

“A HEART FOR GOD”
LESSON 5: THE TRAP OF HATRED

BIBLE BOOK CLUB STUDY JUNE 20 & 24



JUST TO BE CLEAR...

- IT IS NOT WRONG TO HATE EVIL OR SIN. IT **/S** WRONG TO HATE THE SINNER OR THE PERSON WHO DID THE EVIL. HATING ANOTHER PERSON IS A SIN. **IN THE EYES OF JESUS, TO HATE WITH THE HEART AND TO SLANDER WITH THE TONGUE IS THE EQUIVALENT OF MURDER. EVEN TO CALL SOMEONE A FOOL PUTS YOU IN DANGER OF HELL FIRE (MATTHEW 5:22).**
- THIS IS NOT AN EASY DOCTRINE TO DIGEST IN THE ERA OF MASS SHOOTINGS, WAR AND GENOCIDE, SEXUAL ASSAULTS, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND OTHER CRIMES THAT CAUSE SUCH HARM. YET, IT IS CRUCIAL THAT WE REMEMBER OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST AND HIS EXPECTATIONS OF US. **WE CANNOT CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE'S SINS. CHOOSE HOW WE RESPOND TO WRONGDOING, WICKEDNESS, AND EVIL.**
- CHRIST SETS THIS STANDARD FOR **OUR** GOOD. HATRED IS A TRAP. LEFT UNCHECKED, IT SPIRALS OUT OF CONTROL AS IT DID WITH SAUL. THE NEXT TWO PAGES WILL SHOW HOW MUCH DAMAGE UNCHECKED HATRED CAN CAUSE.
- CHRIST SETS THIS STANDARD FOR THE GOOD OF THE **SINNER**. REPENTANCE IS THE ONLY CURE FOR HATRED. WHEN WE OBEDIENTLY DEMONSTRATE FORGIVENESS AND THE LOVE OF GOD, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE DON'T THINK THE PERSON DESERVES IT, WE OFFER THE SINNER THAT CHANCE AT REPENTANCE. THAT'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS CHRISTIANS.
- **REMEMBER THAT THE SINNER WHO NEEDS TO REPENT WILL SOMETIMES BE YOU. SO PRAY SOMEONE SHOWS YOU GOD'S LOVE.**

READ THE SAGA OF SAUL AND DAVID IN 1 SAMUEL. HOW DID (MISGUIDED) HATRED OF DAVID CHANGE SAUL?

IT HARDENED HIS HEART

**SAUL LOST THE THRONE BECAUSE HE HAD
DISOBEYED GOD. THIS WOULD CAUSE ANYONE
CONFLICTING FEELINGS.**

**RATHER THAN REPENT OF HIS FAILURE AND
ACCEPT GOD'S DECISION, SAUL REFUSED TO
ADMIT ANY WRONG-DOING.**

**OVER THE NEXT TEN YEARS, THESE FEELINGS
AND SAUL'S STUBBORNNESS CAUSED HIS
DESCENT INTO MADNESS.**

IT DAMAGED HIS RELATIONSHIPS

**SAUL'S SON, JONATHAN, BECAME CAUGHT IN THE
MIDDLE OF HIS FATHER'S RAGE AGAINST DAVID, HIS
OWN COVENANT FRIENDSHIP WITH DAVID, AND HIS
LOYALTY TO HIS FATHER.**

**JONATHAN AND DAVID, BOTH OF WHOM HAD TRIED TO
BE FAITHFULLY OBEDIENT TO SAUL, HAD TO WORK
TOGETHER TO DETERMINE SAUL'S VOLATILITY AND
VIOLENT HATRED TOWARDS DAVID. MEANWHILE,
SAUL'S HATRED TOWARDS DAVID INTENSIFIED AS HE
PERCEIVED HIS OWN SON TO BE ON DAVID'S SIDE.**

**HATRED CAN LEAVE US ISOLATED FROM THOSE
CLOSEST TO US AS IT BEGINS TO TAKE OVER OUR
PERSONALITIES AND PRIORITIES.**

IT MADE HIM DEHUMANIZE DAVID.

