

Unrooting the R.A.G.S.

Lesson 1: Resentment vs. Resolve

Objectives:

Students will

- define resentment as being displeased at how God handles a situation
- identify Ahithophel's resentment (resulting from David seducing his granddaughter and killing his son's close friend) and the implications (when he ended up killing himself)
- identify key personal areas of resentment
- map a strategy for dealing with those resentments

Materials Needed

- ☐ Lesson 1 handout ("Facts Sheet") (one per student)
- ☐ Playing cards (in order i.e. all the 2s, then all 3s, etc.)
- ☐ Bibles per 4 students
- ☐ Concordance per 4 students
- ☐ Multiple small prizes (for Facts Game)
- ☐ Timer
- ☐ Scrap paper
- ☐ Pens

Pre-amble

Say something like: We've all met people who claim to be Christians for a long time, yet something about their character doesn't seem to match Jesus'. In the next four weeks, we're going to explore four key character areas that a Christian develops as they walk with Jesus.

Minds On

In pairs (or threes), have students share with a partner one experience where they felt resentful or bitter (they should describe the emotions and the result). Be prepared to share the partner's answers with the larger group.

Say something like: We've all felt resentful at times in our lives. Sometimes it's justified and sometimes it's not. The question is, how do you handle those moments where you're resentful? Do you enjoy it? If not, then how do you minimize those moments? Let's explore a historical figure to see how he handled it.

Action

Distribute 1 playing card to each person. Have students gather in their numbers group (i.e. all aces, 2s, 3s, etc.). Have groups study 2 Samuel 16:20-17:23 and the fact sheet (attached). After five minutes, they will play the Facts Game as a group.

Facts Game: Provide each team with scrap paper and a pen. After each question is read and/or posted up on the board, teams have 30 sec. to come up with an answer. All answers are submitted to the leader. Correct answers are awarded 100 points (note to leader: It's up to you whether you want to award partial points for partial answers).

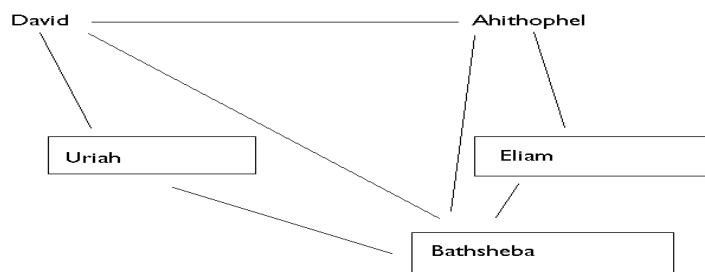
1. Who is Absalom? (He's David's son and now wants to be king in Jerusalem.)

2. Who is Ahithophel? (He is Absalom's advisor and formerly David's advisor.)
3. What was Ahithophel's first advice to Absalom? (For Absalom to set up a tent on the roof and sleep with David's concubines.)
4. What was Ahithophel's second advice? (To gather 12,000 soldiers and send Ahithophel to find and kill David, and return the rest of the army.)
5. Why did Hushai contradict Ahithophel's advice? (To undermine Absalom's rebellion.)
6. How did Ahithophel handle Absalom's rejection of his 2nd advice? (He put his affairs in order and killed himself.)
7. Why did Ahithophel seem to hate David so much that he wanted to kill David? (This question is to be answered in the next task.)

Say something like: Ahithophel, we are told in 1 Chronicles 27:33, was David's closest advisor, suggesting they had a mutually trusting relationship. Yet now, Ahithophel wants David dead.

Students remain in their numbers group. Students will write down the three people who have a relationship with both David and Ahithophel on their worksheets, and be ready to share their group's answers with someone else. (For the advanced version, withhold the Scripture references and challenge students to discover these relationships using a concordance. For a novice version, provide the Scripture references 2 Samuel 23:34, 2 Samuel 23:39, 2 Samuel 11:3.)

When the worksheets are complete, have students move into their suits groups (i.e. all diamonds together, all clubs together, etc.). Compare each person's answers and come up with the final answers. (Check to ensure the answers are correct.)



Say something like: Think about it: David and Ahithophel were very good friends. Eliam and Uriah were part of David's Thirty Men (like King Arthur's Knights of the Round Table) and were trusted friends. Yet David seduces Bathsheba, who is Uriah's wife, Eliam's daughter and Ahithophel's granddaughter, and murders Uriah.

Ask students to vote (thumbs up voting "yes", thumbs down voting "no") on this question: Do you think Ahithophel was justified in feeling angry and resentful towards David?

In pairs/threes, have students share their perspective and be prepared to share with the larger group on this question: How would you feel if your granddaughter was sexually violated and one of your son's friends (and granddaughter's husband) was murdered by someone you trusted?

Say something like: The fact is, when you're bitter and resentful, even if you're fully justified, you become more self-centred and self-focused, to the point where others, including God, are less important. Like Ahithophel, it can eventually kill you. So, if that's not the way to live, then how do we handle resentment?

Students return to their suits group. Each group takes ten minutes to review a given passage, as follows:

Diamonds -- Romans 12:19

Clubs -- Matthew 5:21-24

Hearts -- Matthew 18:15-20

Spades -- Colossians 3:15-17

From these passages, groups devise a strategy on how to handle resentment. Each group appoints a reporter to share their plan.

Some ideas you'll hopefully get:

1. Remember that God will give justice in the end, and we need to give those resentments over to him based on Romans 12.

2. If we do have a problem with a person or if they have a problem with us, it's best to go to that person, and try to resolve and make peace from Matthew 5 and Matthew 18.
3. Consistently move your thoughts to what you're grateful for and thank God for that from Colossians 3.

Consolidate/Debrief

Challenge each student to take a minute to write down up to three things s/he is personally resentful or bitter about. Then, using one of those items, devise a specific strategy to resolve that resentment; they can work on their own or in pairs. Afterwards, in their numbers group, students pray for one another.