

Elijah and Naboth's Vineyard

(1 Kings 21:1-29)

Introduction

Have you ever wanted something that belonged to someone else? Perhaps a bike or some designer clothes? Have you ever begged your parents for it? "Please, please, can't I have it? Everyone else has one. I'll be the only one in the whole school that doesn't have one."

Did you know when you desire something that someone else has, that's called "coveting" and God told us in the Ten Commandments that we are not to covet anything that belongs to someone else?

Today in our lesson we're going to learn about a king who coveted something that belonged to his neighbor.

Opening Prayer

Father, we have all experienced times when we have seen and wanted things that other people have. Lord, teach us what we should do when those feelings of covetousness come over us. We want our lives to be well-pleasing to You in everything that we think, say, and do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." (Hebrews 13:5)

Lesson

If you were a king, think of all you'd own. Think of all the power you would have. Why, you could have anything you could ever want or need.

We've been learning about King Ahab the past few weeks. He was one of the richest kings in the world of his time who had everything you'd ever want if you'd lived back then – fancy speedy chariots and lots of servants. But near his palace, was something he wanted very, very much, but it belonged to someone else.

Large, luscious grapes hung on the vines of the vineyard near Ahab's palace. This vineyard belonged to Naboth, Ahab's next-door neighbor.

One day the king talked to Naboth about selling this land to him for a garden because it was so convenient to the palace. Ahab offered Naboth cash for it, or, he said he would even trade Naboth another piece of land for this vineyard.

1 Kings 21:1-2

Now there was a man named Naboth, from Jezreel, who owned a vineyard in Jezreel beside the palace of King Ahab of Samaria. (2) One day Ahab said to Naboth, "Since your vineyard is so convenient to my palace, I would like to buy it to use as a vegetable garden. I will give you a better vineyard in exchange, or if you prefer, I will pay you for it."

Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard. But, Naboth refused to give his land to the king.

1 Kings 21:3

But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance that was passed down by my ancestors."

According to the law that God gave Moses and the children of Israel, the land owned by each family was to remain in that family. Naboth had gotten this land from his father and he wanted to pass it on to his own sons. So, Ahab was asking Naboth to do something that was illegal. And Naboth's refusal to sell him the land made Ahab very unhappy.

1 Kings 21:4

So Ahab went home angry and sullen because of Naboth's answer. The king went to bed with his face to the wall and refused to eat!

Ahab pouted. He couldn't have what he wanted. Have you ever acted like that when you couldn't have what you wanted? God says that it is sinful when you act like that. Do you know what God says about sin? The Bible tells us in Ezekiel 18:4 that "the soul that sins shall surely die." But Ahab didn't think it made any difference how he acted. He thought he could get away with anything.

Greedy Ahab had plenty of land already, but he wanted Naboth's, too. And he refused to be content without it. As a child of God, are you content? Are you satisfied with the things you have or do you want some of the things your friends have?

Have you ever spent time day dreaming about the things you don't have, imagining in your mind what it would be like to have it? Then, watch out! You are coveting in your heart.

Here's how coveting starts:

- First, you start to believe that you deserve that thing you desire so much.
- Then, you start to think that it's not fair that you don't have it.
- Third, you think you'll never be happy until you get it. Before you know it, you want it so badly that you would do whatever it takes to get it.

People have different ways of trying to get what they want.

- Some kids whine – "My sister always gets what she wants. I never get what I want."
- Some kids throw temper tantrums.
- Some people even go so far as to steal that thing they want so much.

God wants us to be satisfied with what we have. (Review the Memory Verse.) Don't be constantly wanting things that you can't or shouldn't have. Be content with what God has given you.

If King Ahab had been content with what God had given him, he wouldn't have pouted when he couldn't get Naboth's vineyard.

Ahab's wife, Jezebel, found her husband pouting.

1 Kings 21:5

"What's the matter?" his wife Jezebel asked him. "What's made you so upset that you're not eating?"

When the king explained to her that it was because Naboth wouldn't sell him that beautiful vineyard, Jezebel wanted to cheer Ahab by getting him Naboth's vineyard. So, she came up with a plan to get it for him.

1 Kings 21:8-10

So, she wrote letters in Ahab's name, sealed them with his seal, and sent them to the elders and other leaders of the town where Naboth lived. In her letters she commanded: "Call the citizens together for a time of fasting, and give Naboth a place of honor. And then seat two scoundrels across from him who will accuse him of cursing God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

Jezebel arranged to have Naboth falsely accused of cursing God and the king. The penalty for cursing the king was death.

