

## **Biblical Manhood: Handling Haters**

*“Even my best friend, the one I trusted completely, the one who shared my food, has turned against me.” (Psalm 41:9)*

In Matthew 26, the plot to kill Jesus starts to unfold. One of the guys in His circle of friends makes a deal with the chief priests to hand Him over. That gentleman's name was Judas. Judas is a biblical example of a hater, and a hater is a person who has an intense dislike for another person or thing.

There's no pain like betrayal, and none of us is exempt. The truth is, God allows certain people into our lives to facilitate His purposes - even ones like Judas, whom Jesus called "friend". Before He was betrayed, Jesus quoted John 13:18 to His disciples: *"I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'* Jesus could have fulfilled His destiny without John the beloved disciple, or impatient Peter who was always ready to defend him. But it was Judas' kiss of betrayal that ushered Him into His destiny. Rightfully so, Judas gets a bad rap. But what most people tend to forget is that Judas was very much a part of God's ultimate plan to adopt sinful men & women into His family.

You can't always avoid getting hurt by the people closest to you. But God can give you the grace to re-evaluate the situation and realize that the person you thought was your enemy may have simply been a friend in disguise. God will never permit His plans for us to be sabotaged by somebody else's actions. When you're under His shield of protection, He'll allow your Judas to only go so far and then no further. As a child of God, never forget that only His purposes govern how much damage others can do. Once you understand that, it lessens the fear that stems from getting involved again when you've been burned. In Psalm 119:71, the Psalmist says: *"It was good for me to be afflicted, so that I might learn Your statutes"*. You and I are no different: some of God's most powerful lessons come through people who are close to us & have done us wrong.

Rejoice knowing that our God loves to turn negatives into positives. And while none of us enjoys suffering, it takes us to levels of understanding that, left to our own devices, we'd never reach. The way you handle haters is to view them from God's perspective. In the same way that people have hated you, the truth of the matter is at one point, each of us hated God.

**P2R (Point 2 Remember):** When you learn how to sit at the table with your Judas, you'll truly understand the love of Christ.