**“The Dangers Of Assuming About Other People”**

Jarrod Jacobs

II Samuel 10 (and its parallel text, II Chron. 19) speaks of the occasion when David’s kindness was misinterpreted as evil. An assumption was made by the princes of the Ammonites that David had sent spies into the country (v. 3). He had not done this. Rather, this was a diplomatic action following the death of Nahash the Ammonite (v. 2). Yet, because of the princes’ assumption, David’s men were insulted, horribly mistreated, and sent away (v. 4-5). The end result was that the Ammonites hired the Syrians as soldiers and David and Israel went to war with the Ammonites and Syrians. By the end of the chapter, we read that the Ammonites and Syrians lost to David and the Israelite army (v. 6-19).

THINK ABOUT THIS: This whole event, including the resulting war, came about because someone ASSUMED the wrong thing and then acted upon that assumption. Consider for a moment the death, the bloodshed, the widows, the fatherless children, the economic problems, and the other consequences that came to the people because the princes of the Ammonites could not imagine David doing a kind thing for them (though it was a kind act, v. 2)!

Truly, Psalm 19:13 would ring true in David’s life. He asked God, “Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” In essence, Psalm 19:13 is David’s prayer that he might not act as the Ammonites did! Let this be our prayer as well.

I Corinthians 13:4-8 declares that an attribute of love is that it *“thinketh no evil”* (v. 5, KJV). Love also *“believes all things”* and *“hopes all things”* (v. 7). No, this is not encouraging some naïve display of love. Rather, love thinks the best of others and of their intentions. Love wants to believe the best and strives to believe the best in people until proven wrong. Love does not assume things, nor try to “read hearts”. Again, this is not being naïve, nor blind to the truth. Instead, love is thinking the best of others, while having one’s eyes open to the facts. Friends, do we do this? Please go back and reread II Samuel 10 and I Chronicles 19 and see the results of presuming or assuming the motives of others. In truth, those chapters would not even read the way they do if it had not been for the assumption and evil surmising of the Ammonites!

In making application to ourselves, stop and consider the following. When someone does something nice for us, do we say or think, “I know the real reason why they did that...”? I have seen folks who were treated nicely look to the person and ask, “OK, what do you want?” Are we always assuming that others have “ulterior motives” in what they do? Why is this? Biblical love doesn’t act this way. If one says, “I act like this because those people have shown themselves to be two-faced”, then my question is, why are you still associating with them (I Cor. 15:33)? Let us stop presuming things about others. Love does not do this, and as we have already noted, assuming matters brings trouble and hardship!

No, we cannot read other people’s minds (I Cor. 2:11a). Let’s stop acting like we can by presuming or assuming things about God and others! Let us do as love demands and then see how we (and others) can be blessed.

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