

# Battle for Your Soul #5: Gibeon: Deceptive Pride (Part 1)

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*Battles of the Soul*

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Let me ask you to take your Bibles and turn them to Joshua chapter nine. And as we continue our study in the battles of the Promised Land, the seven battles of the Promised Land, the battles for your soul. And let me just start this morning by asking you to stand as we read God's Word together, Joshua chapter nine. We're going to begin at verse one.

And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan, in the hills, and in the valleys, and in all the coasts of the great sea over against Lebanon, the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard thereof; that they gathered themselves together, to fight with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord. And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done unto Jericho and to Ai, they did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp at Gilgal, and said unto him, and to the men of Israel, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us. And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites, Peradventure ye dwell among us; and how shall we make a league with you? And they said unto Joshua, We are thy servants. And Joshua said unto them, Who are ye? and from whence come ye? And they said unto him, From a very far country thy servants are come because of the name of the LORD thy God: for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan, which was at Ashtaroth. Wherefore our elders and all the inhabitants of our country spake to us, saying, Take victuals with you for the journey, and go to meet them, and say unto them, We are your servants: therefore now make ye a league with us. This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses on the day we came forth to go unto you; but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy: and these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new; and, behold, they be rent: and these our

garments and our shoes are become old by reason of the very long journey. And the men took of their victuals, and asked not counsel at the mouth of the LORD. And Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them, to let them live: and the princes of the congregation swore unto them. And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them. And the children of Israel journeyed, and came unto their cities on the third day. Now their cities were Gibeon, and Chephirah, and Beeroth, and Kirjathjearim. And the children of Israel smote them not, because the princes of the congregation had sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel. And all the congregation murmured against the princes. But all the princes said unto all the congregation, We have sworn unto them by the LORD God of Israel: now therefore we may not touch them. This we will do to them; we will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them. And the princes said unto them, Let them live; but let them be hewers of wood and drawers of water unto all the congregation; as the princes had promised them.<sup>1</sup>

Let's pray.

*Father, we've looked at two battles already in this series. We looked at the battle against bitterness and it how it destroys the lives of so many Christians as we looked at how the walls of Jericho were conquered. We looked at the battle against hidden sin, as Achan hid something in his tent which he told him not to take, and because of that Israel suffered defeat and shame at Ai, and only got a victory there later after they had cleansed that hidden sin from their midst.*

*Father, today's battle may be the toughest one of all because it's a battle that the children of Israel didn't even fight when they should have. It's a battle that we seem to allow in our lives so often and in our souls so often. It's the battle of pride. Father, we all suffer from it. We all have times of "I" trouble. Father, forgive me of my own pride that often leaves me overly sensitive to what others say, that often makes me the center of my own universe. And Father, I pray that you'll open our hearts to your Word and convict us of our sin. And that we might truly make the motto of our lives to live for your glory alone.*

*And Father, we ask that your Spirit rebuke and bind Satan and all his henchman from this place today, that you'd open our hearts and our minds to hear clearly what you have to say to us. We pray in Christ's name, amen.*

By way of review, especially for some of our guests that haven't been here for the start of the series, we're studying the seven battles of the Promised Land and talking about how those battles really represent the battles for our soul. And we talked about that when

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<sup>1</sup> Joshua 9:1-21.

Israel was in Egypt, that represented their slavery to sin. They were slaves to Pharaoh. Pharaoh even wore a serpent on his crown, and so this would mean slaves to the serpent. And the only way they were able to leave that area was to have the Lamb of God put inside them. So they all ate the Passover lamb, and when they went out from Egypt they all had the lamb inside them. And that's a picture of inviting the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, into your heart, into your life. And that makes you free from sin. And so they left Egypt.

Now, Egypt tried to pursue them because the devil doesn't like us to get away from his grip. And so they pursued them, and yet they crossed the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army was destroyed there, and God really got the glory. And I think a bunch of people were expecting a happy, easy-go-lucky time from then on. But then they came to the Promised Land, and they sent in 12 spies and two of them came back and said, "We can take it with God's help." And ten of them came back and said, "No way. We're too puny compared with the people that live there."

And so they ended up not going and because of that, they had to wander 40 years in the wilderness because they failed to obey God. They failed to go in and conquer that which God had already promised to give them.

Now, that is the... there were a lot of lessons. And we had two preliminary sermons before this series kind of started, on "what were the lessons learned while they were wandering in the wilderness?" Then we came to the battle of Jericho, and we talked about how that was bitterness because the Bible says a brother offended is harder to be won than a walled city. And that was the basis of making Jericho about bitterness.

