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# **The Roots of Rebellion**

**# 725-B**

**Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)**

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# The Roots of Rebellion

Our journey down the dusty roads of God's "Living Legends" seems to have been slightly derailed at the home of a man named Moses. For 21 lessons now, we have lodged at his doorstep. We have seemingly observed his every move. What we have seen is a man after God's own heart. We have seen a man to whom the whole counsel of God was entrusted and who was trusted as well with the awesome task of communicating that word to God's people. The people were stiff-necked and hard-hearted. Their response to God's word was so negative that it not only broke the heart of God, but broke the heart of Moses as well. Our goal through this series has been three-fold:

- 1- To observe God's special man under pressure.
- 2- To observe God's chosen people under pressure.
- 3- To observe God's responses to their behavior under pressure.

For the most part, we see how to respond by watching Moses. We see how not to respond by watching the children of Israel. We learn of the heart of God in both cases. There is, of course, a deeper purpose whenever we look into the mirror of the word of God. This purpose is to see a reflection of ourselves and to remind ourselves that God did not create just a handful of men and women like Moses to sprinkle throughout the pages of history so that we could see that the victorious godly life was available like the proverbial carrot was just dangled in front of the average Christian, only to be tasted by a chosen few. God shows us the likes of Moses, Abraham, Noah, Elijah, Enoch and Paul that we might see through these Living Legends that they were frail and human as we are, yet, they dared to take God at His word and thus they changed their worlds.

Never believe that you were not designed by God to be a Moses. Your calling may be different. Your personality may be different. Life's setting will be different to be sure. But the qualities of God's character that made Moses a man after God's

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own heart are available to you. The ingredients it took to develop that character still rests in the hands of a sovereign God, a God who wants to make out of each of us men and women after His own heart.

We observed two lessons ago the response of the children of Israel when the heavens appeared to be silent. We viewed Moses when his flock appeared to have panicked its way into idolatry. In the last lesson, we looked on as Moses responded once again to persecution. This time it was from his own brother and sister. We saw the four marks of a man of God. He is meek. He is faithful. He knows how to spend time in the presence of God. He knows how to pray unselfishly for others. We also looked on as Moses agreed to an espionage plan. He sent twelve men to examine the land that was already theirs. Ten of the twelve forgot the land was already theirs and chose in the process to die in the wilderness rather than take by faith what God had already given them. So a whole nation is destined to a life of wandering. They were wandering and murmuring. There, in the wilderness, our next chapter unfolds.

The curtain rises on Act I of this drama in Numbers 16. We begin by reading the first two verses.

Now Korah, the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On, the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took men:

And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown:

(Numbers 16:1,2)

Here we have the beginning of jealousy. Korah's envy or jealousy may well have begun at a much lower level of the Israeli government than where we see it now. Korah camped among the Korahthites to the south of the tabernacle. It so happened that he was camping just adjacent to the Reubenites, a group who had seemingly lost their birthright and their proper place among the tribes. This was another cause for dissension. Whether this conjecture is correct or not, we do know that there arose from within the ranks, the roots of rebellion. Four ungrateful men began to sow seeds of discontent in a field apparently fertile for rebellion. As you can expect, before long a crew of no less than two hundred and fifty "spiritual giants" were joining in and joining up. The makings of a real riot were there. Let's continue:

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And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

(Numbers 16:3)

This tirade was directed against Moses and Aaron. Aaron now is getting a taste of his own medicine. You remember that Aaron and Miriam's cry against Moses was basically the same. They had said, "What right do you have to reign over us?" By now Moses was, no doubt, getting used to having his authority challenged. But what we must take note of is the reality of their rebellion. They did not understand God's concept of authority. "Ye take too much upon you," they said. Literally they were saying that Moses assumed too much authority. This was not true. Moses did not ask for the job, remember? When God appeared and looked at his resume and interviewed him for the position, he did everything but plead the fifth amendment. He, in fact, accused God of getting His files mixed up and selecting the wrong guy. It was not Moses who chose to lead. It was God who chose Moses to lead. That is why, by challenging his right to lead they were, in essence, challenging the authority of God.

