

# Restoration from Resentment

by Pastor Marvin R. Barham

While ministering in Baton Rouge, LA, a dear friend of mine (Melody Simons) shared with me a story. A man had risen from the dead after several days. While asleep he had witnessed heaven and hell. Upon visiting hell he recognized a woman he remembered as being a righteous woman and asked, "Why is she here?" The Lord's reply, "Upon her death bed she swore in her heart that she would never forgive those who did not come visit her in her time of need." In other words, in her final hour she embraced and hung onto resentment.

It reminds me of another story of a bit lighter tale. Having four children, I watch a lot of *Vegitales*. I recall one in particular entitled, *Larry and the Angry Eyebrows*. Throughout *Bumblingberg* everyone began to find reasons to be angry at one another and harbor resentment. Once they found justification or felt they had the right to be angry, the angry eyebrows of Awful Alvin would attach themselves to their forehead and captivate their minds every thought with anger and irrational thought thus destroying relationships all around them. It sounds comical doesn't it? How true it is of so many of us today. Even in the church we say we are forgiving, yet deep in our hearts there is resentment that can be heard in our words and attitudes.

Joseph was confident that he had let go of what his brothers had done to him, until God presented them before him. Suddenly, the resentment arose and Joseph had to confront, not his brothers, but his own heart. In **I Kings 2:1-10** we find another power example of a life lived hanging onto resentment to the death.

**I Kings 2:1-4** *1Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, 2I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; 3And keep the charge of the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: 4That the LORD may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel.*

Like many of us, particularly as parents, we have every intention of passing onto our children strong Godly wisdom, principles and character. Would you not tell your children what David has admonished his son to do? Keep right with God; walk in all His ways; keep God's commandments; everyone and God will bless you. Why, this is what Sunday school is supposed to be teaching them and reinforcing in them for me as a parent, right? Like so many, David's parental, fatherly words of Godly wisdom sound good, until...we get to what is really lingering in his heart in I Kings 2:5-10.

**I Kings 2:5-10** *5 Moreover thou **knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did to me (2 Sam. 3:27)**, and what he did to the two captains of the hosts of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were on his feet. 6 **Do therefore according to thy wisdom, and let not his hoar head go down to the grave in peace.** 7But shew kindness unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table: for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother. 8And, behold, thou hast with thee **Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, which cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim (2 Sam. 16:5-10): but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the LORD, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. 9Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.** 10So David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.*

How sad, that this man who mostly loved God with all his heart harbored such resentment much of his life. You see, David speaks a good game, but then resentment gets the better of his judgment. He cannot let go of the wrongs and injustice done him, so much that he is willing to plant the seeds of bitterness, unforgiveness and resentment in the heart of his son. He tells Solomon, "Walk in the ways of God, honor Him, however, do not forget what so and so did to me. Don't let them get away with it. Get them back. Avenge my resentment."

**Oh how so much of our heart often contradicts our words of good intention.** Jesus called resentment – unforgiveness and in **Matthew 18:35** tells us, *“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts **forgive not** every one his brother their trespasses.”*

We find in **Luke 7:20-24** where Jesus dealt with this same issue concerning one of those closest to Him, John the Baptist. (**20***When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another? 21*And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. **22***Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached. 23*And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.)

You see, John made many personal sacrifices to lead the way for the Master. Then just when the ministry of Jesus begins to springboard, John is thrown in prison to have his head cut off. And what does Jesus do to save him? He does absolutely nothing. Maybe Jesus knew John would be a threat to the success of His ministry? Maybe this was part of a plot to get John out of the way? Maybe, John was a victim of ministry politics? Maybe Jesus just did not consider John of the right class to be a part of His world wide ministry?

**Webster defines resentment as:** a feeling of indignant displeasure or persistent ill will at something regarded as a wrong, insult, or injury; an offense.

Sounds like a very intelligent definition but let’s take it home to a more personal and practical application.