And if you look at how the walls of Jericho were conquered, you can also understand the only way to get rid of bitterness in our lives. By the way, those sermons are on our web site. So you can go out and listen to the first two sermons in the series if you would like to do that.

Then we came to Ai, and Achan had taken something from Jericho he wasn't supposed to take. It was supposed to be totally devoted to God, it was supposed to have been destroyed. And then he took it and he buried it in his tent. He thought, "I can get away with it." And yet that hidden sin caused Israel to lose 36 men that day, which didn't sound like a big number but it totally devastated them. It totally made them go into despair.

And they went into battle without even checking with God, because they thought they were so overwhelmingly prepared for the little, small town of Ai. We talked about how hidden sin often leads us to this next sin, which is the sin of pride. So in Joshua chapter nine, I want to encourage you to keep your Bibles open. We're going to be looking at them several times.

But I want to point out again that we... salvation is composed of three parts, really. When we are saved, that is when we ask Jesus Christ to come into our hearts, we're... the Bible term for that is to be justified. In Romans chapter five, it means to be justified. And Faith, would you and Hope go get the printouts that are on the printer back there? We've got some notes that will help you while you're following along today, and they'll pass those out to you.

But salvation is when... justification is when Jesus Christ comes into our heart and forgives us of our sin. It means to be just as if I had never sinned. And then this stage is sanctification, where every day I should be becoming more like Christ. I shouldn't be backsliding, and there's no way, there is no park or neutral in the Christian life, so you're either moving forward or you're moving backwards.

And then, ultimately, one day the battle... it says in Philippians three that "Christ shall change my vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."<sup>2</sup> That's called glorification. When you add justification plus sanctification plus glorification, you have salvation.

Now, we go around all the time saying, "I'm saved." But in reality, Paul says, "Having been justified through Christ's death, much more shall we be saved through his life."<sup>3</sup> The apostle Paul regarded salvation as something that he had a down payment on now, he had an earnest payment on now, that he had not completely received because the ultimate salvation is to be made into the man or the woman God originally created us to be. And that happens at glorification.

Let's look now at Joshua chapter nine and talk about the great problem with pride. I want you to notice something: that pride often comes into our life after a great victory. They had this overwhelming victory at Jericho. You may remember that the walls of Jericho were about 36 feet thick. Four chariots could ride side by side on top of the walls of Jericho. They were about 120 feet high. And they overcame this by simply walking around the city every day for six days. On the seventh day they walked around seven times. They blow a trumpet, and they all shout הלל (haw-lal') which is the word for praise, and the walls come falling down.

What an amazing victory. And God destroyed the inhabitants of Jericho that day, except for Rahab and her family. They then went to Ai, because they were a little cocky coming off the first one. They wound up having this defeat. They went into battle without checking with God, and they were routed by a much smaller, insignificant kind of army. And yet, after they got Achan and his family and their sin out from their midst, after Achan and his family were punished for taking that which God had commanded them not to take, they went back to Ai and they had another sounding victory.

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<sup>2</sup> Philippians 3:21.

<sup>3</sup> Romans 5:9.

So they had a couple of recent big victories. And guess what happens sometimes when things are going well? We start giving ourselves the credit for it. We start thinking, “Hey. Things are going pretty good. I must be managing things better,” you know? “It’s because of, you know, my expertise that I have this paycheck. My expertise that I have this job. It’s because of the good work I’m doing.” Watch out when you start talking about yourself like that, because you either learn to humble yourself unto the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in good time, or he will humiliate you so you know what humility is about.

And so this is what happened. They failed to seek God before going into battle. Ai... and now come the Gibeonites. These people come and their purpose is to deceive Israel in the making a treaty, the making of an alliance with them. And the sin of pride keeps them from even seeking God’s wisdom or guidance on this subject.

Now let’s stop for a minute. What exactly is pride? Let’s make sure we’re all on the same page here.

First of all, it is reserving the right to make your own final decisions. It is when you are still on the throne of your heart. It is when you are saying, “You know what? I know God may want me to do this, and I may have counsel from my boss or from my parents or from my husband,” or whoever the Scriptural authority in your life is... I want to... “I know I have those people telling me that but I am still going to do it my way. I am still going to be the one that makes the final decision.”