So, the men of his city followed the queen's instructions. They called the meeting and put Naboth on trial. Then two scoundrels accused him of cursing God and the king. Then he was dragged outside the city and stoned to death.

Naboth could have disobeyed God and sold Ahab the vineyard he wanted so badly, but he didn't. How sad, he died and he didn't do anything wrong. Who does that remind you of?

God, the Son, the Lord Jesus, died for all the sins of the world and He never, ever sinned. He died for something He didn't do – Jesus died for what you and I did! He took our punishment for sin, the wrong things you and I think, say and do. Jesus didn't have to die for you.

And Naboth didn't have to die either, but he was obedient to God and is now in heaven.

When King Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he took over the vineyard. Ahab and Jezebel thought they got away with it.

1 Kings 21:16

So Ahab immediately went down to the vineyard of Naboth to claim it

God wanted Ahab to know that what he and Jezebel had done was wrong. So, he sent Elijah the prophet with another message.

1 Kings 21:17-18

But the LORD said to Elijah, "Go down to meet King Ahab of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He will be at Naboth's vineyard in Jezreel, claiming it for himself."

God saw Ahab in Naboth's vineyard! God knew all the time exactly what was happening. Nothing is a surprise to Him. God is everywhere and knows everything that is happening. He sees everything that goes on. He is all-knowing! He saw what Ahab and Jezebel did to poor Naboth! And, God knows all that goes on in your heart and mind, too. He knows everything you do, even when you are naughty.

Ahab thought he could do anything he wanted and no one would know what happened. What began with an attitude of discontentment, led to the cruel murder of an innocent man.

When you want something that you can't or shouldn't have, how can you keep from letting that *want* control your actions?

- First, when your *mind* begins to imagine what it would be like to have whatever you are desiring, think about all the things you already have and thank God for them (Ephesians 5:20).
- Second, when your *heart* begins to believe Satan's lies (that is, you start to say to yourself, "I deserve it; it's not fair I don't have it; I can't be happy until I get it; I can't live without it), then remember our Memory Verse for this week; say it to yourself.

- Third, show kindness to those who have what you want: say, for instance, "That's a really neat bike. You made a good choice." Or, "I hope you enjoy your computer and learn a lot as you use it."

Where does contentment come from? From inside you – from knowing God is with you and from believing His promise to give you all you need. If you are God's child, be content with what God has given you. Ahab's refusal to be content had led him and Jezebel to murder. So, God sent Elijah with a message from him.

1 Kings 21:20

So, my enemy, you have found me!" Ahab exclaimed to Elijah. "Yes," Elijah answered, "I have come because you have sold yourself to what is evil in the LORD's sight."

Then Elijah tells Ahab that he had come to place God's curse upon him. He told him that the Lord was going to bring great harm to him.

1 Kings 21:21

So now the LORD says, 'I will bring disaster on you and consume you. I will destroy every one of your male descendants, slave and free alike, anywhere in Israel!'

1 Kings 21:25

(No one else so completely sold himself to what was evil in the LORD's sight as Ahab did under the influence of his wife Jezebel.)

You need to be content with what you have, not greedy like King Ahab was. Here he was, the king; he had everything, yet he wanted that vineyard.

If you and I are not content with what we have; if we see things that other people have and want them for ourselves, it may lead us to do things that displease God, just like Ahab did. When those feelings of covetousness come over us, we need to stop and thank God for what we already have. Instead of envying other people for what they have,

instead of hating others for having things you want, show kindness to them; be happy for them.

If you haven't yet believed in the Lord Jesus as your Savior, you don't have the Holy Spirit living in you to help you be content. If you want to ask Jesus to be your Lord, come talk to me privately after class.

Let's pray and ask God to help us be content with the things He has given us.

