

Pouting I Kings 21

Would you like to live next door to a president, king, or other leader of a country? The story is told about one of our recent presidents who greatly enjoyed Big Macs from McDonalds. It just so happens that there is a McDonalds near the White House, and every now and then the president decided to walk to the restaurant to get his Big Mac. The Secret Service would immediately go into action and have all cars, parked along the street, towed away to keep the president safe. When these folks came looking for their car, they were told to go to the tow-yard and pay to get their cars back, even though their cars had been legally parked. Perhaps it isn't such a good idea to live so close to important people. Naboth the Jezreelite lived next door to King Ahab but lest you get the wrong idea, Naboth and his family had lived there much longer than Ahab's family: Ahab's father had purchased the property next to Naboth and placed his palace there. Often Ahab would watch Naboth in his vineyard and desire to obtain it. One day King Ahab came to Naboth and requested to either purchase Naboth's property or trade him for another piece of property of equal or even greater value. Naboth told him that he was forbidden to sell his property to anyone. What Naboth knew, and even Ahab knew, was that God had told His people that they were never to sell or trade their property forever.

Ahab went home, pouting all the way. He told his servants that he didn't want to eat and that he was going to bed. When Jezebel, his wife, came home, she asked where Ahab was and went to find him. When she asked him about his behavior, he wined and cried about how unfair Naboth was to not sell him his property. Now who are the ones who usually pout? It is smaller children of course. Because they are small and weak, pouting seems the only way for them to get their way. If your little brother wants the ball that you are playing with, he will begin to cry louder and louder until, guess who, comes in: why, his mother of course. Your little brother will say to mother that he had the ball first and that you took it from him. He is hoping that his mother will say something like this, "You are older than he is, so why don't you let him have the ball." The child got his way, and of course, he will try the same thing again because he was successful. Is pouting a sin? Of course it is. It always breaks the tenth commandment: thou shalt not covet. It is a selfish act: putting your desires before that of others. And it often involves lying so you can get your own way. Do older children pout? If they get a bad grade on a test, they put their head on their desk and quietly cry until the teacher agrees to give a better grade. Teens are often heard to say, "I have to have those shoes that cost \$150.00 or I won't go to school." And of course, they can make life absolutely miserable until they get their way. Adults, like Ahab, pout when they think they deserve money or possessions which they have not lawfully earned. Often they will turn to lawyers or even the government to get these things for them.

Pouting always involves three different groups: the pouter, the "taker," and the loser. We already know that Ahab was the pouter. Who was the "taker?" Jezebel told Ahab that she would get the property for him. He gave her his signature: on a little melted wax he put his special ring leaving its impression in the wax as it hardens. This gave Jezebel the authority that she needed, and she put her plan into play immediately. She told the elders of the city to accuse Naboth of blaspheming God and the king, to get

lying witnesses to confirm the false accusation, and then to take him out and stone him to death. Because they feared Jezebel, the city elders did as she said, and Naboth became the loser by losing his life. When children and adults pout today, bigger, tougher friends, parents, teachers, lawyers, and often big government become the takers: demanding that the losers give the pouter what he wants right then or they will face the consequences. All of us have been losers in one way or another.

After Naboth was dead, Jezebel told Ahab to go take possession of the vineyard. But God told Elijah to go to the vineyard and give God's opinion of this whole mess. Elijah told Ahab that dogs would lick his blood when he died, and that dogs would finally eat Jezebel. All of this eventually happened just as Elijah said it would. All of this should be a clear warning to the pouters of today who think that they are innocent since they don't do any of the violent things to get what they want. God punished Ahab because his pouting had been the cause of the death of a good man. And may I add a warning to those of you takers out there who think you are just doing something nice for a weaker person. Remember, there is always a loser and that loser might just cry to God for justice or, as in the case of Naboth, his blood cried out for God to take vengeance. "Will not the judge of this world do right?"

Almost immediately Ahab cried out to God for forgiveness for what he did. And, would you believe it, God did forgive him and postponed the punishment for a time. My friend God loves to forgive and whether you are lost in sin and think you are unworthy to be saved, or you are saved but backslidden feeling that God just might not forgive this time, remember God loves to forgive, and He will. Won't you cry out to him for forgiveness right now?

If we can be of help to you, please e-mail us at bmason6@bellsouth.net or call us at 864-271-3060

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