### **Resentment is the:**

- harboring of animosity against a person or group of people whom I feel has mistreated me.
- unresolved anger I have over a negative event which occurred in my past life.
- seething, aching emotional turmoil I feel whenever a certain person or event is discussed.
- lack of forgiving, the inability to let go and forget.
- root of distrust and suspicion I have when dealing with people or events that brought me pain in the past.
- unresolved grief I experience when I find it difficult to accept a loss.
- result of being heartbroken after exerting a great deal of effort and energy to achieve something that eventually was lost to me.
- result of feeling that I was unjustly victimized with no resolution to the problem.
- long-term suffering in silence when an open expression of hurt is unwanted and uninvited.
- cancer robbing me of contentment in life.
- grudge I hold against a person or group of people whom I feel has kept me from achieving.
- feeling offended but silent when I believe that a person or group of people have ignored or denied my rights.
- root of my depression.

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Like David or like John the Baptist, resentment easily creeps into our hearts and is hard to recognize ourselves unless the Holy Spirit and the Word of God reveals it in our hearts. Like Joseph, we must confront it head-on. It is like that headache commercial, “apply directly to forehead.” Well, with resentment you have to apply the Word of Truth directly to the heart. Resentment will not only destroy your life and relationships, it also destroys those around you and spreads like a disease. Realize it or not, if there is any resentment in you I guarantee that like David, you have passed those seeds onto someone, somewhere, somehow, at some time. It is amazing how hatred or hatefulness is easier to spread than love. Retaining resentment leads to underlying irrational thinking that is a gall of bitterness.

### **What irrational thinking underlies your resentment?**

- No matter what I do it is never ``good'' enough, so why try?
- People are out to get me so, I'll reject them before they reject me.
- There is no use in resolving unfinished business with people from my past who mistreated me.
- Everyone is out to get me.
- Hard work, a clean life, and treating people fairly is a waste of time; it has never paid off for me.
- There is no way I can forgive or forget my negative past.
- I'll never win at anything I try; I've always lost up until now.
- There are the ``haves'' and the ``have nots,'' and I'm a have not guaranteed to be a loser.
- My life should at least be fair.
- It is better to grin and bear it; I'll never get anywhere with an open, honest approach.
- What's done is done, so let it be.
- I've never been given a break in the past; why should I expect anything different now?
- It's all a matter of politics: who you know and what you have to bow down to that determines your fate.
- It's who you know rather than what you are that determines your success.
- Why is it that people with fewer talents, who work less, and struggle little, always seem to get ahead while I remain stuck.
- The price of hard work and effort seems to be failure and disappointment for me.
- There's always going to be someone who will guarantee that I'll be unsuccessful.
- They are all alike; why try to win them over or be nice to them.
- It will never change; why try to alter the situation between me and them.
- There are always people more talented, prettier, and more competent standing in the wings to take my place.

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Some of you may not resent someone who necessarily wronged you. You may resent a poor decision; you might have roots of resentment against your children or mate and feel they are holding you back; maybe you resent something about yourself or your current situation. Whatever it is, resentment is not healthy for your soul or those around you. The Word of God makes no bones about it when it comes to resentment. David died in his resentment and was given an opportunity to repent when Christ went to the pit, preached the good news and set the captives free. Joseph dealt with his resentment and made right with his God and his brothers. John the Baptist repented of his attitude and resentment of doubt and disbelief because of self pity.

What about you? Where is there resentment lurking in your heart, poisoning your Christlike mind to justify ill will, hindering you from moving forward and accomplishing your Kingdom purpose to the fullest extent on the Kingdom team? You must not sugar coat it, do not belittle it, do not justify it in any way. Confront it and deal with it. This life is too short to live with resentment and its destructive power. Eternity is too long to wish you had dealt with it. Before healing and restoration can be complete, resentment must be released.

## Restoration from Resentment

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2. **I Kings 2:1-4; I Kings 2:5-10 - Oh how so much of our heart often \_\_\_\_\_ our words of good \_\_\_\_\_.** Jesus called resentment – \_\_\_\_\_ and in **Matthew 18:35** tells us, “So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts **forgive not** every one his brother their trespasses.”

3. We find in **Luke 7:20-24** where Jesus dealt with this same issue concerning one of those closest to Him, John the Baptist.

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- cancer robbing me of \_\_\_\_\_ in life.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I hold against a person or group of people whom I feel has kept me from achieving.
- feeling \_\_\_\_\_ but silent when I believe that a person or group of people have ignored or denied my rights.
- root of my \_\_\_\_\_.

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