

A black and white photograph of a bare tree reflected in water, with snowflakes falling in the foreground. The tree is on the left side of the frame, and its reflection is visible in the water below. The water is calm, and the sky is a uniform light gray. In the foreground, several snowflakes are falling, their reflections visible in the water.

SINFUL DISCONTENTMENT

Numbers 31:4-9

Sinful Discontentment

- **Genesis 2:16-17 NIV**, 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”
 - Was God being mean and hurtful when He commanded this of Adam and Eve?
 - What about **Exodus 20:14 NIV**, “You shall not commit adultery.”
 - What about **Exodus 20:17 MSG**, “No lusting after your neighbor’s house—or wife or servant or maid or ox or donkey. Don’t set your heart on anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Sinful Discontentment

- **Genesis 2:16-17 NIV**, 16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”
 - What about **Ephesians 5:33 NIV**, “However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.”
 - Can we set this command aside today in our age of enlightenment?
 - So, what is the ultimate purpose of God’s commands?
 - To bless us
 - What happens when we fail to love wives and respect husbands?
 - What happens when we fail to prevent lusting or adultery in our lives?

Sinful Discontentment

- What about **1st Thessalonians 5:18 ESV**, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - What is God’s will in this verse?
 - Both the circumstance (*by will or allowance*) and the always giving of true, heartfelt thanks
 - Nowhere in Scripture does it say all your circumstances will be fair, match your desires, you will understand
 - Why would God command this from us?
 - You will respond to all circumstances in your life and if you do not respond with thanks, what will be your response?
 - Where trusting thanks leads upward to God, any other response will lead you deeper into yourself, hurt, fear, confusion....

Sinful Discontentment

- **1st Thessalonians 5:18 ESV**, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - What path will our lives take when we fail to “give thanks in all circumstances”?
 - We allow the spirit of discontent to become lord of our lives
 - We hear discontent in the words of King David in **Psalms 13:1-2 NIV**, “1 How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? 2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will *(it seems to me that)* my enemy triumph over me?”

Sinful Discontentment

- **1st Thessalonians 5:18 ESV**, “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”
 - Discontent - lack of satisfaction with one's possessions, status, or situation: a sense of grievance: dissatisfaction
 - Biblically it means to “question the goodness of God”
 - To question every truth Scripture teaches us about God
 - Is He really all-powerful, all-knowing, ever present then why?
 - Does He really love me?
 - It is the chief tool of Satan in the lives of God’s children
 - It was the first tool used in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve

The Nation of Israel had fallen once again into the attitude of discontentment

- They had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years and God had taken care of them right down to the sandals on their feet
- It was time for the new generation of Israelites to enter the land promised them by God
- They were not allowed to pass through the land of Edom that would have taken only a week or two to be at the doorstep of the Promised Land
- They had to go around Edom taking several weeks in the wilderness again – discouraging
- There is still no food or water in the wilderness – been there, done that, discouraging

The Nation of Israel had fallen once again into the attitude of discontentment

- They would have to pass through several kingdoms and fight their way through – discouraging
- They became disappointed and when you remain in disappointment it will lead you to the land of discouragement
 - Discourage – to lose confidence or enthusiasm
 - Prevent or seek to prevent (something) by showing disapproval or creating difficulties
 - Persuade (someone) against an action

Scripture

- **Numbers 21:4-5 NIV**, “4 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; 5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”

The people grew impatient on the way to discouragement

- Notice the progression toward discouragement
 - The people started at disappointment as they traveled around Edom
 - Here is the easiest place to implement true thankfulness before the hardened emotions and thoughts come into your life
 - They did not apply thankfulness to their lives as they continued traveling around Edom, walking on the path God has given them, they grew increasingly impatient day by day

The people grew impatient on the way to discouragement

- Notice the progression toward discouragement
 - They were able to fight this off at first with positive thinking, remembering what God has done, looking forward to when it would be over – trying to overcome on their own
 - They did not bring the God of Thankfulness into their impatience
 - They were mad at Him, Moses, their conditions
 - I don't feel thankful and truthfully, I don't want to be thankful – I just want you to change my circumstances God

The people grew impatient on the way to discouragement

- Notice the progression toward discouragement
 - This is how King David felt in **Psalms 73:12-14 NIV**, “12 This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. 13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. 14 All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments.
 - Until **Psalms 73:16-17 NIV**, “16 When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply 17 till I entered the sanctuary of God (*brought God into the troubled me*)”
 - How did discouragement show itself?