And that’s a problem, when Christians focus on being committed to Christ, rather than being surrendered to Christ. Because if you’re surrendered, you no longer have a will of your own. And you and I need to surrender to Christ and say, “Whatever your will is, that’s what I am going to do.”

Pride is also believing that you have achieved what God and others have done for you. I was on a call this last week with a group of my peers and we were preparing an exam for IBM. And the lady who was in charge used to edit all the books that I wrote for IBM. And she was a merciless editor. I was amazed at how I used to think I was a pretty good writer, I’d get stuff back stacked this thick. The original manual was only that thick, but by the time she added yellow Post-It notes to it, it was that thick. And you know... there would be all these things to fix.

Finally we made it electronic. And she was a brutal editor, but I learned a lot about technical writing from her critique. And the fact is, she was so good that she eventually... we tried to automate some of the processes. She didn’t really want to do it that way, so she took another position at IBM and we wrote a software package... and her name was Judy, by the way. We wrote a software package, and it’s called Cyber Judy. And that’s what we use to edit our documents at IBM now. It does all that critiquing for you. It even has a cute little voice at the end that says, “Your project is finished!”

But anyway, Judy made a comment on the call. She said, “Well, you’re really a good writer.” I said, “I learned it from you.” You know? I wanted her to know that I recognized the contribution that she had made in my life. I had... I have some... I had a professor at the University of Oklahoma that was also very brutal, but taught me one of the most important things about writing that I have drilled into my kids ever since then. And this one trick makes your writing ten times more persuasive, ten times stronger. And I’ve never heard anybody else even talk about this trick, and it’s just an amazing thing.

And so, pride is believing that you have achieved what God and others have done through you. Don’t take credit for it. You wouldn’t be where you are if God hadn’t put the people in your life that he’s put there.

Now, it is also standing in the position of God and judging your family or others. Every time you judge somebody else, you need to remember who the judge is. And you ain’t him. Okay? God is the judge of all mankind. And when we judge others, we’re really putting ourselves in place of God and saying, “You know what? I see what’s in your heart.”

Let me tell you something right now. I had somebody say that to me one time. And he knew the intense motives of my heart. And the reality is... there’s no way. It wasn’t a biblical thing for him to say. Because the Bible says, “For who knows the thoughts of man, or the spirit of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him?”<sup>4</sup> God knows my heart, but nobody else can. And when it’s... when I say things are between me and God, and we’re the only two that really know...

Now, you may know me well enough to guess. And you may know well enough from the things I do to infer what’s going on in my heart. But be very careful that you don’t ever think you know what’s going on in somebody’s heart. Because you don’t. You’re not God. You can’t see that way.

Pride is also a danger that can destroy your family. The Bible says, “Only by pride cometh contention.”<sup>5</sup> That’s arguing, that’s disagreement, that’s fighting, that’s quarrelling. But with the well advised is wisdom. Pride will destroy your family.

Now, let’s look at the pattern of pride. And I have already figured out, there is absolutely no way to even remotely approach all of this. So it’s going to be at least a two-part-er, if not a three-part-er. But we need to finish on time today. We’re a little behind.

Pride, first of all, comes to deceive. Now notice what happened in verses three and four. They come with these old clothes, these clotted-up shoes, their moldy bread, their old wine skins. And they said, “Oh, boy, all of this was new when we left home, you know, several weeks ago, you know. We made this long journey. We came to make a treaty with you.” See, pride wants to deceive us. It is the master weapon of the master

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<sup>4</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:11.

<sup>5</sup> Proverbs 13:10.

deceiver, who is the devil. It comes respectably. You notice, they come and they purport themselves to be ambassadors. And they come and they say, “We want, on behalf of our nation, to make a treaty with your nation.”

And so it comes respectably. It comes craftily. They went to great effort to make it appear as though they had truly come from a long distance.

Now, it’s amazing that when you are filled with pride, you are more easily deceived. Why is that? Because you have made yourself the judge of things in your life, instead of taking every decision in prayer to God. So it’s easier for you to be full. It’s also, you know, people with pride have decided to... “Well, I can get away with it,” or you know, “I’m smart enough to make this decision without getting on my knees and fasting and praying about this. I’ll just make my own decision.” But you know, God says if you’re one of these people that says, “I can get away with it,” he says, “Be sure your sin will find you out.”<sup>6</sup> So pride... it deceives you into thinking, “I can get away with it,” but the reality is just the opposite.

