

The Bad Girls of the Bible
Athaliah: Godless Ambition
(Part 5)

Intro:

Throughout history, marriages were used to create alliances between countries. When the nation of Israel split in half after the death of King Solomon, the north became known as Israel and the south became known as Judah, and there was constant conflict between the two. Many years later, an alliance between the two nations was created with the marriage of Athaliah (Daughter of King Ahab and Jezebel in Israel) to King Jehoram of Judah. When Athaliah's husband dies, her youngest son Ahaziah reigns as King in Judah for one year. Her son follows her advice and the advice of Jezebel. He is soon killed and Athaliah's ambitions take over. – (Share rest of the story)

- 3 principals from the life of Athaliah

I. Be Intentional With Your Influence On Your Children's Lives

- Athaliah and her relatives encouraged her son to do wrong (House of Ahab was his advisors)
- Never underestimate the influence you have on your children or grandchildren. What are you passing on to them?

A. Athaliah's influence destroyed the life of her son

II Chron. 22:3-4 "Ahaziah also followed the evil example of King Ahab's family, for his mother encouraged him in doing wrong. He did what was evil in the LORD's sight, just as Ahab's family had done. They even became his advisers after the death of his father, and they led him to ruin." (NLT)

1. What a horrible statement about the people who influenced the young king's life. His mother and grandmother led to the ruin of his life. I'm sure they believed they were telling him the right thing to do. BUT, it destroyed him.
2. I have seen so many parents over the years unintentionally model characteristics and values that actually damage the lives of their children. What do I mean?
3. I have seen parents model dishonesty: Work calls, "Tell them I'm not here." "Tell them you're 12 so you get in cheaper"
 - I have seen parents model hypocrisy: They fight all the way to church and then smile and act spiritual as they walk in the doors.
 - I have seen parents model gossip and slander as they run people down verbally in front of their kids.
 - I've seen parents model how to wound each other as they fight in front of their kids hurling verbal assaults at one another.

4. The influence that we have on the lives of our children is tremendous. Our lives function as a model that they will follow. If we are not careful, what we model can negatively affect the lives of our children.

B. Our influence should equip our children to succeed

Deut. 11:19 “Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.” (NLT)

1. These verses talk about intentional parenting (grand parenting). Our job as parents who follow Christ is to equip them for success...to train them to be successful followers of Christ who can function effectively in a fallen world.
2. We don't allow our children to come up with their own values and convictions. We must intentionally teach, train, and model these convictions to them.
3. The #1 reason our values do not transfer to our children is because we compartmentalize our beliefs and values. Deut. 11 is describing a lifestyle that impacts our children. Let me explain.
 - How do we get our children to want to embrace our faith? (kids see you pray / read /
 - How do we get our children to value marriage? (Do you have a healthy marriage?)
 - How do we get our children to value service to others? (Do you serve others?)
 - How do we keep our children from becoming materialistic? (Are you generous?)
 - How do we get our children to believe that obedience to God's word creates more blessing than following the promises of the world? (Does your life model this?)
4. Whatever kingdom you model will be the kingdom your kids embrace! I want to make following Jesus so attractive that my kids have no other option.
5. Our children do not need perfect parents. They need consistent parents who daily live and model the right values and behaviors for them to embrace.
 - This is why we must be allowing Jesus to be transforming our lives so that we are modeling the right stuff for our kids!
6. How intentional are you being with your influence?

II. Ambition Unchecked Can Damage Those Around Us

- WHY?

A. Godless ambition is self-serving and destructive

II Chron. 22:10 “When Athaliah, the mother of King Ahaziah of Judah, learned that her son was dead, she began to destroy the rest of Judah's royal family.” (NLT) She murdered her grandchildren, nephews, anyone who had a right to the throne.

1. Athaliah is an example of ambition completely out of control. She was

willing to literally remove anyone who stood in her way of controlling the throne.

2. She saw the opportunity for power and seized it. She removed the competition and proclaimed herself ruler of the nation. Athaliah remains as the only governing queen in Judah's history.
3. Although her ambition is extreme and her actions severe, ambition unchecked can be very self-serving and destructive to the people around us.

4. Look how ambition unchecked has affected our country? The failure of banks and other mortgage institutions; wide spread fraud; ponzi schemes; multi-million dollar bonuses for executives; and a nation- wide financial crisis.

5. Now we have people foreclosing on their houses in record numbers and a high unemployment rate. Ambition unchecked damages the lives of people.

6. Even personal ambition unchecked can be damaging. How many people have destroyed their marriage because of ambition for a career / promises of money / more significant position?

- Ambition can be like a drug that is addictive and destructive if left to run free in a person's life.

B. God prompted ambition is others serving and Kingdom productive

1. There is nothing wrong with ambition when it is prompted and controlled by God. The Apostle Paul was one of the most ambitious guys I know of.

I Cor. 9:23-25 "I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings. Don't you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. " (NLT) This guy had ambition!

2. Notice his ambition caused him to want to share God's blessings with others; yet when it came to the serving God's purposes, he ran to win! His serving was all out, all or nothing, completely absorbed in it! That's ambitious!

