

# The Deborah Report

A Partner Update from Deborah Ministries International

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During this season that will long remain in our memories as the season of the pandemic—the masks—the restrictions—those lost to covid, I have become increasingly aware of a vague dissatisfaction in almost everyone with whom I have talked. This vague dissatisfaction goes beyond all the explainable reasons, and seems to come into focus best when described as a deep sense of being *deprived*.

## Recognizing



## Deprivation

*Eglah. He had these six sons while he was in Hebron; he was king there for seven years and six months. 1Chron. 3:1-4.* Perhaps it is easier to grasp the gravity of this passage if I simply list his sons:

1. Amnon by Ahinoam
2. Daniel by Abigail
3. Absalom by Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur
4. Adonijah born of Haggith
5. Shephatiah by Abital
6. Ithream by his wife Eglah

According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, the medical definition of deprive is: to take something away from and especially something that is usually considered essential for mental or physical well-being. In fact, the same library refers to something called *psychosocial deprivation*, which is defined as: the absence of appropriate stimuli in the physical or social environment which are necessary for the emotional, social, and intellectual development of the individual. And, lastly, Merriam-Webster defines deprive as: 1) to take something away from, and 2) to withhold something from. So, in addition to feeling distress or dismay because of the restrictions and the loss of much of our social and interactive freedoms, there is a deeper sense of loss. That deeper sense of loss is the sense of having something taken away or withheld—something that is essential to our sense of satisfaction or well-being.

After reading these definitions, I suddenly understood why I felt compelled to write this letter about a certain aspect of King David's life. I remembered that about three years ago, the Lord had given me a revelation about David's life that I termed *the deprivation mentality*. Amazingly enough, David's struggle with this is so relevant to this season that we are walking through! At the time that the prophet Samuel sought out and anointed the shepherd boy David to be the next king of Israel, Saul was already king. The period between his call (anointing) to be King and when he finally took the throne was a period of extreme emotional, physical and relational difficulty for David. In fact, after Saul's attempts to kill David, he finally fled everything that was familiar to him and became a fugitive, exiled to living the life of a man on the run, constantly evading Saul and his armies.

After several years of this kind of stressful and unrelenting 'life on the run,' Saul and three of his sons died in a battle with the Philistines. It was at this time that the Lord sent David to Hebron, where the tribe of Judah crowned him King. In a matter of days, David's life changed dramatically. He went from living in caves and hiding to being crowned King!

The scripture tells us, *These are the sons that David had while he lived at Hebron: his firstborn was Amnon by Ahinoam of Jezreel; second, Daniel by Abigail of Carmel; third, Absalom born of Maacah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; fourth, Adonijah born of Haggith; fifth, Shephatiah born of Abital; sixth, Ithream born of his wife*

In spite of the fact that many of the names seem so strange and unpronounceable to us, one thing stands out very clearly. In the 7 ½ years that David lived in Hebron, he fathered six sons by six different women! Yikes!

It's almost like he's desperate to make up for all the years of struggle and deprivation, when he couldn't really live 'normally.' He couldn't settle down in one place long enough to build a life and a family. This is a man who is starved for the things that other men take for granted—to simply have a family to call his own. However, in making choices that are rooted in those years of being deprived, he is not making healthy choices. It's somewhat like a starving man who eats to gorge himself and in so doing harms himself instead of nourishing himself.

That is the key to what we need to see here. When we try to fill an emptiness, which was born out of unmet desires or needs of a different season, we are motivated by a *deprivation mentality*. Having been deprived of a family to raise and call his own, David tries to fill that need the same way a starving man attacks food. Sadly, though, the emptiness doesn't go away—no matter how much the circumstances change. The exile and the need to live so abnormally is gone, but the emptiness caused by the deprivation is still deeply embedded in David's soul. It's a bit like a person who went through a period of time of going to bed hungry, afraid that the hunger would eventually be the death of him. Then, in another season, this same person now lives a stable life where hunger is no longer a threat, at least outwardly. However, because the threat was deeply established in the person's soul, the threat is still there. So, this person eats like he or she is threatened by starvation. In so doing, he or she always overeats, never really feeling satisfied by the food. No amount of food can establish a sense of being well-fed, unless the deprivation mentality is erased from the soul.

In David's case, this shows itself in relationships. He is definitely gorging himself! However, it's pretty clear that he's not feeling satisfied with a wife and a child, the emergence of family. Instead, he almost feverishly tries to erase that inner sense of deprivation from all those year in exile. Unfortunately, even though David is gorging himself on the opportunity to have the intimacy of family, he's not really cultivating relationship with any of them. Relationship requires a mutual giving and receiving, primarily a giving and receiving in the form of building a

bridge over which our humanity travels back and forth to connect with each other. That's where the nourishment of relationship is found—in connection. If there is no real connection, there is no nourishment and the relationship feels less than satisfying. In healthy relationships, there is mutual nourishment. In unhealthy relationship, the need to fill an emptiness prevents the connection that would actually nourish and bring joy and satisfaction.

