cold shoulders, and eye-rolls. Mark was exhausted by the constant undercurrent of criticism, and Anna was exhausted by feeling unseen.

◆ Faithful God Then and Now

When Michal looked out the window and saw David dancing before the Lord, Scripture says she "*despised him in her heart*" (2 Samuel 6:16). Her contempt didn't spring up in that single moment. It had roots — years of being treated like a political pawn, losing David, being reclaimed not for love but for leverage, and then finding herself one among many wives in his crowded palace.

To David, her scorn may have felt like it came out of nowhere. But to Michal, it was the overflow of wounds left unspoken and unresolved. Just like in Anna and Mark's story, contempt is rarely about the present moment — it's the fruit of pain that's never been healed.

◆ What We Can Learn

- **Resentment is slow-growing.** What looks like a character flaw is often the product of years of unmet needs and unhealed hurts.
 - **The target is usually confused.** The partner on the receiving end of contempt often feels blindsided because they don't know where the bitterness began.
 - **Ignoring it won't work.** Contempt left unaddressed doesn't fade — it festers, widening the distance between spouses.
 - **Hope is real.** With honesty, humility, and God's help, couples can untangle the roots and find healing together.
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◆ Behind the Curtain

In coaching, I see this pattern often: one spouse is bewildered by the other's coldness, while the other is weighed down by hurts they've never been able to voice safely. It can feel like an impasse — one is tired of the criticism, the other is tired of not being understood. But when a couple is willing to slow down, dig into the roots, and invite God into the process, breakthrough happens. I've watched couples move from contempt to compassion, from weariness to renewed connection.

◆ Faith Step for the Week

Pray this simple prayer with your spouse in mind:

“Lord, show me where bitterness has taken root in my heart. Give me courage to confess it, grace to forgive, and humility to heal. Make me quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry” (James 1:19).

This week, take one small step toward healing by sharing with your spouse one unspoken hurt — gently, honestly, and with an openness to grace.

◆ Next Week

Next issue, we'll look at the compromises made in the book of Ruth — the ways people tried to take matters into their own hands, disobeying God, and the consequences that followed.