

Be Careful What You Want!

It is almost axiomatic that we will get what we want, even if our cravings are not in line with the will of God for our lives. So we will look briefly at three Bible situations that will verify this premise. It is hoped that these situations and their results will convince the reader to “be careful what you want” because as we will see, wrong desires (when fulfilled) produce unexpectedly harmful results.

1. ISRAEL CRAVED MEAT

God’s plan to feed the Israelites as they traveled through the desert was to make available to them a substance called manna. It was to be found daily (except on the Sabbath) on the ground all around the camp, where the people were allowed to collect it in specified quantities per person. The rules for the collection of manna and some instruction for its preparation are recorded in **Exodus 16:16-33**.

However, the people were not always satisfied with God’s miraculous provision of manna, even though it was probably the most nutritious food that human beings have ever been privileged to eat. On one occasion, the Israelites were simultaneously unhappy with manna and lusted intensely for meat. (**See Numbers 11:4**). The place of this craving was called “Taberah” (a fire from God to their complaining) as Numbers 11:3 records. It was later called “Kibroth Hattaarah” to commemorate the conclusion of their lusting (**Numbers 11:33-34**).

Moses was discouraged by these people and their demand for meat. So God told Moses to tell the people that they would, indeed, eat meat. **Numbers 11:18-20** records God’s angry words to the people via Moses:

“Therefore, the Lord will give you meat, and you shall eat. You shall eat, not one day, not two days, nor five days, not ten days, nor twenty days, but for a whole month until it comes out of your nostrils and becomes loathsome to you, because you have despised the Lord who is among you, and have wept before Him, saying, ‘Why did we ever come up out of Egypt?’”

God then brought an innumerable quantity of quail for the people, satisfying their intense cravings for meat. **They got what they wanted!** But their “victory” was of very short duration. “But while the meat was still between their teeth, before it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was aroused against the people, and the Lord struck the people with a very great plague.” (**Numbers 11:33**). As mentioned above, as a result of the people lusting for meat when God was providing their sustenance quite handily, this matter was concluded by the death of many Israelites. “Kibroth-hattaavah” signified the place where “.....they buried the people who had yielded to craving “ (**Numbers 11:34**).

They were not careful what they wanted but got what they wanted anyway, only to discover that their folly and carelessness in choosing their desires brought greatly unexpected loss.

OTHER SCRIPTURES ON THE SUBJECT YOU CAN GO TO:

* **Psalm 78:29-31**

* **Psalm 106:13-15**

What do you see as being said in these references? Write out your thoughts and insights.

God gave them what they wanted, but with it they also got God's wrath and leanness of their own souls!

2. ISRAEL CRAVED A KING : 1 Samuel 8:1-22

As Samuel drew near the end of his tenure as senior judge and prophet of Israel, "...All the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah" (verse 4). However, their purpose in visiting Samuel was not to congratulate him for a job well done. Instead, the elders were not at all delicate in pointing out that since Samuel was old and his sons (judges in Southern Israel) were dishonest (unlike Samuel), the nation must now have "a king to judge us like all the nations" (verse 5).

Samuel was extremely unhappy with the elders' demand for a king; but when he prayed to the Lord about it, God's reply was for Samuel to give them what they wanted. God then encouraged Samuel by telling him that the elders' demand for a king was not because they rejected Samuel but because "...they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them" (verse 7). **See also 1 Samuel 10:19.**

In the interest of honesty, even in giving the people a king to satisfy their craving for one, God insisted that Samuel tell the people in advance how the behavior of a king would radically change their lives. And not for the better (verses 9-20). This Godly disclaimer did not change the mind of the people, whose craving for a king overcame the honest warning of Samuel. So God gave His people a king like those of other nations **to give them what they wanted** – at His own expense of being their King.

3. AMNON CRAVED TAMAR: 2 Samuel 13:1-19; 32

David had many wives who bore him many children. Although he fathered these children, many of the brothers and sisters were only half brothers and sisters because of the many different wives (mothers) who gave birth to them. That being the case, Amnon was a son of David and Tamar was a half sister of Amnon and a full sister of Absalom.

Amnon fell in love (lust) for Tamar and became so distraught in his love for her that he became sick. He knew that it was wrong to do anything to her but nevertheless sought the counsel of his friend Jonadab to see if there might be a way for him to have the sexual encounter with Tamar that he craved.

Jonadab devised a plan for Amnon to be alone with Tamar and Amnon followed the plan, soon revealing his real intention – to rape her. After he raped Tamar, the Scripture gives us an interesting insight: “Then Amnon **hated her** exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was **greater than the love with which he had loved her**” and Amnon said to her, ‘Arise, be gone!’” (**2 Samuel 13:15**). So she said to him, ‘No indeed! This evil of sending me away is worse than the other that you did to me.’ But he would not listen to her.” (**2 Samuel 13:16**).

The result of Amnon's ungodly behavior toward Tamar was that Absalom (Tamar's brother) hated Amnon for raping her and waited patiently for two years to carry out a plan of vengeance to kill Amnon. Ironically, Jonadab was the one who told David that it was “by the command of Absalom this (vengeance) has been determined from the day that he (Amnon) forced his sister Tamar” (2 Samuel 13:32).

It is apparent that Amnon was not at all careful about what he wanted because when he got his desire, it certainly did not bring happiness to him (1 Samuel 13:15-17). His own actions caused him to hate Tamar and to banish her from his presence. Worst of all, his own actions led to his own untimely death.

THINKING ABOUT IT

1. Have you experienced in your own life a desire so great that when you may have got that desire, it proved to not be what you thought? If so, how did it affect you?
2. Do you at this time have some desires that seem to consume you? Have you taken these to the Lord and submitted His will to them? We encourage you to do so if you have not. It would be FAR worse to bring leanness to your soul than to have something brought into your life that God did not intend for you.