

Russell Kelfer

Chased Like Bees

#1369-A

**Series: Possessing the Land:
The Process of Mentoring**

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

Note: Russell wrote each of these lessons in a manner that would enable him to clearly communicate them to his weekly class. The grammar or punctuation you encounter may not be technically perfect, but you will certainly “hear” his unique gift for making the message applicable to the common man in everyday situations.

It’s been said of him that he was really a writer who read his stuff. And that’s a very accurate statement!

May you be richly blessed as you “hear” as you read.

Chased Like Bees

There are certain phrases that simply conjure up images in your mind that you can never forget. Talk about the ice cold water of a mountain stream and you can all but feel your toes going into the frigid, rushing river. Think long enough about a gentle spring rain, and you can not only feel it, you can smell it. Picture a raging bull charging at you from behind a barbed-wire fence and you are ready to run for your life.

Or try this one. Close your eyes and think of the phrase “chased by bees”. Your mind races back to a childhood experience when you either accidentally or intentionally disturbed a nest of bees and they decided to declare war. You ran. They swarmed. Maybe they caught up with you, and maybe they didn’t. Maybe you not so proudly wore the badge of courage that comes from being stung a dozen times, or maybe you didn’t. But you didn’t forget. All someone has to do now is mention a swarm of bees and your heart races and you are about to.

Some things are like that. They just stay with you. So intense are those memories that people use the term “like a swarm of bees” to describe anything or any group of things that is chasing after you, trying to descend on you and make you either uncomfortable or worse.

None of us wants to be chased by a swarm of bees. Neither did the Israelites. Yet, so hard-headed were they that even with fair warning they poked a stick of rebellion into a hive of enemy bees and found themselves running for their lives. It was deliberate, though they would tell you otherwise. It was stupid, though they would deny that as well.

As we enter this phase of our look at this somewhat religious, but altogether faithless group of would-be Hebrew heroes, we cannot help but envision that image of swarming bees and fleeing men because the Scripture describes their folly in just those terms. It comes to us from the book of Deuteronomy, chapter one, verses 41-46:

Chased Like Bees

Then ye answered and said unto me, We have sinned against the LORD, we will go up and fight, according to all that the LORD our God commanded us. And when ye had girded on every man his weapons of war, ye were ready to go up into the hill.

And the LORD said unto me, Say unto them, Go not up, neither fight; for I am not among you; lest ye be smitten before your enemies.

So I spake unto you; and ye would not hear, but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill.

And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah.

And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.

So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there. (Deuteronomy 1:41-46)

THE PROCESS OF PRESUMPTION

The background, by now, ought to be familiar to you. The Jews were gathered together for a congregational meeting and Pastor Moses was recounting the mistakes of the prior generation as he attempted to prepare the present generation for the journey of their lives. It was a journey their parents had refused to make. He wanted to be sure they didn't make the same mistakes, so he was reminding them of both the *reasons* and the *results* of mom and dad's faithlessness. The reason they failed to enter the land was unbelief. The results were a lifetime of wandering.

Once the sentence had been given to them, however, they determined to show God what they could do on their own. They decided to go up and fight the very enemies God had offered to fight for them. The result, of course, was disastrous. They offered a good verbal confession. They cried out: "*We have sinned against the LORD.*" Those are the right words. But, beloved, words are not enough. "*Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looks on the heart.*" That is why it is so difficult to gauge another's salvation. You can walk down an aisle, verbally pray a prayer, fill out a card, and not be genuinely convicted of sin. You can weep until you fill buckets with your tears, and still not see the need for a personal Savior. Trace that phrase through Scripture. Listen

Chased Like Bees

to David as he responded to Nathan's accusation against him with the very same words:

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the LORD. And Nathan said unto David, The LORD also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. (II Samuel 12:13)

What was the difference? The difference was that David's heart was broken. Saying words or even feigning grief does not impress God. Either you are broken or you're not. If you are, God weeps with you. If you're not, God weeps over you, but you are not forgiven.

These Jews cried crocodile tears and even admitted that their sins were against God, *but they did not recognize their unbelief as the core of it all*. They thought God was concerned about *their happenings*. He was concerned about their *heart*. They were now going to try to do in the flesh what God had offered to do supernaturally in the Spirit. They were going to go *presumptuously up the hill*.

That word "presumptuously" bears looking at. A presumptuous spirit grieves the heart of God. There is a good reason for that. It is that reason we need to search for and discover before we continue. If we can truly come to understand the things we do that are "presumptuous" to God, we will have moved miles closer to a more intimate walk with our Savior. They went "presumptuously" up the hill. What does that mean?

