

That day, I walked into band class like I owned the place. This was third block and I had gotten compliments on my shirt all day. When Margot saw me, she marched right over and in a voice that everyone in the room could hear she said, “Wow Allison, I didn’t know they started selling Banana Republic at Goodwill. Nice used shirt.” Everyone laughed and I was mortified. I went into the bathroom and burst into tears. I wore a jacket over my new shirt the rest of the day and it took me months to wear that shirt to school again.

Thinking about that day 22-years later, I can still remember how her words made me feel. How we treat people matters.

In the Bible, there is a group of people called the Edomites that were known for being bullies. The target of their hate was usually God’s chosen people, the Israelites.

Think back in the Bible to the story of Isaac’s sons, Jacob and Esau. Esau sold his birthright to his brother for a bowl of soup. This was not a wise choice and Esau’s descendants, the Edomites, continued in this pattern of poor choices. The Edomites were a small group of people that were not thought of very highly socially. But that didn’t matter to them because they thought a lot of themselves. They were filled with pride, especially in regard to their bravery and wisdom. Say what?!? We just talked about their lack of decision-making skills and they still thought that their wisdom was something worth bragging about!

Raise your hand if you have ever felt like someone was picking on or bullying you? That’s almost all of us. The Israelites felt like they were constantly being tormented by the Edomites. The Edomites would run their mouths, threaten, and try to intimidate the Israelites.

Well, God had enough of their behavior. He sent one of His prophets with a message for the Edomites. This prophet’s name was Obadiah and his message to the Edomites from God is actually in the book of the Bible named Obadiah. And it’s the shortest book in the Old Testament. Being a prophet of God was not a fun role, but Obadiah was faithful to what God had called him to do. His name actually translates to, “Servant of God [Yahweh].”

The Book of Obadiah boils down to God sending His message to a group of people that have been picking on His people.

The first thing that we learn is that:

1. Pride can create a bully.

We throw around the word 'pride' all the time. When something sets us apart or makes us different, people often tell us that they're proud of us, or that we should be proud of ourselves. I tell you guys that I'm proud of you all of the time. That's uplifting and encouraging.

However, sometimes we take a sense of accomplishment too far. We're not just smart because we aced a test, in our minds that makes us better than someone who got a less than perfect score. We aren't just excited to win the game, but we are better than those losers from another school.

Our excitement and energy about something we were a part of can take an ugly turn and be used as a weapon against someone else in the blink of an eye.

More dangerous even is when I think that I am awesome, I often am not thinking about God at all. When I'm having a rough time and the world doesn't seem fair, I find myself constantly praying and reaching out to God. But, when life is great, sometimes I forget to talk to Him. I have a friend like that. They always call me when they need help or a favor, but they never call to ask about me or because they just want to hang out. It's exhausting. In the same way, I think often my pride is exhausting to God.

One of the best things that the Edomites had going for them was their houses. Their houses were carved out of the side of a rocky canyon. This enabled them to see their enemies approaching from afar and also served as like a ready-made fortress. It would be difficult for someone to destroy a rock home!

Look at what we read in Obadiah:

The Lord says to Edom, "I will cut you down to size among the nations; you will be greatly despised. You have been deceived by your own pride because you live in a rock fortress and make your home high in the mountains. 'Who can ever reach us way up here?'"