**SAUL WAS SO VIOLENTLY HATEFUL OF DAVID
THAT HE STOPPED CALLING THE MAN BY NAME,
REFERRING TO HIM ONLY AS "THE SON OF
JESSE".**

**DEHUMANIZING THOSE WE HATE ONLY MAKES
IT EASIER TO KEEP THE FLAME OF HATE
BURNING. IT IS FAR EASIER TO HATE WHEN
YOU HAVE DETACHED YOURSELF FROM ANY
HUMAN CONNECTEDNESS TO THE PERSON.**

HOW DID (MISGUIDED) HATRED OF DAVID CHANGE SAUL?

IT DISTORTED HIS REALITY

SAUL BEGAN TO PERCEIVE HIS OWN OFFICIALS AND ADVISORS AS BEING SET AGAINST HIM IN FAVOR OF DAVID. HE INSULTED THEM AND MADE FALSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THOSE MOST LOYAL TO HIM.

IT RESULTED IN VIOLENCE

NOT ONLY DID SAUL LASH OUT AT DAVID, HE WAS SET AGAINST ANYONE WHOM HE PERCEIVED TO BE ASSISTING DAVID.

AS A RESULT, WHEN HE FOUND OUT THAT THE PRIEST AHIMELECH HAD SHOWN MERCY ON DAVID, SAUL ORDERED THE ENTIRE HOUSE OF AHIMELECH AND EVERYONE IN HIS VILLAGE PUT TO DEATH.

THE FACT THAT DOEG, THE INFORMANT, WAS EAGER TO CARRY OUT SAUL'S VIOLENCE WARNS OF THE DANGERS WHEN PEOPLE ARE ENABLERS OF SUCH IRRATIONAL HATRED.

IT MADE HIM FALL AWAY FROM THE LOVE OF GOD AND MAN

GOD MAY HAVE DECIDED TO REMOVE SAUL FROM THE THRONE, BUT THAT DID NOT NEED TO SEPARATE SAUL FROM GOD.

WHEN WE BECOME SELF-RIGHTEOUS IN OUR HATRED, WE CLOSE OUR HEARTS TO REPENTANCE THAT COULD LEAD US BACK INTO RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. WE SIMPLY NO LONGER SEE OUR NEED FOR GOD'S GRACE.

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF HATRED

- **HATRED INVERTS REALITY, MAKING THE ABUSER SEE HIMSELF OR HERSELF AS THE VICTIM**
- **WE CAN TRY TO JUSTIFY OUR HATRED BY BLAMING IT ON THE OTHER PERSON'S BETRAYAL.**
- **HATRED CAUSES US TO MAKE FALSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST OTHERS.**
- **HATRED PLAYS THE VICTIM. BEING THE VICTIM LETS US OFF THE HOOK (WE THINK) FOR OUR HATRED AND OUR SINFUL RESPONSE TO THE OBJECT OF OUR HATRED. IT'S ANOTHER WAY OF CLAIMING INNOCENCE FOR OUR SIN.**
- **HATRED ALLOWS US TO WALLOW IN SELF-PITY. SELF-PITY ALLOWS US TO FURTHER JUSTIFY OUR HATRED.**
- **HATRED IS AGGRESSIVE, BUT IT LIKES TO DISGUISE ITSELF AS MEEKNESS AND WEAKNESS. WITH THAT TACTIC AND PLAYING THE VICTIM, WE CAN BRING OTHER PEOPLE ALONGSIDE US IN OUR SIN, PERHAPS GET THEM TO DO OUR DIRTY WORK AS DOEG DID FOR SAUL.**

THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL OF HATRED

- **HATRED NEEDS AN EXCUSE. WE DON'T WANT TO ADMIT TO THE HATE IN OUR HEART BECAUSE THEN "WE LOOK BAD". HATE NEEDS TO VILIFY OTHERS TO JUSTIFY OUR OWN SINFUL BEHAVIORS. THE PERSON WE HATE IS A SCAPEGOAT.**
- **HATE TRIES TO HIDE BEHIND PIETY. THIS IS SOMETIMES CALLED "RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION", WHICH IS JUST A TERM FOR SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. WE THINK WE'RE DESTROYING EVIL. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE WHEN THE PERSON (OR GROUP) WE HATE HAS OPPOSING RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL VIEWPOINTS. *IF YOU NEED AN EXAMPLE OF HOW HOT THESE FIRES OF PIETY CAN BURN, CONSIDER THE ABORTION DEBATE OR THE CURRENT POLITICAL CLIMATE IN AMERICA.***
- **HATE HAS TO DEHUMANIZE ITS VICTIM. THEN THE 'SINNER' BECOMES NOTHING MORE THAN A THING OR AN OBJECT WITH NO HUMAN IDENTITY OTHER THAN THE INJURY YOU PERCEIVE THEM TO HAVE CAUSED. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN SO HATEFUL OF SOMEONE JUST THE MENTION OF THEIR NAME SETS YOU OFF?**

AND ONE QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF...

AS YOU READ THE SAGA OF SAUL AND DAVID, CONSIDER HOW DAVID REACTED TO SAUL'S PERSECUTION. **HE STILL CALLED SAUL "GOD'S ANOINTED ONE" (KING). HE STILL RECOGNIZED THAT IT WASN'T HIS RIGHT OR ANYONE ELSE'S RIGHT TO HARM SAUL BECAUSE GOD HAD ORDAINED SAUL. WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE TO KILL SAUL, HE OBEYED GOD'S WILL INSTEAD. HIS LOVE OF GOD WAS GREATER, SO GREAT THAT ITS UNCLEAR WHETHER DAVID BORE SAUL ANY HATRED OR ILL WILL AT ALL.**

SPEND SOME TIME IN THE BOOK OF PSALMS. MANY OF THOSE PSALMS WERE WRITTEN DURING DAVID'S TIME HIDING FROM SAUL. THEY ARE NOT FULL OF SCHEMES FOR REVENGE BUT RATHER APPEALING TO GOD TO SEE DAVID THROUGH THIS "WILDERNESS SEASON". DAVID SHOWS US THAT HATE MUST BE MET WITH SUBMISSION TO GOD AND DEPENDENCE ON HIS GRACE.

- **IF YOUR HATRED IS BORN OF JEALOUSY IS FOR ANOTHER PERSON'S SKILLS, GIFTS, ACCOMPLISHMENT, CONSIDER THESE QUESTION: *IS THE PERSON POSSIBLY MANIFESTING A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT OR SOME BLESSING OF GOD? DO YOU SEE SOME WAY IN WHICH THEIR SKILLS ARE FURTHERING GOD'S KINGDOM OR MAGNIFYING HIM?***
- **IF SO, IT MIGHT BE THE ENEMY FANNING YOUR HATRED OF THE PERSON. REMEMBER THAT THE DEMONIC FORCES ARE SET AGAINST THOSE WHO TRY TO BUILD GOD'S KINGDOM. MAKE CERTAIN YOUR HATRED ISN'T THEIR WAY OF BLOCKING GOD'S PURPOSES.**

THE END RESULT OF HATRED

- **HATRED TURNS US INTO A PERSON WE DON'T RECOGNIZE. HATRED TURNS US INTO A PERSON THAT OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY DON'T RECOGNIZE. WE ARE IN DANGER OF DRIVING OTHERS AWAY OR DELIBERATELY ISOLATING OURSELVES FROM PEOPLE WHO DON'T SUPPORT AND VALIDATE OUR HATRED.**
- **LEFT UNCHECKED, WE LEAVE OURSELVES VULNERABLE TO THE SWAY OF DEMONIC FORCES. WHEN A PERSON HOLDS ONTO THEIR HATE JUST TO GIVE THEMSELVES A PURPOSE, THEY ARE HARDENING THEIR HEART AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INFLUENCE. IT CAN EVEN CAUSE US TO LASH OUT VIOLENTLY AT THE OBJECT OF OUR HATE. GOD AND SATAN CANNOT OCCUPY THE SAME HOUSE. YOU ARE THAT HOUSE. LIGHT AND DARKNESS HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP (2 CORINTHIANS 6:14). YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE WHO IS GOING TO INFLUENCE YOUR HEART, AND THEREFORE WHO IS GOING TO DWELL IN YOUR HEART.**
- **GOD KNOWS HOW YOU SUFFER. WHEN SOMEONE HAS DONE YOU WRONG, GOD DOESN'T EXPECT YOU TO PRETEND IT DOESN'T HURT OR THAT IT NEVER HAPPENED. BUT GOD IS CONCERNED FOR YOU, FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF HATE ON YOU--PHYSICALLY, EMOTIONALLY, SPIRITUALLY, AND ETERNALLY. UNCHECKED HATE WILL DESTROY YOUR LIFE AND POSSIBLY CONDEMN YOUR SOUL. IT IS NOT GOD'S WILL THAT WE SHOULD BE LOST. THIS IS WHY HE WANTS US TO ALLOW HIM TO ENACT JUSTICE ON OUR BEHALF BY HIS OWN MEANS AND IN HIS OWN TIME, NOT BY HUMAN MEANS OR DEMAND.**