Our journey begins in Exodus, chapter twenty-one, where God is explaining to His chosen ones how to govern and how to apply the law, particularly where murder is concerned. Here are His words:

He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death.

And if a man lie not in wait, but God deliver him into his hand; then I will appoint thee a place whither he shall flee.

But if a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour, to slay him with guile; thou shalt take him from mine altar, that he may die.

And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death. (Exodus 21:12-15)

The word "smiteth" means to crush or attempt to destroy. It has to do with being involved in a conflict where you end

Chased Like Bees

up beating or hurting another. The key here is that the word involves “laying in wait” or deliberately planning to harm or execute another. It is where “premeditated murder” comes from. The person in verse 12 was to receive the death penalty. Capital punishment was to be his or her fate because the murder was deliberate and planned. This was not an act of passion brought on by unexpected circumstances. This person was deliberately killed and the killer’s fate was predetermined by God. They were to be executed in order to set an example and keep others from attempting to do the same thing. The law was fair, but it was uncompromising where life and death were concerned.

But verse 13 tells a different story. This man also is guilty of killing another. He does not go scot-free, but neither does he receive the death penalty, because he did not kill *presumptuously*. It was not premeditated. There is a distinct difference in *motive*. One killed with an eye to vengeance. The other with a response to danger. Both must be punished, but the punishment was decidedly different. One was *presumptuous*. The penalty must reflect the presumption.

The root word used in this passage can also be translated “arrogantly”. In fact, the two words are used almost interchangeably. What is “arrogance”? It means to be “puffed up”; to be filled with self-importance, to be haughty, to be proud. It means that you elevate your own value above that of someone else. You are not in subjection, you are in control. You think you are “above the law”. What a dangerous place to be. No one in his or her right mind would want to be “above the law”. To be above the law is to be out from under the law, which means there is no authority either to control you or protect you. You are on your own. Bad move. Look now at Numbers 15:

And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.

Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.

But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.

Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath

Chased Like Bees

broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off;
his iniquity shall be upon him. (Numbers 15:28-31)

The Hebrew words translated “ignorance” in Scripture can be also defined as “inadvertent”. It was unintentional. They broke the law, but it was through ignorance rather than arrogance. Ignorance stumbles into sin, arrogance defies God and knowingly violates His word. Both sins must be atoned for, but God has made arrangements for the soul that sinneth ignorantly. The law will punish, but the punishment will be in accordance with the attitude of the heart.

The arrogant, or “presumptuous” sin, however, must pay a different price. He has deliberately chosen to violate a known law of God. He knew in advance that what he was about to do was a slap in the face of a Holy God, but he did it anyway. Look now at Deuteronomy 18:

I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the name of other gods, even that prophet shall die. (Deuteronomy 18:18-20)

God is the mouthpiece of the true prophet. The true prophet never speaks unless God has given him words to speak. Therefore, the man or woman who ignores those words has to answer to God. There is, however, another kind of prophet: the one who speaks “presumptuously”. He, with arrogant disregard for truth, begins to speak words which God has not given him to speak, *and he attributes those words to God*. There is no mercy for him. The same is true of one who stands up and speaks in the name of other gods (as though there were other gods). He or she may quote Scripture, tell of the works of Jehovah, then liken Him or imply equality with either the world system or the false gods Satan has raised up in that particular generation. This is an act of arrogant presumption.

Then the passage reminds the reader of the absolute nature of God’s word, lest we decide to pick and choose what we think

Chased Like Bees

God has a right to say or has said. It continues:

And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken?

When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him.

(Deuteronomy 18:21,22)

God doesn't play the percentages. His percentage is 100%. If God said it, *it will come to pass*. 98% may be good for a lot of things, but it is the same as 0% to God. An absolute is an absolute, and if God says it, *there is no alternative*. That is what is missing in today's world. Increasingly, in these last days, man is trying to mix truth with his humanistic substitutes, and *like oil and water, they do not mix*.

Truth is truth. If God says don't, then don't. If God says, He will, then He will. That's what is missing in the legal systems, in the educational systems, and in the religious systems of our world. We ignore the absolutes of God, and then when the world falls apart, we begin to pray. The children of Israel did the same thing.