Discouragement, if left to fester, will challenge the goodness of God

- **Numbers 21:4-5 NIV**, “4 They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; 5 they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!”
 - They really don’t like their circumstance or conditions, do they
 - Do they really have a valid complaint against God?
 - Spoke against – openly bringing others into their discontent
 - They found others with the same feelings and outlook
 - The result was it spread through the Nation until this was the dominant mindset

Discouragement, if left to fester, will challenge the goodness of God

- They were challenging God
 - Challenging His authority, His character, Plan for their lives
 - Is this going to be just like when you led our fathers to the door of the Promised Land and then didn't allow them to enter?
 - Are you God ever going to let us in, or will we wander in the wilderness without bread or water again?
 - Will this ever change?
 - Discouragement brings a sense of hopelessness

Discouragement, if left to fester, will challenge the goodness of God

- Challenging God's leader, "We're not sure this Moses guy is really the one who should be leading, Might be time for someone else"
 - Challenging God's provisions, "We detest this miserable food!"
- All these statements and similar ones flow from a heart of discontent
- Jesus said in **Matthew 12:34 ESV**, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."
 - **NCV**, "The mouth speaks the things that are in the heart."

God loves them so deeply that he blessed them with fiery (*poisonous*) snakes

- When we look through the eyes of discouragement it always points us toward sin which God must deal with
 - **Numbers 21:6-7 NIV**, 6 Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. 7 The people came to Moses and said, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.” So Moses prayed for the people.
 - God knew that if He did not deal with national discouragement the Nation of Israel would become lost to Him, so He challenged the sin in their lives
 - God knew these people were not ready to inherit the Promise Land by faith, so He blessed them with fiery snakes

God loves them so deeply that he blessed them with fiery (*poisonous*) snakes

- Discouragement brings death because that is what you are sowing in your life
 - Death to relationships, families, futures, hope, peace
 - **Galatians 6:7 ESV**, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.”
 - They were sowing discouragement rather than thankfulness and reaping the results

God loves them so deeply that he blessed them with fiery (*poisonous*) snakes

- Unlike their fathers, they knew the answer to discouragement – repentance and returning to God
 - Truthfulness, “We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you.”
 - It is our fault these snakes are here, it’s our sinfulness
 - There is a turning away from the direction of their lives and moving back to their dependance upon God

God loves them so deeply that he blessed them with fiery (*poisonous*) snakes

- “Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us.”
 - This is an expression of trust in Moses’ leadership
 - Moses could have said, “My feeler is still hurt so I think I will wait a day or two.”
 - When Moses saw the repentant heart, “So Moses prayed for the people.”

God led them back to a life of faith in Him

- **Numbers 21:8-9 NIV**, 8 The Lord said to Moses, “Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live.” 9 So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.
 - It took faith to take God at His word and simply look at the image of the snake on the pole
 - Notice it does not say if the person was worthy of healing or even if they had adequate faith
 - It does not say God immediately took away the effects of the fiery snake bites
 - The effects may have lingered in the person for some time
 - At the end, you will live

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 - This healing would have led them out of the path of discouragement and placed them onto the path of thankfulness
 - They will be ready to inherit their next blessing, the Promise Land

Sinful Discontentment

- Jesus used this event to foretell of His crucifixion
 - **John 3:14-15 NIV**, “14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone (*who looks to Him and believes*) may have eternal life in him.”
 - The answer to discontent in your life is the same as receiving salvation for your personal sin debt
 - Repentance or turning and facing God
 - Acknowledging the sin/attitude in your life without making excuses
 - Lifting up your eyes to the one who was on the cross in belief
 - Receiving by faith His forgiveness
- Begin to live in the land of thankfulness and watch how your life begins to change

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