Here’s another thing. Pride wants assistance without surrender. Did you notice what the Gibeonites had come to ask for? They could have repented and surrendered to the God of Israel. They could have asked the God of Israel to be their God. They could have asked the Israelites, “Teach us about your God so that we can follow him too.” But what they do instead... They don’t want to surrender to Israel’s God. What they want to do is say, “We want your assistance. We want to make a league with you. We want to make a pact with you. And we want... we’re not coming to beg terms of surrender. We’re not coming to repent.” But they were coming to make a league.

By the way, this was going to suck Israel into a series of ongoing conflicts with the Amorite kings while they were in the Promised Land. You know what? This is a problem for all of us. We want God to help us, but we’re not quite willing to put down the stuff he’s told us is wrong in our lives. It’s kind of like, “Well, God, I need financial help.” And yet God’s told you about something in your house that’s not pleasing to him, something on your computer that’s not pleasing to him, something that you’ve allowed as a habit in your life that doesn’t please and you won’t get rid of it, and yet you expect God to help you. Pride wants assistance without surrender.

Pride also makes us the solutions instead of God. Gibeon is coming to Israel saying, “We want your... a pact with you. We’ll help you, you help us.” The reality is, the Gibeonites had a bad problem. The Gibeonites were always being attacked by the Amorites. Now the Gibeonites were scared of Israel because they’d heard about Jericho. And yet, Israel has a new fear. The Amorites were a long-standing, long-running fear.

So they had this idea. “Well, let’s go make a pact with Israel since they sound like they’re the toughest guy on the block right now. And they can help us out with the Amorites, who we know to be a constant problem with us.” They wanted Israel to be the

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<sup>6</sup> Numbers 32:23.

solution to their problems, and when they came to Israel, they said, “We want to make a league with you.”

And Israel was kind of flattered. Joshua and the princes of Israel were kind of flattered. It’s kind of like, “Well, yeah, we have had a couple of pretty good victories lately, boys. I can understand why they’re coming shopping over here to be our buddies and be our friends. After all, wouldn’t you want to be one of our allies?”

See, pride lets us become the solution. You have to be very careful with that. You have to be careful that when somebody comes and asks you for your counsel, that you don’t sound like or you don’t purport yourself as having all the answers. Recognize the fact that you need to point people to God to get the answers. You can give them some opinions. You can give them some thoughts. But don’t make their decisions for them. They need to learn how to go to God and figure out what’s right. So if somebody asks for my counsel, I want to give them some biblical principles, but I want to point them to God and I want them to spend time with God and let them make the decision that God wants, because a) I could be wrong. B), it isn’t pretty having everybody depend on you.

Do you remember when David, as king, while he was running from Saul at the time... but all of David’s men, well, they practically worshipped the ground he walked on. One day they’re out fighting a battle, and they come back from the battle, and when they did their wives and their children were gone. And this was back at Ziklag. And they looked at David and they immediately started picking up rocks to stone him. He went from being on a pedestal to being part of a rock concert really, really quick.

Now, why was that? Because they had lifted him up. They had put their trust and confidence in him, and he had failed as a leader to point them always to God instead of to himself. And that’s what we need to do. What Israel should have done is point Gibeon to God, and do that. Pride allows us to become a solution to other people’s problems.

It also allows us to form wrong partnerships. And I can tell you already, this is going to be our last point because I want to go into this principle a little bit. And I’ve been asked this question a few times: “What does the Bible say about partnerships? Why is this such a big deal?” So I want to... I want to spend the next few minutes on that, and then we’ll pick up on this concept next week.

But let’s talk about this. See, the covenant... they made a covenant with Gibeon. And covenants can’t be broken. They were sacred. It was a big deal. You made a covenant, it was a sacred deal, you couldn’t break it. The fact is, when the people of Israel murmured against Joshua and the princes, Joshua and the princes had to come back and say, “Well, yeah, maybe we made a mistake, but we have to honor our covenant because we swore unto them.” They had entered into basically a partnership with the Gibeonites, and it was a sacred thing.

See, pride can make us become unequally yoked in a lot of different ways; in our friendships, in marriage... And I’m not just talking about unequally yoked together with

unbelievers. Sometimes you can get unequally yoked together with other people who claim to be believers, as well. But they don't share your same convictions about things.