The passage says that if a man uses God's word to predict something and it *almost comes to pass*, that man has used prophecy *presumptuously*. If someone takes a passage that is meant to delineate a principle and uses it to guarantee a prophetic happening, and says it as though *it were fact*, that person may be preaching *presumptuously*. There are some things God wants us to know *exactly*. There are other things He wants us to watch for and wonder about, knowing that what we know is all we need or all we can handle.

THE PRINCIPLES OF PRESUMPTION

Using these and other passages as our references, we can begin to see a series of patterns.

To act "presumptuously" is to:

1- Consider yourself above the law, or act as though there are no absolutes. (Numbers 15)

2- Reject the instruction of the authority in your life as though it does not come from God. (Deuteronomy 1)

Chased Like Bees

3- Act with premeditated intent as opposed to inadvertent response. (Exodus 21)

4- Live with continuous, repetitive sin, presuming on the grace of God. (Romans 6:1)

5- Misrepresent or misuse the word of God. (Deuteronomy 18)

It is not acting in ignorance, but in arrogance, and the children of Israel were told by God through Moses that *this is what they had done*. And God got angry. He still does. They knew what God had said to do. They knew that God was their total complete authority. They knew that God had spoken and that what He said would come to pass. Even knowing all of that, *so arrogant were they that they went up anyway*.

They had sinned presumptuously. They arrogantly defied the known instructions of God through Moses and went *presumptuously up the hill*. And when they came down the hill, they knew what they had done.

Don't laugh. Give yourself a "presumption" quiz.

1- Have you gradually, as you have attained "mature" status in the Christian community, assumed that certain sins in your life are not subject to the wrath of God because of your good works, your knowledge of Scripture, your ministry in the church? I remember a pastor who years ago was caught in an immoral act who exclaimed, "But I'm Pastor so-and-so. It's okay for me." It wasn't. It may have been even "less okay" for him, because "To whom much is given, much will be required." The more you grow in grace, the less right you have to be presumptuous, but the temptation to assume that you are above the law in certain cases or that what you once considered an absolute just might be acceptable grows with every passing day.

Do you take the absolutes of God more seriously than you did the day you came to Christ? Or less seriously? Do you go "presumptuously up the hill" in certain areas of your life simply because God has never overtly punished you or your sins have yet to be found out? Oh, beloved, you go alone. He is not among you. That arrogant spirit forces His mercy to be withheld, lest you misinterpret that mercy as a compromise in His precious word. Weigh your presumption carefully. God does. He is grateful for your ministry and your impact on others, *but that impact is all of grace, and if you use it as a license to sin, He hates it*. Mark it well.

Chased Like Bees

2- Have you begun to resent the authority in your life and question the authority in your life as though it doesn't come from God? Moses was appointed by God as His spokesman to Israel. They knew it. They loved it when He parted seas, brought water from rocks, stayed the hand of the enemy. Then, His word was God's word. But when *the hand of correction came from the mouth of authority*, they questioned his right to be right. And they suffered the consequences. They were willing to be under authority for protection but not for correction.

Ask yourself: *"Do you chafe when God corrects you or redirects you through those he has placed over you?"* Do you use your boss or your husband or your parents or your pastor or your government as a shield against abuse or failure, then resist or resent them when they say "Don't do that." Is the government your friend when it sends the police to protect you, but your unwise enemy when the speed limit seems too low? Is it your friend when it fixes the road, but your enemy when the tax bill comes? Is your boss a God-appointed authority when he gives you a raise or promotion, but a fool with no God-ordained authority when he rebukes you? Do the "good things" come from God but the "bad things" are out of His control? You are being "presumptuous". You are presuming on the authority of God, using it for your advantage, but denying Him the right to use it as He sees fit. That's what the Israelites did. They went presumptuously up the hill, out from under authority. Then they came home to that authority and wept, but it was too late.

3- Do you enter into certain mind games or actual behavioral acts knowing in advance that they are sin, but concluding it is worth it? Do you go places you know will bring about temptations that you have a propensity to yield to, assuming the pleasure is worth the loss of the treasure? That's presumption. You are tempting God. You may get suddenly trapped into a situation and find yourself in a place you never intended to be. That's one thing. But to knowingly turn on that television program that's such a temptation to lust, or to knowingly go to that place where the temptation to intoxication or compromise is a known factor is presumption. It is premeditated intent to break the heart of God. If being around a certain person always causes your downfall and you willingly, knowingly accept an invitation to do that, *you are presuming on God*. You are entering into premeditated warfare, and God will let you go, but you are on your own.