EASY TO HATE. HARD TO LOVE. WHAT DO YOU DO?

**AS MATTHEW WEST'S SONG "*FORGIVENESS*"
PRAYS: LORD SHOW US HOW TO LOVE THE
UNLOVEABLE, TO REACH THE UNREACHABLE,
TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE. HOW DO WE SET OUR
HATRED FREE AND FIND FORGIVENESS?**

**THE GOOD NEWS IS WHEN FORGIVENESS IS
IMPOSSIBLE FOR US, WE KNOW ALL THINGS
ARE POSSIBLE FOR GOD.**

**ADMIT IT. RECOGNIZE THE HATRED IN YOURSELF AND KNOW THAT
ONLY GOD CAN CHANGE YOUR HEART, IF YOU WILL ALLOW HIM.
PRAY WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND OBEY WHAT THE HOLY SPIRIT
COMMANDS OF YOU. PRAY FOR OBEDIENCE TO GOD.**

**CONCENTRATE ON WHAT YOU CAN DO. "STOP THOUGHTS"
MEANS STOP THE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS THAT PLAGUE YOU
ABOUT THIS PERSON OR PEOPLE GROUP. DISTRACT YOURSELF
WITH ACTIVITY. AND STOP GOSSIPING ABOUT THEM. THAT JUST
FUELS THE FIRE. RECOGNIZE THAT THOSE NEGATIVE THOUGHTS
COME FROM THE ENEMY. ANY VOICE IN YOUR HEAD THAT FUELS
ANGER IS NOT THE VOICE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

**REFUSE EVIL. GUARD YOUR HEART, THOUGHTS, AND WORDS
WITH GOD'S HELP.**

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.

A FINAL WORD OF CLARITY...

***BUT HE SAID TO ME, "MY GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR YOU,
FOR MY POWER IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS."
THEREFORE I WILL BOAST ALL THE MORE GLADLY ABOUT
MY WEAKNESSES, SO THAT CHRIST'S POWER MAY REST ON
ME. THAT IS WHY, FOR CHRIST'S SAKE, I DELIGHT IN
WEAKNESSES, IN INSULTS, IN HARDSHIPS, IN
PERSECUTIONS, IN DIFFICULTIES. - 2 CORINTHIANS 12***

"LOVE YOUR ENEMY" DOES NOT MEAN:

- PRETENDING WHAT THEY DID DOESN'T MATTER
- LYING TO YOURSELF THAT WHAT THEY DID WASN'T EVIL OR WRONG.
- THAT YOU HAVE TO INVITE THEM BACK INTO YOUR LIFE TO HARM YOU AGAIN.

IT DOES MEAN:

- BEING ABLE TO SEE THROUGH THE LENS OF GOD'S GRACE. WHAT IS PREVENTING YOU FROM SEEING ANYTHING HUMAN ABOUT THAT PERSON, ANYTHING WORTH REDEEMING? THINK OUTSIDE OF YOURSELF.
- LET GOD SOFTEN YOUR HEART AND OBEY HIS LEADING.
- TRUST THAT GOD WILL PROVIDE YOU A NEW PERSPECTIVE OR AN UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU COULD NOT HAVE RECEIVED BY YOUR OWN MEANS. TRUST IN GOD'S GRACE.

RESOURCES FOR THIS LESSON

- ***“A HEART FOR GOD”*, REBECCA MANLEY PIPPERT, IVP BOOKS, 1996**