3. God uses ambitious people. God looks for ambitious people. Ambitious people do not need anyone to light a fire under them to make them move forward. They have an internal fire that motivates them.

- I look for people like this (explain)

4. Ambitious people are not satisfied with the status quo. They become the change agents that transform their environment. God uses people like this! But in order to use people like this He has to have control over them.

5. When God controls people with ambition, He can use them to serve others, advance

His Kingdom, and change the world.

6. I am a highly ambitious person. That's no secret. If God didn't have control of my life I would probably be a business owner out there trying to make money like all the rest. BUT God has a hold on my life and all this ambition is now turned towards serving people and seeing the transformation of this geographic area.
 7. Are you an ambitious person? Does God have a hold of you and your ambition? Serving God is the most ambitious adventure you can ever take. It is the most challenging, rewarding, and fulfilling thing you can ever do with your life.
 8. Many people can be ambitious to make money. We get to be ambitious to make a difference! We get to be ambitious for something that is eternal...something that lasts forever.
- Maybe it's time to let God have your ambition? Maybe it's time to let God have that internal fire that's in you and use for His Kingdom purpose? Don't waste it on the world when God can use it to serve others and advance His Kingdom!

III. No Matter How Dark The Situation, God Is Working

A. Sometimes it appears as if the darkness has won

- Athaliah killed the royal line and established herself as queen. It looked pretty dark. **BUT:** *II Chron. 22:11-12* "...the priest and sister of Ahaziah, hid the child so that Athaliah could not murder him. Joash remained hidden in the Temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled over the land." (NLT) BUT, the average person had no idea.
 1. No matter how dark it looks, God still has a plan. Just because we can't see it, doesn't mean God is not orchestrating events for His purposes.
 2. It appeared as if the promise that God made to David had failed (He would always have an heir to sit on the throne and the Messiah would come from) Yet, God was secretly at work.
 - There was Satanic opposition going on with this story. The line of David was almost wiped out. (explain)
 3. There was also God's plan being orchestrated for 6 years that no one knew about. God was using faithful people to orchestrate events to further His purposes.
 4. Sometimes the circumstances seem so dark it appears as if the darkness has won. Sometimes the darkness is so great we don't see any hope. In these moments we must believe that God's purposes are true and they are worth clinging to and fighting for. There is good in this world because God is in this world!
- Lord of the Rings movie clip
- Why do we cling to and fight for the purposes of God?

B. It is impossible for the purposes of God to be thwarted

II Chron. 23:11 “Then the priest and his sons brought out Joash, the king’s son, placed the crown on his head, and presented him with a copy of God’s laws. They anointed him and proclaimed him king, and everyone shouted, “Long live the king!” (NLT)

1. The darkness can NEVER overcome the purposes of God. We are clinging to and fighting for the winning side! Look what Scripture says about the plans of the enemy.

Is. 8:10 “Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted; propose your plan, but it will not stand, for God is with us.” (NIV)

Is 14:27 “For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him? His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?” (NIV) ANSWER: No one!

2. When things are dark, the people of God do not focus on the darkness, they focus on the promises of God. They don’t fall into despair because of the wrongness they see, they continue to advance the Kingdom of God believing in His goodness.
- I am so sick and tired listening to believers whine and complain about what is going on in our country / state. I know it’s not good. I realize there is darkness. I’m not advocating living in denial. BUT this is not our obsession as followers of Christ!
3. So many followers of Christ live as if the outcome is in question. Last time I checked the end of the story, God wins! Not one purpose of God’s can be thwarted, stopped, hindered, or prevented. Not one!
4. What hinders our confidence in the darkness is we don’t know God’s purposes or His promises. If this is the case, we live in fear wondering about the outcome? This is why making God’s word in your life needs to be such a priority. My confidence comes from knowing God’s word...His purposes / promises.

Darkness takes on many forms.

- Are you facing financial darkness? (Job loss / bankruptcy / overdue bills)
 - Are you facing relational darkness? (marriage / antagonist / needing reconciliation)
 - Are you facing emotional darkness from losing hope as you experience negative circumstances?
5. The darkness takes many forms and sometimes comes in like a flood, but God’s word is the same yesterday, today and forever, and will always prove to be true! It cannot fail!
 6. The best thing you can do when facing darkness of any kind, is to run to God’s word; submit your life under His purposes and claim His promises. How can I know His promises? Let me give you some practical tools.

dailybiblepromise.com – This gives you a biblical promise sent to your email / iphone / twitter daily.

bible-promise.com – This gives you a daily bible promise as well as categorized promises to search.

- Get on a Bible reading plan. Find the promises of God yourself.
biblegateway.com
- Don't allow yourself to become obsessed and overwhelmed by the darkness. Fight to keep to goodness of the word of God in your life and cling to it. No matter how dark it looks, God is working!

The life of Athaliah shows us that...

1. We must be very intentional to equip and train our children for success as followers of Christ. We must let God continue to change us so we model the right stuff.
2. We need to be giving our ambition to God so that He can direct it to serve others and advance His Kingdom.
3. No matter how dark it is, God is working. His purposes cannot fail. We need to cling to God's purposes and promises in the midst of the darkness. To do this we must have a commitment to know His word.