So let's look at a few things about why partnerships can be a dangerous thing. Number one is, it can jeopardize your reputation. My reputation cost me 89 dollars this weekend. I went to have my wheels aligned on the van, it's out there in the parking lot and it's kind of been in our driveway for a long time because the wheels were about ready to fall off. And finally I went and had the front end fixed and then I took it to get an alignment because I wanted the new tires to last long. And so I took it back down to a store where I had been a few months ago, and took the same vehicle, and they told me it was going 1500 dollars' worth of work. Well, there was no way I was spending 1500 dollars on that car.

And so I found someone else who would do the work and guarantee it, do it for less money and got the work done. And I took it back here to get the wheels aligned. And when I went in, I said, you know, "I was here a couple months ago, found out all this stuff was wrong, couldn't get no wheels aligned then. But I'm back now to get my wheels aligned and all the stuff has been fixed." And I started listing the tie rod and the center drag and the, you know, upper and lower bearings and all this other stuff that had been replaced... the aigler arm.

And so the guy says, "Okay." So he says, "Well, we'll get your alignment done for you." So I came back... he called me several hours later and I went back down and he hands me the receipt and he says, "Sign here." And when he handed me the receipt, it had zero dollars on it. And I said, "What's the deal here?" I said, "Where's the amount?" I figured it was just a misprint.

He said, "Oh, it's free." And I'm kind of scratching my head for a minute. I'm thinking, well, why would it be free? And I said, "I need to make sure that we don't have a misunderstanding here." I said, "I'm pretty sure I'm supposed to pay you for the work you've done on my van."

He said, "No, you already paid when you came in last time."

I said, "No, sir, I really don't think I gave you a dollar last time. A few days ago, I brought it in, you told it me it was hopeless and it was going to cost more money than I wanted to spend on it. And so I haven't paid you." I said, "You know, I could be wrong, because I forget things now. But," I said, "can you look in your computer and verify whether or not I paid you?"

And so it took him several minutes. He brought it up, found out that I had not paid him, and so he told me, he says, you know, "I appreciate your honesty." Okay? Because I could have walked out of there with a free wheel alignment. But I told him, I said, "You know, the Bible says a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches." I said, "I would have loved to have had that 89 dollars, but for me to have a good name and to honor my God was more important."

And he kind of raised his eyebrows, like nobody had ever said anything like that to him before. It was kind of a new thought. But, see, the thing is, a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches. And when we get in a partnership and we're yoked together with someone, there's the potential that our good name that we should seek to be keeping for our integrity so we can honor God could become damaged. And I'll tell you a story about that here in a little bit.

You acquire people's enemies and friends, when you enter into a partnership. Here's another reason partnership tends to jeopardize your reputation. Here's an example from the Scriptures. 2 Chronicles chapter eighteen, in Jehoshaphat, it tells us that he had riches and honor in abundance, that toward the end... And Jehoshaphat was one of Judah's good kings. But toward the end of his reign, he decides that he needs to make an alliance with King Ahab of Israel and he received the rebuke and wrath of God.

And look what God says in 2 Chronicles 19:2. "And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD."<sup>7</sup> So he made an alliance with them, and as a result his reputation suffered. Not only that, but he ended up getting the chastisement that was also designed for Ahab.

Here's another reason. It can hinder your freedom to obey God. God wants every man, in terms of business, to be free to follow his direction. We ought to be free to follow his direction in terms of what job he wants us to take, what career he has for us, what business he wants us to start, how we run that business. He wants us to do it his way. There's a way that the world has of building up a business. You go out and get in debt, buy all the stuff you need up front and then, you know, you try to work your way out for several years from under the burden.

That's not God's way. He's a pay as you go God. He gives you what you need when you need it, and you don't have to pay back for it. And then he has ways of managing his principles, and he wants you to tithe faithfully off of all your income to support the ministry of your local church. And he wants you to remember that every dollar you make in that business is his. He wants you to always pay your bills on time, so it doesn't detract from your reputation.

The problem is, is when you get into partnership and delegate part of the authority of the business to the other person. And they may not have the same understanding or appreciation for God's ways that you do, even though very frequently they'll tell you they do at the beginning of the partnership. Just look at Abraham. Abraham... God called him away from his kindred, but he took Lot with him.

Now the fact is, I don't know if you know this. God called Abraham twice. And I want... I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this, but the first call is actually recorded when Stephen is speaking in Acts chapter seven and God's glory appeared. It doesn't

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<sup>7</sup> 2 Chronicles 19:2.

mention that the other time that it happens, that God's glory appeared to him and the call came to him when he was in Mesopotamia, in Ur of the Chaldees. This is before he ever went to Haran. And God told Tarah, his father, and Abram together, "I want you to leave your kindred."