Closing Prayer

Father, discontentment is a sin. It's like saying that what You have given us isn't good enough. Forgive us for coveting things that other people have and help us to be content. Thank You for all the wonderful things that you have given us. Help us to always have a thankful and contented heart. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

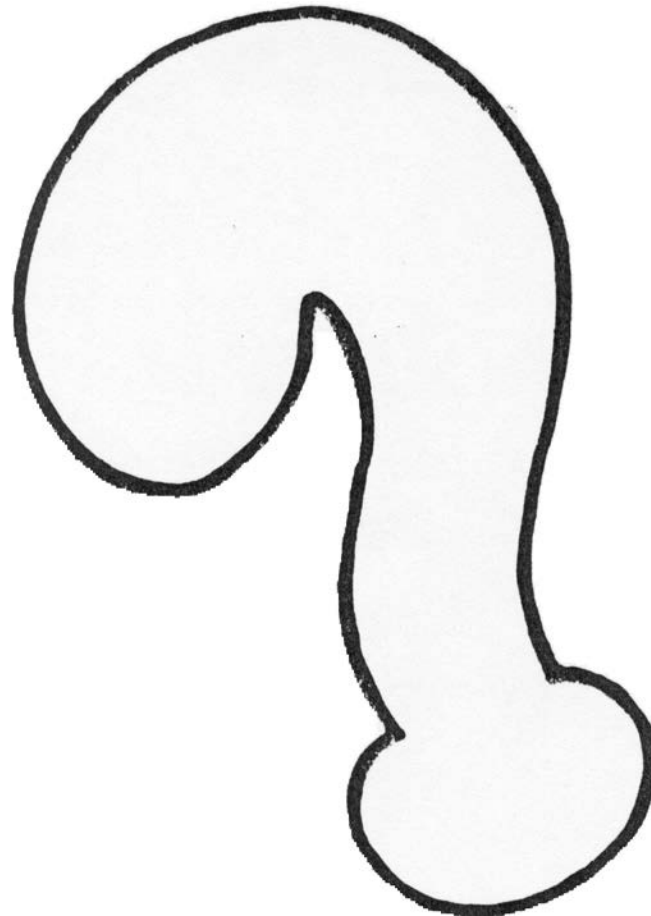
Learning Activities

Craft Corner

On a piece of construction paper, write today's Memory Verse. Have children use magazine pictures to make a collage of the things for which they are thankful. (Or, use the pattern provided at the end of this lesson.)

Game Center

Question Marks — Make a large question mark pattern using the sketch provided. Cut out a question mark shape for each question. For a correctly answered review question, the child may choose a question mark. On the back of the question mark, have written "Zonk," "Sorry," "Try again," "Winner," or "Bull's Eye." Award a small prize or candy for "Winner" and a larger one for "Bull's Eye." Or, you could have point values on the backs of the question marks.



Or, Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did King Ahab covet? (His neighbor's vineyard.)
2. What was it about this vineyard that King Ahab liked so much? (It had large luscious grapes hanging on the vines and it was conveniently located right near his palace.)

3. What did Ahab offer Naboth for his vineyard? (Cash or a trade for some other land.)
4. Why didn't Naboth want to sell King Ahab his vineyard? (Moses had passed a law that said land had to stay within a family. So, it was against the law to sell it to Ahab. And since Naboth had gotten the land from his father, he wanted to pass it on to his sons.)
5. How did Ahab act when Naboth told him he wouldn't sell his land? (He pouted because he couldn't have what he wanted.)
6. Have you ever pouted when you couldn't get your way?
7. Do you know what God says about sin? (The Bible tells us in Ezekiel 18:4 that "the soul that sins shall surely die.")
8. Are you satisfied with the things you have or do you want some of the things your friends have? Be honest!
9. How does coveting start? (First, you spend time day dreaming about the things you don't have, imagining in your mind what it would be like to have it.)
10. What happens if you allow your thoughts to continue to desire the things you don't have? (You think you'll never be happy until you get it and before you know it, you want it so badly that you would do whatever it takes to get it.)
11. What are some ways people manipulate others to get their way? (Whine, temper tantrums, stealing.)
12. What does God want you to be with the things that you already have? (Content!)
13. What did Jezebel do to get that vineyard for her husband? (She arranged to have Naboth falsely accused of cursing God and the king. The penalty for cursing the king was death.)
14. Naboth died and he didn't do anything wrong. Who does that remind you of? (Jesus)
15. How could have Naboth saved his life? (He could have disobeyed God and sold Ahab the vineyard he wanted so badly.)
16. When you begin to covet, what should you do? (Think about all the things you already have and thank God for them.)
17. Where does contentment come from? (From inside you – from knowing God is with you and from believing His promise to give you all you need.)
18. What should you do instead of envying other people for what they have? (Show kindness to them; be happy for them.)

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