**Shameful Discontent**

Ahab and Jezebel were the most wicked to ever inhabit a royal palace in Israel and the events described in 1 Kings 21 help to illustrate the depths of their treachery. The chapter begins innocently enough; Ahab wanted a vegetable garden next to his palace and Naboth’s vineyard happened to be in just the right spot. Ahab made a very reasonable offer but Naboth had no interest in selling.

At that point, it was entirely up to Ahab to decide how to react. Had his behavior not been so disturbing, it would have been comical. Verse 4 says that “he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and ate no food.” Of course, the rest of the story was that Jezebel learned of her husband’s self-pity, had Naboth murdered and Ahab took possession of Naboth’s vineyard.

There are a number of possible lessons we could get from this sad episode in Israelite history, but I want to focus on Ahab’s attitude toward Naboth’s property. There was nothing wrong with contemplating the purchase of a vineyard. But when the deal went south, Ahab became obsessed with Naboth’s unwillingness to give him what he wanted.

**Ahab was covetous.** When he made an offer, the vineyard represented a potential business transaction. When the offer was rejected, Ahab persisted in his unreasonable desire for the possession of another: covetousness. Plain and simple. Paul called greed and covetousness idolatry in Colossians 3:5. When material things become more important to us than pleasing God, we may as well bow down to it. Same thing.

**Ahab traded contentment for misery.** What Ahab failed to realize was that he was perfectly capable of having a happy life with or without Naboth’s vineyard. It was totally within his control. He chose to make himself miserable. 1 Timothy 6:6 tells us that godliness with contentment is great gain. Contentment is our choice.

**Ahab had an attitude of ingratitude.** If parents sacrificed to take their 13-year-old to Disney World and the child threw a tantrum because they didn’t get everything they wanted, we would be rightfully disgusted. Now consider an adult who ignores the countless spiritual and material blessings from God and makes themselves miserable because some aspect of their life is less than ideal. How do you think God feels? For Ahab to despair over one vineyard sent God a clear message: I have no regard or appreciation for the myriad of wonderful things you have done for me. It is no wonder that the keys to the peace of God that surpasses all comprehension are trust in God and thanksgiving to Him for what He has already done (Philippians 4:6-7). Combine them with godliness, contentment and a proper attitude toward “stuff”, and we won’t find ourselves pouting like Ahab.

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