Their second assumption was as wrong as the first. "All the congregation are holy," they argued, "and the Lord is among them." Notice Korah was pretending to take up an offense for the wounded masses. "Oh, these poor troops," he said. As we shall see, his real concern, as always, was for himself. His argument is at the heart of all forms of rebellion. It is this: Are not we all equal in the sight of God? Therefore, what gives one person more authority than another? We all have our rights, right? "We have the same direct line to God as you do, Moses. What right do you have to tell us what to do?" he cried. It is the same argument Satan used when he defied God and rebelled. It is the same argument he used against Eve. "You don't need anyone to tell you what to do," he chided, "We are all created equal. Right?" Wrong.

We are all created equal in value. We are all equal in the sight of God where worth is concerned. But we are not all equal in rank. Rank does not necessarily denote worthiness. Rank denotes position. This position is ordained of God to create order in a world of chaos. He ordained parents to be in authority

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over their children. He ordained husbands to be in authority over their wives. He ordained employers to be in authority over their employees. He ordained governments at all levels to be in authority over their people. He told children to obey their parents. He told wives to submit to their husbands. He told employees to respond to their employers. He told all of us to submit ourselves to those who govern us for the Lord's sake to exercise order in society. The Scripture is clear. Not all parents are good ones. Not all husbands deserve submission. Not all employers are worthy of honor. Not all governments are just. The Scripture is also clear that this is not the issue. Authority is not based upon worthiness. Authority is based on rank. By our submission to those who least deserve it, we accrue even greater glory to God who ultimately is the authority we serve.

Korah simply memorized Satan's lie. His question was, "Who made you an authority?" God's answer is, "I did, that's who." His second question was, "Aren't we all equal?" The answer is, "In value, yes. In worth, yes. But in rank, no." So that was the root of his complaint. Moses, the meek one, responds again with godliness. Let's go on:

And when Moses heard it, he fell upon his face:

And he spake unto Korah and unto all his company, saying, Even to morrow the LORD will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him: even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him.

This do; Take you censers, Korah, and all his company;

And put fire therein, and put incense in them before the LORD to morrow: and it shall be that the man whom the LORD doth choose, he shall be holy: ye take too much upon you, ye sons of Levi. (Numbers 16:4-7)

Notice the godly logic of a man of meekness. When his God-ordained authority was challenged, he did these six things:

1- He did not ignore the rebellion or pretend it did not exist. Neither should we.

2- He did not retaliate.

3- Instead, he fell on his face before God *before* he said a word to his accusers.

4- Because he was in an office ordained and appointed by

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God, he made it an issue between them and God, not between them and him.

5- He sought for a specific solution for the offenders that they might learn the lesson of authority. It was God's problem. These were God's children. Therefore, he sought God's solution.

6- He expected his God to act. He wasn't disappointed. Neither will we be.

Now the real reasons for their rebellion begin to surface in verse 8. Here we see three basic characteristics of the flesh. These are three evidences of rebellion in a believer's life. The first is the sin of ingratitude.

And Moses said unto Korah, Hear, I pray you, ye sons of Levi:

Seemeth it but a small thing unto you, that the God of Israel hath separated you from the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and to stand before the congregation to minister unto them?  
(Numbers 16:8,9)

What Korah was really after, according to verse 10, was Aaron's job. Yet God had already ordained him to a very special place in the kingdom. He had chosen the Levites first of all to be set apart from the rest of the congregation. They were called to a special calling. Secondly, He had called them to draw near to Him by granting them responsibilities that required relationship. Thirdly, God's special calling and blessing had a special responsibility; the responsibility to stand before the congregation and minister. So Moses said, "Korah, God has given you a special calling, a special closeness and a special ministry. You ought to be on your knees grateful to God for the role He has given you, not clutching at the authority He has given to another. You are ungrateful, Korah." There is the root problem behind all rebellion. *It is a spirit of ingratitude.*

The second quality that surfaced in the rebellion was a spirit of ambition. This is revealed in these verses

And he hath brought thee near to him, and all thy brethren the sons of Levi with thee: and seek ye the priesthood also?

For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the LORD: and what is Aaron, that ye murmur against him?  
(Numbers 16:10,11)

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Korah's real challenge was to cover his ingratitude with ambition. "If only I were in his shoes, boy, could I be a better leader," was his thought. Probably not. Wives, if you cannot trust God to work even through your own husband, don't think for a moment that you could trust Him if you were in charge. Men, if you can't trust God to work through your own boss, don't delude yourself into thinking, "If only I were the boss." If you can't obey as an arm or a hand or an eye or a foot, don't fool yourself into thinking that you would be a hero as the brain. If you can't follow simple instructions, don't covet the job of the instructor. What Korah and his core of rebels wanted was Aaron's job. The fact that they felt that they deserved it was all the proof they needed that they couldn't handle it. So they were ungrateful and ambitious.

Lastly, we see that they were irresponsible as well.

And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab: which said, We will not come up:

Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us?

Moreover thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up. (Numbers 16:12-14)

Their response was irresponsible for these four reasons:

1- They refused to face Moses eye to eye and plead their case. They said, "We will ignore the summons to appear before the supreme court because we don't like the judge."

2- They were irresponsible in that they refused to accept God's deeper purposes in bringing them out of Egypt. They tended to glamorize the past while blaming God for the present. Have you ever done that?

3- They were irresponsible because they would not accept that the reason that they missed the land flowing with milk and honey was their own refusal to believe, not Moses' inability to lead. "Thou hast not brought us into the land," they cried. They refused to be responsible for their own choices.

4- They were irresponsible in that they could not trust themselves to God for His discipline. They refused to face the music because they did not trust the Composer.



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Now rebellion is pretty much like the measles or the flu. Given the right set of circumstances, and exposure to those who have the disease, it can turn into an epidemic in no time. It started out, in all probability, in verse 1 with one man who coveted another man's job. It spread to four men who, for varying reasons, also aligned themselves with the cause because they needed a platform to vent their own ingratitude and their own ambition and their own irresponsibility. Before long, there were two hundred and fifty men. All of them were of great stature in the community. They had signed an imaginary petition challenging the right of Moses and Aaron to be in charge. By verse 19, the disease of rebellion had been classified by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare as a real live epidemic. There we continue to read:

And Korah gathered all the congregation against them unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation: and the glory of the LORD appeared unto all the congregation.

(Numbers 16:19)

This, my friend, is why God must put down rebellion in its early stages. It is like a spark in a dry land filled with trees. Just let the wind of adversity change direction and the whole forest is filled with flame. It began with one discontented man, and now an entire nation was engulfed in a sea of rebellion. So God had to act. Moses picked up his hotline to heaven and pleaded his case to God. "Lord," he said, "I haven't so much as taken a donkey from these people. I have not hurt one of them." Verse 16 tells us that Moses gained a word from God and regained his composure. He then turned to the people and said, "Tomorrow we are going to have a congregational meeting. I will be there. Aaron will be there. God will be there. You had better be there as well, every last one of you. And I want each one of you to bring a censer with incense, all two hundred and fifty of you. Aaron will be there with his."

Now the odds seemed pretty good to Korah; two hundred and fifty to two. So he stirred up the whole nation to come and view this extravaganza. This was sort of a Super Bowl I. I don't have any doubt that they probably set up concession stands and sold Sinai Soda-pop on the side. We don't know. Maybe they handed out leaflets that read: "Uncensored Spectacular". But we do know from verse 19 that the whole country came out to gape. This was the biggest event to take place since the town meeting

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when the multitudes voted almost unanimously not to pass over into Giantsville. Verse 19 adds that the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation, but this was not what they were looking for. Every time the glory of the Lord had appeared to them, they had frozen with fear. We always do, when we are living in disobedience.

And the LORD spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying,  
Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.

And they fell upon their faces, and said, O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation? (Numbers 16:20-22)

I guess it is hard for me personally to fathom that kind of response. We all know intellectually that we are supposed to pray for our enemies, pray for our accusers and be patient with our loved ones. But again and again Moses responded like this: He interceded before God, who Himself was suggesting as a test to Moses, that He annihilate the whole nation. This is now the third straight time that God has suggested “Plan B”. He said to Moses, “If you will move away, I will destroy them all with one quick stroke of justice.” As we have watched Moses over these past three lessons, he over and over developed a progressive system of appealing before God. He said, “God, these are *Your* people. These are *Your* promises. This is *Your* reputation. We are dealing with *Your* character.” In this event he adds a final dimension as he says, “God there is a principle that You have given to us and I want you to invoke this principle. The principle is individual accountability. God, You have always brought us up and taught us that each man is accountable for his own sins. The son is not responsible for his father’s sins and the father is not responsible for the son’s sins. The nation is responsible as a nation for its behavior, but this whole nation is not guilty, Lord.”

God, as always, was waiting to see what Moses’ response would be. He heard the prayers of one righteous man. He knew He didn’t punish all the people for a few men’s sins. But He desired to hear it from Moses. It was a test. Moses gets another A+ on his report card. We continue:

And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,  
Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

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And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him.

And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

(Numbers 16:23-26)

Moses now assumes his authority once again. It had been challenged; he had fallen on his face before God, given the responsibility to God, heard from God, interceded before God, and now God had vindicated him. The pattern returns. Now with the word of judgment from God he implements a central doctrine. This doctrine is to separate yourself from those who are in rebellion, lest you perish with them in their foolishness. Verses 27-35 tell the sad but amazing story of how God dealt with those who rebelled. He had the multitude separate themselves from the rebels. He planted into Moses' heart a prayer that could be called on both to deal with the rebellion and to do so in a way so that no one could ever doubt it was not a coincidence. When Moses finished praying, the ground beneath them opened up and swallowed them alive. It was a symbol of the second death when men who know not God will remain alive without His presence forever. God then came down with fire and took the two hundred and fifty men who stood with their censers before God.

God eventually must deal with rebellion or else it will eat at the fiber of His people and destroy His image and His authority. So God placed it in the heart of Moses to ask for something different in the way of discipline. God is infinitely more creative in His discipline than we are. We look for something that works on one occasion with one person and we make a rubber stamp out of it and use it until it is out of ink. Not so with God. He always designs the discipline to suit the offense and the offender. He always designs it first of all to put down rebellion in the heart of the offender. Secondly, He designs discipline to serve as a deterrent to those who look on, so that He can restore order in the land. The Scripture teaches that you must punish the guilty or the innocent who are yet to rebel will decide that there is no such thing as right or wrong. That is why God always demands discipline for those who rebel.

In the rest of chapter 16, we learn that God always expects us to create reminders of our discipline and of His blessing. We have seen this so many times before in previous lessons. In

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verses 37 and 38 God told Moses to have Eleazar, Aaron's son, pull the censers from the fire, beat them into a big piece of sheet metal and hammer it into a piece to cover the altar. Then God gives the reason:

To be a memorial unto the children of Israel, that no stranger, which is not of the seed of Aaron, come near to offer incense before the LORD; that he be not as Korah, and as his company: as the LORD said to him by the hand of Moses. (Numbers 16:40)

“Every time you look at the metal covering,” God said, “it should be a reminder that I have ordained levels of authority.” God wanted them and us to learn that He wants us to remain in the place where He has placed us and be blessed. Remember the sin of Korah. Of course even this tragedy did not fully convict the murmuring multitudes. Let's look as verse 41 goes on:

But on the morrow all the congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the LORD. (Numbers 16:41)

Oh, how deep the roots of rebellion run. The very next day, instead of repenting before God, they had another town meeting to lynch Moses and Aaron. They wanted to hold them accountable for God's discipline rather than accepting their own rebellion. So in verse 42, God makes one more appearance and for the fourth time He asks Moses what he thinks they ought to do. He asked Moses if He ought to destroy the nation. God allowed a plague to begin, but Moses, the faithful one, called upon his anointed priest, Aaron, who ran among the people and made atonement for their sins. However, 14,700 of them perished. This was the high cost of rebellion.

But, oh, my friend, consider the love and the patience of our God. Consider how He restrains His infinite power. Consider how He tempers His infinite holiness with His infinite mercy. But never let the mercy or patience of God lull you into a false concept of how He feels about rebellion. It can best be summarized from a verse we have covered again and again. It is found in I Samuel 15:23. Most of you know it from memory. Let's review the situation. King Saul was justifying his disobedience by pleading that what he had done was a plus for the kingdom and a blessing for the people. Besides, it gave them more from which to sacrifice and serve the Lord. Thus he concludes that God ought to be tickled to death with his disobedience. “I did it all for Him,” Saul cries.

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In verse 22 Samuel replies to Saul,

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.  
(I Samuel 15:22,23)

Samuel asks Saul, "What is it that pleases God anyway? Is it what you do for Him or how submissive you are to Him?" Then Samuel answers his own question, "No, Saul, to obey is better than sacrifice." God is more pleased with a spirit that yields to His authority than He is to one that does all the right things but will not yield his will to God. We see that God views rebellion in the same light as witchcraft and He sees stubbornness as evil as iniquity and idolatry. Do you understand this? It means that rebellion equals in God's sight, in terms of intensity of the sin, the same as witchcraft. If you don't know what God thinks about witchcraft, do a study and find out.

The second meaning is even more important than the first. Rebellion is not only equal to witchcraft, it is similar in nature to witchcraft. In other words, it means basically the same thing. The word used here for rebellion literally means bitterness. The passage is saying that a spirit of bitterness, left to itself, will produce allegiance to a spirit other than the spirit of God. So God in His love must deal with rebellion because the real root of rebellion is the yielding of the will to a spirit that is at war with the spirit of God. It is thus the same as the spirit of witchcraft. The stubbornness that clings to it makes of it an idol of itself.

If you and I could somehow grasp the meaning and message of rebellion, perhaps our whole concept of total commitment to the Lordship of Jesus Christ might be changed. Ask yourself today, "What is rebellion?" I believe it has at least three facets.

1- It is any act or attitude that resists the authority God has placed over you. We are in rebellion if we resist the authority God has placed in our lives to change us. Authority might be defined this way: a person or agency designed by God to do three things: 1) to exercise responsibility; 2) to maintain order; 3) to create character in those under them. Authority, remember, is

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the mark of God's ownership of your life. You are not your own, you have been bought with a price. It is the mark of ownership that God designs to create character in you. He thus raises up God-ordained authority to both direct you in love and to chisel out character by challenging your will. If your will hardens beneath His hand, you miss the blessing, prolong the process, and increase the temperature at which the Master Craftsman must work. To harden your will unto the hand of authority is to rebel against God. It is, to God, as the sin of witchcraft.

Rebellion is the response of "Maybe I will, maybe I won't." to your employer or husband or parents. It is the look of defiance. It is the clenched fist. It is the angry heart that obeys, but obeys grudgingly. It says to God, "Don't tell *me* what to do. Who is he or she to rule over me?" It says to the world, "I am my own final authority. I am my own god." So the first characteristic of rebellion is to resist the authority over you and thus to resist God. This was the essence of Aaron and Miriam's complaint in Numbers 12. It was at the root of Korah's uprising in Numbers 16. It is at the heart of many of our problems within the body of Christ. One reason it is becoming increasingly important in these last days to submit to authority, and in particular to unjust or unworthy authority, is that this is the very antithesis of the world's philosophy. The reason is that the world's philosophy was designed by the greatest rebel who ever lived. He even lives today to reproduce that spirit in us.

2- Rebellion is any act or attitude that resents the circumstances God has allowed to come into your life. This characteristic is more subtle than the first. It strikes back at the authority of God by challenging the circumstances He has allowed to come into our lives. These circumstances come from three sources: 1) Some are designed by God to bless us or test us, but either way to accomplish His purpose in us, which is character; 2) Some are designed by Satan to destroy God's purposes but always will ultimately be used by God to accomplish His purposes which, once again, involve character; 3) Some are the result of our own choices and thus are a part of sowing and reaping. Even these will be used of God for His glory and our good. So don't become too introspective. It is usually not that important which of the three or what combination of the three are involved in your circumstances. All that is important is that *God is sovereign*. Therefore, if we allow resentment, hostility

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or bitterness to engulf us over the circumstances we are in, it is rebellion to God. This is perhaps the most dangerous form of rebellion of all. The children of Israel went through this again and again. “We have no water to drink, what kind of God do we have? He just saved us to hurt us”. “Manna, again? He is not blessing us, He is teasing us”. “A promised land? You must be kidding; there are giants in ‘them thar’ hills!” We personify this quality every time we shake our fists in the face of God and say, “God, you are unfair.” My friend, *it is impossible for God to be unfair*. The cancer of anger that churns in your spirit will surely soon break forth into an epidemic of rebellion.

3- It is any act or attitude that refuses to accept the responsibility for your own choices. “Moses, you didn’t give us the land,” they complained. Wrong, they chose not to enter by faith. But a spirit of rebellion never says, “I was wrong, I deserve to be disciplined.” It always shifts life’s blame to others and ultimately back to God. Perhaps this rebellion is the most difficult of all to spot. There is so much inner self-righteousness that is convinced that God is unfair and that this unfairness has been aimed primarily at us. So we have to find someone or something to be the scapegoat. There are many things in life that we have no control over. But we do have some deliberate choices that have definite consequences. To deny that is a form of rebellion.

Now I don’t know about you, but in the process of looking at this lesson, God has pointed out a lot of rebellion in my own life. He has shown me a resistance to authority. I am not under much, but that is the problem. Those of us who are not under much authority are more accountable to the authority we *are* under. Think about that, some of you who are the heads of your home and in business for yourself. I have found resentment to circumstances, particularly long-term circumstances that I could not control; circumstances that look as if they would never change. I began to see in my own life a refusal to say that I was wrong, especially where spiritual things are concerned. I realize today, as I hope you do, that God will only be able to work in my life or your life in the days to come to the degree to which we deal with these three roots of rebellion. We need to admit they exist and name them. That is the first step. We need to get alone before God and confess them. That is the second step. But the biggest step of all is changing the selfish mindset we have that, in the flesh, has been programmed into the computers of our

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minds. Only one thing will do that: the word of God.

Joshua cautioned Israel in Joshua 1:18 that condemnation awaited those who rebelled and would not yield themselves to the word of God. So he told them to memorize the Scripture, line upon line, precept upon precept. He told them to meditate in the Scripture, to pray it back to God as an anthem of praise, to apply it specifically to the wounds of rebellion so it can draw out the infection and heal and restore. Good intentions can challenge it, but only God through His word can change it. It will take time, maybe years, but it will take, if you will but take His word and apply it to your rebellion. Some of us need to take the first step right now. We need to admit to God the depth of our rebellion.

You may be in *total* rebellion to God, having never made your peace with God by receiving the gift of God through His Son, Jesus Christ. You can end your hostilities and cease your rebellion right now by coming to God on God's terms in simple faith. You need to grant Him the right He already owns, the right to run your life. If you have never ever said, "Jesus I receive you, come into my heart," you can ask Him right now. You can cease your rebellion and really begin to live. If you should choose to trust Him, begin with a total yielding of your life. God is not basically in the fire insurance business. God is in the life insurance business. He wants to ensure you of an abundant life if you will give all of your life back to Him. You can do that right now.

