History:

Absalom, from the Hebrew meaning “father of peace,” was the third son of King David, and Maacah, one of the king’s numerous wives and concubines (2 Samuel 3:3). Contrary to his name, Absalom was not a man of peace. His personal vanity and disloyalty to his father due to selfish ambition caused great strife and open warfare in the royal family.

- The troubles began when Amnon, David’s oldest son, assaulted his half-sister Tamar, Absalom’s sister.
- Absalom bided his time, and when the opportunity arose two years later during the sheep shearing time at Baal Hazor, he had his brother Amnon killed. (2 Samuel 13:23-29).
- Thinking that it was the start of a general massacre of competitors to the throne, all of the king’s other sons fled for their lives back to Jerusalem (2 Samuel 13:29-33).
- Absalom then took refuge with his mother’s father at Geshur, where he remained for three years (2 Samuel 13:37-38).

King David mourned for his dead son, Amnon, and also for the fugitive Absalom

1) Eventually, David permitted Absalom’s return to Jerusalem, although two more years would go by before the king agreed to meet with him.
   a. Although David mourned Absalom’s absence, the king still couldn’t stand the sight of him. (2 Samuel 14:28).
2) Absalom then made his move, not merely to succeed his father as king, but to replace his father while he was still reigning.
3) Through scheming politics, he managed to gain the support of a large portion of the people.
4) Absalom then moved to Hebron, the previous capital city of Judah, and declared himself king - thereby triggering a civil war between himself and his father. (2 Samuel 15:1-12)
5) The attempted coup was successful at the beginning,
   a. David found it necessary to flee from Jerusalem
   b. It was one of the darkest times of David’s life,
6) Absalom then took over the throne in Jerusalem (2 Samuel 15:13-37).
a. It seemed like the end for David, except for one undefeatable reality - God had already decided who would succeed David, and the choice wasn't the vain and disloyal Absalom.

b. The matter was settled on the battlefield where Absalom and his followers proved to be no match for David, the commanders who remained loyal to him - and the will of Almighty God.

7) Absalom lost 20,000 of his troops, and the rest were put to flight.

8) Absalom himself, while making a hasty retreat riding a mule, got his head caught in the branches of an oak tree.

9) Joab, one of David's commanders, then ran Absalom through with 3 javelins.

His body was then thrown into a pit in the forest (2 Samuel 18:1-18). The rebellion and Absalom's life, were over.
Lesson: The Spirit of Absalom

2 Samuel 15:1–6 (NKJV) Absalom’s Treason

15 After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. 2 Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, “What city are you from?” And he would say, “Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel.” 3 Then Absalom would say to him, “Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you.” 4 Moreover Absalom would say, “Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice.” 5 And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. 6 In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.

This is pretty low. This is bad, when a man would do things behind his own father’s back just to make himself look good. Absalom would degrade his own dad’s reputation by complaining about dad’s ability to judge and run the kingdom. Absalom was even found in bracing and kissing cheeks of men that he wanted to gain favor with. This is the ultimate of political maneuver.

Note: be careful who kisses you cheeks

Absalom actually worked on these people behind the Kings back until he stole their hearts they began to believe Absalom. They thought Absalom was sweet and caring, but David was bold and hard. Many people do the same exact thing in the church today. This is especially true among assistant leaders. They are jealous of the number one man and so they politic the people toward them and against their pastor. They get jealous of the ministry that pastor has and they try to have one just as good without paying the price. It won’t work! But this is what the Absalom spirit will drive you to do.

“If I were the King,” this is a very famous saying. “If I were the pastor,” this one is just as famous. For some reason young ministers are easy prey to this, as well as deacons and elders in local churches. If these people ever did obtain the pastorate, it would be disastrous. Anyone who would politic his
way for position would mutilate himself in office. These people are so deceived. Absalom actually called force and gathered men together to march against the throne. He was real proud of his army he gathered. He really thought they would amount to something.

Did you notice what Absalom told the people when he came to the King for help and counseling? He told them that they each had legitimate claims, but there was no one from the King’s office to help. It’s so easy to say the pastor is too busy and he just doesn’t have time for us. He hasn’t sent anyone in the right office to help us. I guess we’re on our own. How sickening that people thrive on such self-pity. Actually they are obtaining an Absalom-like spirit.

Absalom finally did it. He collected enough radicals to march against the King. He really thought he could win. That day there was a great war and many men died. David won of course and Absalom ended in a sad way.

2 Samuel 18:9–15 (NKJV)

9 Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which was under him went on. 10 Now a certain man saw it and told Joab, and said, “I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!”

11 So Joab said to the man who told him, “You just saw him! And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten shekels of silver and a belt.”

12 But the man said to Joab, “Though I were to receive a thousand shekels of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king’s son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying, ‘Beware lest anyone touch the young man Absalom!’ 13 Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against me.”

14 Then Joab said, “I cannot linger with you.” And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom’s heart, while he was still alive in the midst of the terebinth tree. 15 And ten young men who bore Joab’s armor surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.
The Absalom Spirit

1) You will begin to judge your own family members
2) You will begin to wish you were in charge
3) You would think and say, “if I were the pastor...”
4) You will be convinced that your pastor is too busy for you, and that no one else could even help you.
5) You will feel comfortable running with those who have been placed under church discipline and those who are troublemakers. You will have carnal sympathy for them.
6) You will start to collect people that share the same problems you have
7) You will begin to politic, kiss cheeks and put down your pastor
8) You will accuse pastor of being too hard, strict and untouchable.
9) You will finally march against your church leadership, but only to your own failure

Absalom Quiz

A. Do you feel your pastor is too hard or too strict?
B. Do you often find the need to go and share things that bother you with other people?
C. Do you try to band together with people who have the same problems you do?
D. Are you politicking or kissing cheeks, or licking the wills of people who have hurt feelings and charges against church leadership?
E. Do you ever think or say: “if I were the pastor...?"
F. Do you find yourself most comfortable when you are with troubled people rather than pure and holy fruit bearers?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, check yourself with the Word, repent, seek godly advice and stop feeding off of negativity, feed off the Word of God.

How Work for Next Week: Research Korah and present a chronological paper on his life