Chased Like Bees

4- The same is true of repetitive sin. Doing the same things over and over all the while assuming that God forgives, therefore you might as well enjoy yourself and then ask forgiveness is presumption of the highest order. We all do it. We *presume upon the grace of God*. Paul said it clearly in Romans:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? (Romans 6:1,2)

It breaks God's heart. We presume upon His goodness by willfully thinking things or doing things we know He hates, planning to get the most mileage out of them, and then pretend to be penitent by claiming His grace.

Grace, however, though a free gift, is given at God's discretion, not ours. He will forgive the sin, if we repent of it. But is willful disobedience, followed by a verbal cry of sorrow, repentance? In the case of the Israelites in Deuteronomy, chapter one, it was not. God told them not to go. They would not listen. They cried out "Sorry, Lord". He would not listen. If we truly confess our sins, agreeing with God over those sins, *He will always forgive us and cleanse us of all unrighteousness*. But simply saying the words after having willfully chosen in advance to commit those sins...is presumption. Don't presume on the grace of God and then wonder where the power went. It went when you went...presumptuously up the hill.

5- Finally, do you treat the word of God with presumption or contempt? He will have none of that. His word is the expression of His nature, and His nature is perfect. That is what that Deuteronomy 18 passage was all about. Taking God's word and *presumptuously using it for any purpose other than that for which it was intended breaks the heart of God*. Taking passages out of context and using them for your own gain is grievous. Taking principles and turning them into prophecy is dangerous business. As we become more familiar with the word of God, we tend to use it for our advantage, rather than giving God more room to use it for His. Be wary of presuming on the word of God. Treat it with the respect it deserves. Stand when you can when it is read. Bow your heart in open humility when you open your Bible. It is God speaking to you. Quote it without fear, but quote it without presumption. Quietly thank God for it every time you

Chased Like Bees

encounter its power. Don't just assume you will always have it in written form. Others have, and have lost it. When you presume upon His word, you go up the hill in your own strength, and you will come down defeated.

The children of Israel presumed upon God's authority, and arrogantly, willfully chose with premeditated intent to rewrite His word and use it to meet their immediate needs. They turned a deaf ear to God's man and they went up the hill to show God what they could do when they were armed with nothing but a promise out of context and a presumptuous spirit. God said "Go ahead. You're on your own. I am not among you." And indeed, they were, and He wasn't.

CHASED LIKE BEES

What happened when they went presumptuously up the hill? The Scripture makes it really quite clear:

And the Amorites, which dwelt in that mountain, came out against you, and chased you, as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah.

And ye returned and wept before the LORD; but the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you.

So ye abode in Kadesh many days, according unto the days that ye abode there. (Deuteronomy 1:44-46)

One dictionary definition of presumption is "taking matters into one's own hands". That's it in a nutshell. The children of Israel took matters into their own hands. They took out their rifles and bayonets and warmed up their stealth bombers and took off to show God what they could do to atone for the sin of disobedience they committed in the first place. God must have wept as He waited for their return. He didn't have to wait long. They came running home, weeping. "They chased us like bees!" they cried to Moses. "They chased us like bees!" Indeed.

Most of us know what that means. Think about what it's like to be chased "like bees" chase. Then make the spiritual switch. You will see why the sin of presumption leads so often to complete, abject humiliation and defeat. When God takes His precious hand off His children, Satan is freed to "do his thing" within the limits God prescribes. And when God's children are presumptuous, God often allows the enemy to chase us like bees. Think about it:

Chased Like Bees

1- Bees are tiny creatures, but when enough of them get together, you think you are being attacked by an army of giants. So Satan may not come at you at first with major artillery fire. He may fire a volley of seemingly harmless inconveniences to distract you from the plan of God. Then he may allow a series of things to come in rapid-fire order, one right after the other, the way he did with Job; the way he did with Jesus in the wilderness. “While they were yet speaking” Job got another blow. Jesus had three attacks, one right after the other, each designed to wear Him down for the next one to take effect. Watch for it. Like a swarm of bees, you will feel surrounded, threatened, running for your spiritual life. But it may begin seemingly innocently, with just enough of a sting to cause your focus to shift on healing the sting, rather than on the nature of the God who isn’t affected by bee stings.

2- Bee stings can be sometimes be deadly. The enemy knows what you are allergic to, spiritually, and knows just where the sting will have the most effect. Don’t underestimate your ability to fall, apart from grace. Satan can send something your way that appears to be harmless to others, but when it hits you, it strikes a nerve end that leads right to the heart. For some, it is family. For some, it is health. For some, it is financial. For some, it is relational, and something as simple as a rejection can cause them to swell up and require major attention at the hand of the Great Physician. It isn’t that you are necessarily weak. And it isn’t that Satan is omniscient. He’s not. In fact, many times, as with Job, God has to give Satan a few ideas to lead him to your place of vulnerability, causing him to think it’s his idea, when, in fact, it is God’s.

