

**~Other Speakers G-L: Sermon Illustrations II:**

Alexander the Great was one of the few men of history who deserved the adjective "great." His biographer describes him as by nature fervently passionate and impulsive. He was strong in his loves and his loyalties; and although hatred was foreign to his magnanimous nature, he was often swept by storms of anger. Yet by a magnificent display of will power he held the reins upon his passions. But to this long chapter of noble self-control there is one sad and tragic exception. At a banquet given for Dionysius a song was sung comparing Alexander with Castor and Pollux, to his advantage. Then someone disparaged the old Macedonian officers who had fought under Alexander's father, Philip. This aroused one of Alexander's generals, Clitus, who commanded the famous Hetairoi. Clitus reminded Alexander how he had saved his life in one of the recent battles, and said Alexander had bought his fame with the blood of the Macedonian officers. He told Alexander to associate with his lickspittle Persians, who bowed the knee to him and told him only what he wanted to hear. Alexander, stung by this remark of Clitus, reached for his sword, which a discreet officer had hidden away. Then in his anger, falling . . . as men always do at such a time . . . into his native idiom, the Macedonian, he ordered the trumpeter to sound the call, and when he delayed, Alexander hit him with his fist. Before he could inflict hurt upon Clitus, the friends of that half intoxicated officer hurried him out of the banquet hall. But he soon entered by another door, where he stood under the curtains quoting lines from a Greek poet to the disparagement of Alexander's conquests. "Quick as a flash, Alexander snatched a spear from the hand of the guard and hurled it at the figure by a raised curtain. The deed was done. The friend of his childhood, his life companion and rescuer, lay gasping out his life." The passion of remorse followed quickly upon the fury of his anger. Alexander himself drew out the fatal spear, and but for his officers he would have fallen upon it himself. All through the night, and for several days, he lay writhing in his remorse, piteously calling Clitus by name and chiding himself as the murderer of his friend. Alexander the Great conquered the world, but he could not conquer himself. In his conquests he stormed and took almost

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**every great city of the ancient world. Yet he was not able to subdue that  
more important city, to conquer which is the greatest of all achievements. . .  
the city and citadel of his own spirit. pp. 20,21**