But then, he gets sidetracked. He goes with his dad to Haran and he ends up staying in Haran possibly... we're not sure, somewhere between 30 and 60 years that he doesn't go to the Promised Land, that he's detoured, living up the big life in Haran. Because he's with his family and God told him to leave. Genesis 12:1, there's only a mention of the command. There's no mention of God's glory appearing. Just the call came in Haran and Abraham this time was told, "Leave your father's house."

So he's been told now twice, "Leave your family behind." What does he do? He takes his nephew. He takes Lot. What's the consequence of that incomplete obedience? Well, there's some problems that come as a result of this. First of all, there was that long delay. We don't know, somewhere between a 30 and 60 year delay that happened. But then we also see that there's some long term problems.

Let's look at the sketch that went through here. Lot moved to Sodom after his conflict with Abraham. They got into some disputes, the herdsmen and... Lot's herdsmen got into disputes with Abraham's herdsmen, and it's kind of like, "Well, this pasture ain't big enough for the both of us. Somebody's got to pack up and leave." So they did that. Then Lot got captured by the Amalekites, so what happens? Uncle Abraham has to go and rescue him.

Lot goes back to Sodom, but after a few years there there's some big problems and he has to flee Sodom's impending destruction with his family. His wife turns into a pillar of salt and he escapes only with his daughters. Because of his daughters' utter despair, they commit incest with their father, and Ammon and Moab were born of that relationship. Moab then becomes Israel's enemy. The whole nation comes from Moab, and they become an enemy to Israel.

Later, the king of Moab hires Balaam to curse Israel and then Moab introduces Israel to Baal worship because Balaam couldn't get the curse out. Every time he tried, it would fail. So finally Balaam says, "Look. God won't let me curse Israel but I'll tell you how you undo it. All you've got to do is intermarry with them and teach them to worship Baal and God's blessing will depart from them." And so that was Moab's plan. And they did precisely that. And they taught Israel in the Baal worship and ultimately Israel goes into captivity sometime around 721 B.C.

Now, here's the thing. You see the promise that a little compromise, a partnership, led to some disastrous consequences here. There's some other things. Partnerships ignore God-given limitations. There's some things that we can't do, and maybe the reason that we can't do those things is because God didn't want us to do them to begin with. He didn't give us an adequate supply because it wasn't his will for us to do it.

A lot of people, you know, they want to go in and they want to borrow big amounts of money and instead of saying, “God, if this is your will, will you provide?” And they go out and do things their own way. They ignore his limitations.

See, a partnership is often formed because one man says, “You know, I don’t have quite enough to get this business off the ground unless somebody helps me. I lack resources.” So they want to do that. They lack provision. And... but that could God’s message to wait or it could be, “Hey. I want to give it to you, I want to give you the provision. I just want you to ask first.”

Also, there’s a problem with the death of vision. You remember that God told Abraham and Sarah they were going to have a baby? Well, when they didn’t for a long time, what did Abraham do? Well, he went in—which was a legal thing he could do at that time—and he took Sarah’s handmaid Hagar. He had a child with her so that legally it would be his child. He figured he’d help God out on doing his will.

First of all, God doesn’t need your help. He’s big enough and powerful enough without you trying to help him out and do his will. So they ignored that death of vision. See, Satan always offers his solution first. But he appears as an angel of light and he makes his solution look like the good deal. It’s kind of like, “Oh, well, just do this. This is a good deal.” Ignore your limitations here.

Partnerships can also end in bitterness. They’re, you know... or... why? Because you have different expectations. And when those expectations aren’t met, it’s easy to get bitter about those things. And then you also are... maybe you’re always making comparisons against the other partner, or against the family. Maybe one family is saying, “Well, you know, my dad works harder on that than their dad does.” You know? And that’s... maybe that’s the problem. And so there’s always this comparison going back and forth.

And then they have different ideas about what success is. One person’s success is to have, you know, no liabilities and a lot of assets. It means all equity. And another person’s is that they want things to look good even if it means they’re in debt because they want to put on the appearance of that. So there’s potential conflicts and when there’s conflicts the words of a talebearer go in our body as deep wounds. So one person says something hurtful and it wounds us deeply. Or “a whisperer separateth chief friends.”<sup>8</sup> There’s the murmuring that goes on as a result of that.