These six sons of David's, the fruit of his passion to get what has been withheld from him, will ultimately bring him much anguish in later years, the years when he is fully established in Jerusalem. Here is a key part of the revelation that the Lord gave me about all of this. Because circumstances are often the result of what is going on inside of us—we *make the mistake of trying to arrange our circumstances in order to make us feel good inside*. However, that simply does not work in the long-term. The truth is that *we must get the inside of us to look the way we'd like our circumstances to look*. For example, we have to want what we want for wholesome, healthy reasons, otherwise we will never really get what we want because we will mistake gorging for eating. *And nothing will ever be enough*.

Ultimately, in David's case, six wives and six sons—six families—is still not enough. He wants Michal back, the wife of his youth that Saul gave to another man. The scripture says, *So David sent messengers to Ishbosheth, Saul's son, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines."* 2Sam. 3:14, NKJV

This shows where the seed of David's insatiable appetite was sown, when Saul manipulated him using Michal, bringing him great pain and shame. So, David assumes that demanding Michal back will restore what he lost. But it doesn't work that way because, even though he gets Michal back, his relational hunger is still not met because the wound that is driving the hunger is not healed. In fact, if we follow David as he steps into the fulfillment of his destiny when he takes the throne over all Israel in Jerusalem, we see that hunger is still eating him. Ultimately, it drives him into lust for another man's wife, Bathsheba. I don't believe that his adultery with Bathsheba was about her beauty, neither was it about David being in the wrong place at the wrong time to see her bathing. It was about his insatiable hunger, born of a deep unhealed wound in his soul!

In total, the Bible lists twenty sons and one daughter born of David's eight wives. The additional children who were born of his concubines are not named in scripture. My point is that though David had eight personal families, his relational connection to them was the thing he desired the most and the thing that eluded him, because he did not understand his own deprivation mentality.

A peek into David's future to see how this affected his personal life all the while he was fulfilling his destiny as King of Israel. Instead of the fulfillment and joy of family, the scripture records that David was continually plagued by the pain and anguish of fragmented loyalties—sons vying for his power, his crown and his attention—even to bloodshed and death. Amnon, David's firstborn, lusted for Tamar his half-sister and ultimately raped her. Absalom, Tamar's full brother, David's third son, murdered Amnon in revenge of the rape. As a result, Absalom's was

banished from David's presence for years before he was finally pardoned. It was Absalom who headed a conspiracy to seize David's throne, causing David to have to flee Jerusalem. Ultimately, Absalom's coup fails and he is defeated by David's forces, but he is killed in the process. Adonijah, his fourth son, eventually rose up to try to seize the throne also. I could go on and on through all the details of the relational difficulties David had, but the point is already made. More is not always better, neither is bigger always better.

So, what about us? What about this season of restrictions and the vague sense of lack of well-being that many are suffering? I truly believe that the Lord wants us to see what is going on in our own responses, beyond the obvious things that characterize this season. In His beautiful care for us, He doesn't want us scarred by this in our souls. We don't have to come out of this season with a deprivation mentality that drives us to continually try to fill a sense of emptiness that is no longer there circumstantially, but is nevertheless within us.

*"Restore unto me the years that the locust has eaten."*

How do we avoid it? First, we need to honestly assess what it is that has been taken away or withheld from us. This is not about blaming anybody or feeding anger or resentment. It is about recognizing what our souls are really longing for. If we don't recognize this, we are doomed to search and search for a well-being that will elude us just as it eluded David. I certainly don't want to go into the next season, bringing this vague sense of loss and deprivation with me! Instead, I will invite the Holy Spirit to shine His light into my soul and show me what is festering there. Then I will humbly ask Him to "restore unto me the years that the locust has eaten," which is a biblical phrase meaning "undo the damage done by devastation." In other words, when we finally leave this season behind, let us not take the deprivations of covid within our souls into the next season! Though we cannot change the circumstances through which we have walked, we can choose how they affect our future. Invite the Holy Spirit to break the power of a deprivation mentality in you and heal any wounds you have suffered.

In fact, don't limit this revelation to just this last season. If you have any pattern in your life—no matter when it started—a hunger that never seems to be satisfied, or an itch that never finally quiets down, invite the Holy Spirit into that. Let Him give you relief and a release from that relentless pursuit. When you cry out to Him and release it all to Him, He will bring that thing to a place of resolution, peace and rest within you. Let's learn from David. All of our frenetic trying only produces more complications and difficulties, because flesh cannot quench the hungers of the soul. Only God can.

God bless each and every one of you! Thank you for your beautiful faithfulness to this ministry. My gratitude knows no bounds. The ministry continues to go forth into Asia, Africa, America and the hearts of individuals everywhere. It just looks different now. But it is still all about connecting the hearts and needs of people to the heart and provision of our loving God! May your heart's hunger be truly filled by Him and His wonderful care for you.

*Deborah*