But for those of us who are Christians, the issue is more subtle but hardly less critical. The basis of God's authority is His ownership. He owns us by creation. He owns us by re-creation. He saved us. Now we are not our own. We have been bought with a price. The ultimate root of all our rebellion is the refusal to yield control to Him. The issue often boils down to total control. We need to come to the point where we can say, "Not God and I. Not God on my terms. Not God if... But just God." We need to quietly bow before the Lord right now and say, "God, You take my life and You do with it whatever You want. Take it if You choose. It is Yours to use as You see fit. Nothing I have is off limits, Lord. Nothing I desire is a prerequisite. I have no ambition but to be Your slave; to perfectly obey Your image. I gladly accept whatever authority You place over me because You are the authority over me. Lord, my life is expendable. Your life in me is indispensable. I will not murmur. I will not complain. I will not allow a root of



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bitterness to spring up in me. How can I be bitter if I have no expectations? With no presumptuous expectations, I can have no disappointments. I yield to Your sovereign will. I am Yours.” That is how God wants us to pray. I can promise you, that if you maintain that spirit before God, the problem of rebellion to authority will fade into the background and disappear.

There is one final word of encouragement. Learn to praise Him consistently, *whether you feel like it or not*. Praise Him for whoever or whatever He brings into your life. That unjust boss. That unbelieving spouse. Those seemingly endless problems that batter the fortress of your trust. Every night make a list of every person and every situation that has come into your life, good or bad, that day, and before you go to sleep, do not lay your head on the pillow until you have praised Him for each and every one. *In everything give thanks because this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you*. In many cases you will have no earthly reason to praise. That is good. The heavenly reasons bring more glory. They honor Him by faith and reassure your heart of His sovereignty. They cleanse your life of rebellion, and the life cleansed of rebellion will be free to become one of God’s Living Legends.

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THE ROOT OF REBELLION

Are you in rebellion, Beloved?  
Does your heart in anger burn?  
When the hand of pressure beckons  
Does a bitter spirit churn?

Do you cry out through life's problems,  
"God, You don't really care!"  
Only missing, through rebellion,  
The special love that's there.

Do you tend to blame the Master  
For choices *you* have made?  
When the sowing leads to reaping,  
Do you somehow feel betrayed?

The root of it all is rebellion;  
Rebellion to God's control.  
The root of it all is resistance  
To letting Him rule your soul.

It eats at the fiber of spiritual growth,  
It hinders God's work in your life.  
It leads to a spirit of dark despair,  
It leads to a spirit of strife.

But ah, it is not the plan of God  
His leading to refuse.  
The plan of God is a yielded will  
That says, "Lord, whate'er You choose."

"God, whatever You send my way,  
May my anxious heart be still;  
And may I cease rebelling  
And *simply seek Your Will*".

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### For Focus and Application

1- In Numbers 16:3, Korah admitted to the real reason for his rebellion. What was it? Consider your own relationships with those in authority. Does the same thought surface in your heart? How can you monitor those thoughts? How do those thoughts affect God's heart?

2- Do you understand the principle that we are all equal in value, but not in rank? How does Satan try to blur that distinctive? Why does he? How did he use it against Eve? Against Jesus in the wilderness? How does the misunderstanding of this principle lead to rebellion in marriages, churches, businesses and governments?

3- Do you understand that the one in authority *does not need to be worthy of your submission*? That you are to submit to the *office*, even if you cannot joyfully submit to the *person*?

4- How did Moses respond to Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16:4,5? How do you respond when those under your authority rebel? What six things did Moses do? Apply those this week to those under your leadership or authority.

5- Consider the four reasons we know these rebels were irresponsible (page 8). Apply these to your own life.

6- The concept of separating yourself from those in rebellion is mostly ignored in today's society, especially in the church. We use the principle of love as our reason. How can separating yourself from those in rebellion actually *demonstrate love*? Find verses to confirm your answer.

7- Do you think God's answer to Moses' prayer was just? How did He answer? When God answers your prayers for mercy by delivering you, but *still allows some of the reaping to go on*, do you complain?

8- Consider the three facets of rebellion described on pages 13-15 and ask God to reveal to you what your "RQ" (rebellion quotient) is.

a- Rebellion is any act or attitude that resists the authorities God has placed over us.

b- Rebellion is any act or attitude that resents the circumstances God has allowed into our lives.

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c- Rebellion is any act or attitude that refuses to accept responsibility for our own choices.

9- What place does Scripture hold in replacing rebellion with restoration and obedience? Ask God this week to give you passages to memorize and meditate on that will keep God's perspective of rebellion in your heart.

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