And we look at the example of Jacob and Laban in Scripture. For 14 years, Jacob was Laban’s employee. He was serving Laban for pay, but also for his daughter. But then he got the wrong daughter. The employer cheated the employee and so he had to work another seven years for the next daughter. And after 14 years, he finally has Laban’s two daughters. And now he says, “I don’t want to be an employee anymore.” And Laban begs him to remain employed. Laban says, “Appoint me thy way and I will give it.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Proverbs 16:28.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 30:28.

See, he had been so good, it's kind of like, "You name your salary and I'll pay it. That's how good you are. Just tell me what it is."

But Jacob insists that he doesn't want to be an employee anymore. He wants to be a partner. He wants to share in that. So they established a partnership, and seven years later the Bible shows that Jacob is now complaining because he had to stand behind the losses. He had to pay for the losses when things went bad. He says in Genesis 31, "That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night."<sup>10</sup> He says, "You made me pay for the losses."

That was part of the partnership deal that he got into. And then Laban's own daughters, Jacob's wives, resented him. They said...

"And Rachel and Leah answered and said unto him, Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? for he hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money."<sup>11</sup>

They get bitter and they want to leave. That can lead to bitterness.

Here's another problem. It can cause conflicts among those in authority. When you have equal authority, it just doesn't work. The church needs to have one senior pastor. There needs to be a structure between a husband and a wife so that the children know that... yeah, well, both of those are their authority... the buck stops at Dad. They need to know that there's a final authority because Jesus himself said, "No man [he could have also said "no woman, no child"] can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold the one and despise the other."<sup>12</sup>

And this is a problem a lot of kids have today. They don't... they're upset with their parents because Mom and Dad tried to be an equal partnership. That was never intended to be that way. It's a problem. This is demonstrated in Jacob and Esau's life. Esau wanted to please his dad. Jacob wanted to please his mom. And there was all kinds of family conflict because of that.

Partnership also exposes one to the partner's chastening. I don't know about you, but one of the ways God whips me is when I'm doing wrong is to hit me right in the pocketbook. The fact is, sometimes when I get hit in the pocketbook, sometimes it's just the second law of thermodynamics. But I wonder every time I get hit in the pocketbook, "Is this something God's trying to speak to me? Is he trying to tell me about this?"

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<sup>10</sup> Genesis 31:39.

<sup>11</sup> Genesis 31:14-15.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13.

Proverbs 6:26 says if you're involved in adultery, guys... What is adultery, by the way? Jesus says if you've looked at a woman to lust after her, you've committed adultery with her already in your heart. What does he say about that? "For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life."<sup>13</sup> He says, "You commit adultery, you're going to be in poverty." That's one of the consequences of a man's having an affair. He's going to go into poverty.

Drunkenness and gluttony... he says, "For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags."<sup>14</sup> God was going to punish Ahab in battle. But Jehoshaphat says, "You know, I'm going to make an alliance with you." And it says, "And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle; but put thou on thy robes ... And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat, that they said, Surely it is the king of Israel. [They thought it was Ahab because they swapped clothes.] And they turned aside to fight against him: and Jehoshaphat cried out."<sup>15</sup>

So guess what? Jehoshaphat got whooped up on why? Because he'd made an alliance with someone who was under God's punishment. Any time you mix things that aren't meant to be together, it causes a violation of Scripture. The Bible tells us in Deuteronomy that you're not supposed to plant two kinds of seed in the same field because it decreases a field. Take a field and specialize in one crop in that field.

It also says that you're not supposed to mix wool and linen together. Now I think there's two interesting things about this. You can't mix them in the same... you can't spin them in the same fiber, because when you wash it one contracts more than the other and your... you know, it would instantly start tearing holes in it.

I remember one day that Judy was not feeling well, and it just seemed like she was weak all over. And it happened that she had on wool and linen—kind of a blouse and a skirt—and I said, "Go change your clothes," and she did and she felt better. Scientists have said there's an electrostatic field produced between these that will cause muscle weakness and fatigue.

Don't yoke different animals. Don't put an ox and a donkey in the same yoke together. It's not a good idea. And you don't mix believers with unbelievers, or believers with one set of convictions with believers in another set of convictions in a business relationship. You don't mix Christ with Belial. You don't mix light with darkness. It needs to all be the same.

Partnerships can also mean surety. One partner becomes surety for the other. In other words, if he goes out and buys something, I have to help pay. A man that

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<sup>13</sup> Proverbs 6:26.

<sup>14</sup> Proverbs 23:21.