Remember: Satan has no access to your life that God does not allow. And though Satan means it for evil, God means it for good. The enemy wants to prove that your love for God is not real. God wants to take you through the refiner’s fire, knowing you will come out pure gold. So He teases Satan into taking you on. “Have you considered my servant...?” says God, and fills in your name. And He gives Satan just enough rope to hang himself, but not enough to hang you. So Satan sends a swarm of bees after you, and unless you are wise enough to see the pattern, you may simply run and scream at God for deserting you. God isn’t deserting you; He is transforming you through trial.

3- Finally, remember the “swarm” principle. Though Satan

Chased Like Bees

often starts out a little at a time and builds, at some point, you begin to feel as though there is a veritable spiritual army surrounding you and you have no place to go. Those tiny insects, when sufficient in number, can cause a giant of man to flee for his life. Swarms of bees have been known to topple huge animals and clear huge areas of land just by joining forces and going after their target. And once in a while, seemingly in everyone's life, Satan takes after us full speed ahead. The "little by little" attack didn't seem to topple us this time, anyway, so he calls for full-scale war. And suddenly, everything falls apart at once. You are being chased by bees. The intensity is horrendous, the noise, the swarming, the stings. You want to give up, but that would only leave you to their mercy.

It is as though you are trapped in a long hallway, and as you turn the corner, yet another swarm of bees attacks from the other direction. Where did they come from? What are they after? They are after you, and God has allowed them to escape from their hiding places with you on their menu. Why has He done this? What is He after?

He is after one thing: the same thing He wanted from the children of Israel. He wants you to give up every trace of arrogance and presumption and humble yourself before His Holy Name desiring only to walk by faith from now on.

Maybe you have said "Yes" to His calling to walk by faith, but you live a life typified by sending spies ahead to scope out His plan and test it by man's standards. Maybe you claim to want to be His man or woman, but when He calls you to enter the land and possess the promises, His ways just seem too slow, too awkward, and too unnatural for you to follow. So you presume to bail Him out by going presumptuously up the hills of life taking on the giants your own way.

Then back you come, weeping. It was as though a swarm of bees came after you, and now you are ready to repent. Are you repenting because things didn't work out? Because God seems angry? Because you are tired of the battle and want some rest from the conflict?

Or are you ready to put it all at God's feet and say to Him: "Lord, I'll go where you want me to go. I'll do what you want me to do. I'm tired of presuming to be what I'm not. I don't care what it takes. I'm yours. I'm covered with bee stings, and I'm tired

Chased Like Bees

of running. Here I am, Lord. Here I am. Send me.” It is called “brokenness”.

Go ahead. Tell Him. He’ll listen. That’s what He is waiting to hear. And then tell Him again every morning. He will turn your life around and He will pour Himself into you in ways you never thought possible.

And you will praise God for the rest of your life that He loved you enough to *chase you like bees* .

Chased Like Bees

For Further Study and Application

1- What thoughts come to your mind when you think about being chased by a swarm of bees? What is there about something so small that can make grown people cringe or run? Why do you think God used that analogy in Deuteronomy 1?

2- The Israelites cried out to God "*We have sinned against the Lord*". Those were the same words David used in II Samuel 12. What was the difference? Why did God hear David's prayer and refused to hear the cry of His people as they came home from being defeated? Can you relate from your own experience times when you have cried out to God as David did? As the Israelites did? Did you expect the same response from God?

3- Take a concordance and search out the word "presume" or "presumption" or "presumptuous". What synonyms do you find?

4- Reread Exodus 21:12-15. What is the basic difference between the one who killed in verse 12 and the one in verse 13? Can you liken this to anything in our present legal system?

5- In Numbers 15:28-31, there is a distinction made between the soul that sinneth ignorantly and the one who sinneth presumptuously. How does that help you define presumption?

6- The one who presumes to speak for God in Deuteronomy 18:18 but who alters what God has said or promises something from God that does not come to pass is said to be speaking "presumptuously". What do you think that means?

7- Take the "presumption" test on pages 9-11. Ask God to help you exchange your presumptuous spirit for one of humility and quiet obedience.

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230

210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778

www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer