

Spirit of Life Community Adventist Fellowship
Prayer Meeting Guide – August 22, 2006
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2 Samuel 15 (PART ONE)

1. Verse 1-6 Absalom prepared him chariots and horses along with fifty men to run before him. . David should have stopped him right then. Absalom did not want the chariot for speed, but to make an impressive procession. This is Absalom the politician, sensing what the people want and knowing how to provide them with the image of what they want. He sensed the people wanted a show and he gave them one. This is exactly what the news media is doing to us today. We get a good show but little substance.
2. **Absalom stole the hearts of the people.** How is it possible to steal someone's heart? (The hearts must have been up for grabs – this is why the bible warns us to keep our hearts with all diligence). He found fault with men in power. When someone begins to unjustly criticize leadership they are stealing the hearts of the people. Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. Whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he **would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. He played on their weakness for emotional connection and attention.**
3. Absalom was skilled at projecting a "man of the people" image. From what we know of Absalom we can guess that he really didn't consider himself a "man of the people" at all. He regularly acted as if he was above others and the laws that applied to others didn't apply to him. He knew he was better looking, better connected, better off, and had better political instincts than most anyone. But it was these political instincts that led Absalom to create this false image. The people went for the image, the idol much as we use idols" today. Not the kind of Idols you bow to but the idols you admire and give your money, time, attention and support.
4. He became more popular and more trusted than David. Absalom knew exactly how to do this. He carefully cultivated an exciting, enticing image (chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him). He worked hard (Absalom would rise early). He knew where to position himself (beside the way to the gate). He looked for troubled people (anyone who had a lawsuit). He reached out to troubled people (Absalom would call to him). He took a personal interest in the troubled person (What city are you

- from?). He sympathized with the person (your case is good and right). He never attacked David directly (no deputy of the king to hear you). He left the troubled person more troubled (no deputy of the king to hear you). Without directly attacking David, Absalom promised to do better (Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice).
5. Another part of the sadness of this story is all that Absalom was good and necessary but from the wrong motive. He did not care for the people at all. He was using "good things" to establish an "evil" plan. In order not to be fooled by an Absalom you have to look deeper than someone's behavior. Look to see spiritually what they are really doing. Absalom clever approach made him able to divide David's kingdom without saying any specific thing that could condemn him. If someone objected Absalom would simply say, "Tell me one specific thing that I have said or done." In fact, Absalom could do all this and say, "I'm helping David to deal with all this discontent" while Absalom was in fact promoting discontent. David was Israel's greatest king - and Israel became dissatisfied with him and let a wicked, amoral man steal their hearts. How could it happen?
 6. This same pattern is repeated in local churches today. There are people who come to church, receive the love and care of the membership. They get upset and leave in anger after they have eaten good spiritual food. They leave but they do not leave quietly. They feel driven to stir things up as they go. **Ezekiel 34:17-19**. The Hebrew gives the meaning that they urinate in the grass and water and mix it up with their feet so that after they are gone there is such a mess that no one can eat or drink because of what they left.
 7. **2 Samuel 15:7-12**. There is no doubt that this reading is corrupt regarding 40 years. The text should read FORTY DAYS or FOUR YEARS. Some believe that this is a minor corruption of the text and that it should read four years, based on the readings in Syriac and Arabic translations, Josephus, and some Hebrew manuscripts.
 8. Here he pretended to be a strict follower of God, and now desires to go and perform a vow at Hebron, which he pretends to have made while he was resident at Geshur. And all this was the more perfectly to organize his system of rebellion against his father.
 9. It is possible that Absalom did all this while feeling spiritual and in God's will. In the last days men will kill other men in the name of the Lord. People like Absalom deceive themselves with words like, "Lord, You know we need new leadership. Thank you for raising me up for such a time as this. Guide me and bless me, as I endeavor to do what is best for Your people." Problem people almost never see themselves as the problem.

They see themselves as crusaders for God's righteous cause and often believe or hope God's hand is upon them. **This is especially a problem because some Christians will only believe a person is divisive if that person admits they are divisive.** As long as they claim to be doing God's will they are better able to fool and confuse the sheep. Absalom knew that the appearance of spirituality could work in his favor.

10. Verse 11. These were probably soldiers, whom he supposed would be of considerable help to him. They had been seduced by his deceptive conduct, but knew nothing of his ultimate plan. Absalom wisely knew that he needed others to support - or to appear to support - his government. **He counted on these two hundred men, who were not against David, to at least be silent - and give the impression that they were for Absalom. The silent presence of the 200 gave the impression that they were in agreement with Absalom. When was the last time you sat in silence as a modern day Absalom did his or her work? When the innocent and unknowing are among the divisive, their silence is always received as agreement.**
11. 12,13. It is very difficult to account for this general defection of the people. Several reasons are given: David was under the displeasure of the Almighty, for his adultery with Bath-sheba, and his murder of Uriah; and God let his enemies loose against him. Remember what God told David after he had sinned. This was a part of the punishment and discipline of God. Absalom appeared to be the real and undisputed heir to the throne.
12. Verse 14-18. **David said-Arise-let us flee.** This, I believe, was **the first time that David turned his back to his enemies** other Saul. And why did he now flee? He appears to take all as coming from the hand of God; therefore he humbles himself, weeps, goes barefoot, and covers his head! He does not even hasten his departure, for the habit of mourners is not the habit of those who are flying before the face of their enemies. He sees the storm, and he yields to what he conceives to be the tempest of the Almighty.
13. The king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. Sadly, this also tells us that David had at least ten concubines. A concubine was essentially a legal mistress. In addition to David's many wives, this shows that David was a man who sometimes indulged his passions instead of restraining them in a godly way.
14. As David watched this procession leave Jerusalem and head for safety, he was greatly pained. This is reflected in the Psalms David wrote during this time. **Psalm 41,55,61,62,63.**