<sup>15</sup> 1 Kings 22:30, 32.

was a member of a church that I pastored in east Texas came to me one Sunday and told me was thinking about getting in a partnership, starting an automotive supply store. And I said, “You know, I really wish you wouldn’t do that.” I said, “The Bible really teaches against that.” I said, “There’s other ways. You know, you could form a corporation. You could sell stock. You could be the CEO. There’s other ways of doing it. But you don’t want to enter into a partnership.”

He says, “Oh, don’t worry. This guy’s a good Christian.”

Well, a few years later I was back in that community, and I went by just as a former pastor to see this fellow. I looked in his Coke machine and there was Coke, 7-Up, Orange Shasta drink, and down at the bottom was beer. And I went to this fellow and I said, “Do you realize that your Coke machine out there has beer in it?”

“Oh, I didn’t know that,” he says. “So-and-so always fills that machine.”

“Well,” I said. “Come out and look at it.” And I went and I said, “What’s happening here?”

And he said, “Oh, I don’t know. Sometimes he makes decisions I don’t agree with.”

Next time I went back two years later, this guy had absconded with a quarter of a million dollars and left him with about 300,000 dollars of debt and never saw the guy again. And he’s had to have been working for years now to pay off that debt because he ignored that godly counsel.

You know, part of the thing is... partnerships, we create them so we’ll have a little more security. It’s not all my dough on the line, somebody else’s dough is on the line too. That makes me feel a little more secure. But your security is lost when you become surety for another, because they’re making decisions you’re going to have to pay for.

The Bible, by the way... one of the problems with partnerships is, we overlook people’s character problems. We see their checkbook but we don’t see their character problem. “Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go.”<sup>16</sup> Why? Lest you learn his ways and become like him.

We’re going to stop there, but I want you to see there’s some dangers with partnerships. So if you look there on your list, you’ll notice we’ve only covered four of about 20 observations on what pride can do to us and what pride causes to happen in our lives. So we’ll pick this up next time I have an opportunity to present this to you.

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<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 22:24.

But what I want you to see is that pride makes us make decisions outside of God's will and it always leads to disaster. It makes us do things thinking that we are the right judge, that we have the intelligence and the wisdom and the savvy to do things. And it's just simply not true.

They came to deceive Israel, and they got an alliance made. And we'll see next time that one of the consequences of that alliance was that Israel had to fight Gibeon's battles. Gibeon was under attack, and Israel would now come under attack from the Amorite kings because of this alliance. And there's so many more observations.

Let me tell you something that's on one of the very last two slides in this presentation as I close. And this is an ongoing battle. I'm going to tell you in all honesty this morning, because I believe in full disclosure, that if you came up here during the invitation song and got on your knees at that pew and confessed to God you had a pride fault, don't expect it to be gone tomorrow.

You know why? Because you'll go home and say, "Boy, I was humble today. I confessed my pride."

By the way, you know what the most common form of pride among Christians is? False humility. You know what we do? We deprecate ourselves and say things about ourselves so that someone will say something good and lift us up and make us proud. It's a pretty common form among us Christians. Hey, we know it's not spiritual to be proud. So we go in the opposite direction far enough that other people can brag on us instead. And I'm guilty of that. I'm guilty of that very thing.

Let me leave you with this verse in James chapter four. It says, "God resists the proud." The word in Greek means he stands opposed against it. "God resists the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."<sup>17</sup> Grace is the power and the ability and the desire to do the will of God. How many of you need more grace in your lives?

You need to humble yourselves therefore in the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. Humble yourself now so he doesn't have to humiliate you later. That's the way it really works.

Would you stand, please? Richard's going to come and lead us in a song. And I just want to invite you today, and again this presentation will be on the internet for you to listen to again, and we'll pick up next time in the rest of the lesson. And I knew when I got started that there was going to be too much for here.

But I just want to encourage you that if God's moving on your heart that this is a place where you need to place your church membership because you want to

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<sup>17</sup> James 4:6.

come here and you want to be taught from Scripture, you want to feel like you belong in a fellowship where people love and care about one another, we would just love to invite you to do that.

And if you're here without Jesus Christ today, you have the worst form of pride. Because you think you can get into eternity on your own good merits. It doesn't work. You need Jesus. And I'd love to tell you how he came into my life and why I know that in spite of my pride and arrogance and all the stupid things I do, that I'll still get to stand in eternity with him in glory. You come and I'll be happy to talk with you.

What number? Number 401, would you sing, please? And you come as God moves on your heart.