



THE GOOD KINGS OF JUDAH

learning to avert moral failure from eight good men who didn't

... give me an undivided heart ...

Psalm 86:11

Student Guide



©2013 Stan Key. Reproduction of all or any substantial part of these materials is prohibited except for personal, individual use. No part of these materials may be distributed or copied for any other purpose without written permission.

Unless otherwise noted, scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright ©2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

For information about these or other additional study materials, contact:

The Francis Asbury Society

PO Box 7

Wilmore, KY 43090

859-858-4222

800-530-5673

fas@francisasburysociety.com

www.francisasburysociety.com

To follow Stan on his blog, visit: <http://pastorkeynotes.wordpress.com>.





TABLE OF CONTENTS

KING SOLOMON	.....	1
KING ASA	.....	3
KING JEHOSHAPHAT	.....	5
KING JOASH	.....	7
KING AMAZIAH	.....	9
KING UZZIAH	.....	11
KING HEZEKIAH	.....	13
KING JOSIAH	.....	15
KING MANASSEH	.....	17
ROYAL LESSONS FROM THE GOOD KINGS OF JUDAH	.....	19
SMOKE	.....	21

SOLOMON
More, More, More!
II Chronicles 1-9

I. Introduction to the Good Kings of Judah.

A. "We want a king!" (I Samuel 8:4-7).

God gave them what they wanted but the consequences were tragic. The moral of the story:
_____!

B. The United Kingdom.

Israel's first king was Saul (I Samuel 9-31). Starting over, God chose David to be the next king, "a man after his own heart." (I Samuel 13:14) Although David had his own sins and shortcomings, the kingdom prospered under his godly influence. His life and reign became the benchmark _____ by which all future kings would be evaluated.

C. The Divided Kingdom.

1. The Kingdom of Judah (2 tribes) lasted about 350 years (930-587 BC) and had 20 different kings. All were descendants of David. _____ of these kings were "good."
2. The Kingdom of Israel (10 tribes) lasted about 200 years (930-722 BC) and had 19 kings. These kings were of various dynasties and _____ of them were evil.

D. The "Good" Kings of Judah (including Solomon, excluding Jotham, adding Manasseh).

1. Solomon	II Chronicles 1-9	(I Kings 1-11)	Lust
2. Asa	II Chronicles 14-16	(I Kings 15:8-24)	Unbelief
3. Jehoshaphat	II Chronicles 17-20	(I Kings 22:41-50)	Moral compromise
4. Joash	II Chronicles 22-24	(II Kings 11:1-12:21)	Fickle faith
5. Amaziah	II Chronicles 25	(II Kings 14:1-20)	Divided heart
6. Uzziah	II Chronicles 26	(II Kings 15:1-7)	Pride
7. Hezekiah	II Chronicles 29-32	(II Kings 18-20)	Bitterness
8. Josiah	II Chronicles 34-35	(II Kings 22:1-23:30)	Spiritual deafness

Each of these good kings had one _____. That's all it took to cast a dark shadow over a life that was otherwise marked by goodness and faithfulness. One leak can sink a boat. One night of sin can ruin a marriage. One moral failure can ruin decades of fruitful ministry.

II. Solomon: More, More, More.

A. An overview of his life. (II Chronicles 1-9)

1. Off to a great start! (II Chronicles 1). *Give me now _____... (1:10).*
2. Solomon's Temple. (II Chronicles 2-7). *The house that I am to build will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. (2:5).*
3. A Promise and a Warning. *And as for you, if you will walk before me _____ your father David walked... then I will establish your royal throne... (7:17-20).*
4. The half has never yet been told! (II Chronicles 8-9).

B. Character strengths.

1. His prayer for _____.
2. His lavish and passionate _____.
3. His gift of _____.

C. The fatal flaw.

1. I Kings 11:1-8. How to explain Solomon's womanizing ways?

- a. Perhaps his _____ were to blame.
- b. Perhaps these marriages were part of his _____.
- c. Maybe he was _____.
- d. Perhaps he had an _____.

Four steps to victory over sexual temptation:

1. Be _____. (I Corinthians 10:12)
2. Be _____. (Ephesians 5:3)
3. Be _____. (I Corinthians 6:18; II Timothy 2:22; Job 31:1)
4. Fight _____ with _____. "The expulsive power of a new affection" (Thomas Chalmers). (Acts 15:8-9; I Thess. 4:7-8).

2. Deuteronomy 17:14-17. How to explain Solomon's flagrant disobedience?

- a. Perhaps he justified his behavior as an act of _____.
- b. Perhaps he felt he was _____.
- c. Perhaps he found a way to justify his behavior. It was only a little _____.
- d. Maybe he felt these activities would make him a more effective _____.
- e. Maybe he felt he was _____ to temptation.

3. Solomon's flaw.

What then shall we call Solomon's basic fatal flaw? I've chosen to call it lust (greed, desire, avarice, cupidity, voracity, covetousness, insatiable appetites). Not just lust for sex/women. But lust for _____, _____, _____, _____, _____, etc. Solomon was never content. He never had enough. He always wanted _____.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴ And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. (Galatians 5:22-23)

TABLE TALK

1. What is the main lesson you have learned from Solomon?
2. Have you known someone who had the same fatal flaw Solomon had? What happened?
3. How could things have been different for Solomon? What should he have done?
4. Is illicit desire the cause or the result of turning from the Lord? Which comes first?
5. Share one area where your desires are threatening your spiritual health?

ASA
Whole-Hearted or Hole-Hearted?
II Chronicles 14-16

I. A Question of Character.

- A. What is God looking for? II Chronicles 16:9. A heart that is _____ to him.
- B. Isn't _____ enough?
- C. Partial commitment is no commitment at all! (Luke 9:57-62; 14:25-33).
- D. King Asa started well. He had a whole heart. But partial commitment caused him to end tragically. And as in all marathons, the race is determined not at the start, but at the _____.

II. Asa: A Drama in Four Acts.

King Asa reigned from about 910-869 B.C. (41 years). His reign can be divided into four time periods.

- A. Act I _____ God Brings Peace - about 10 years. (II Chronicles 14:1-7)
- B. Act II _____ on God Brings Victory - about 5 years. (II Chronicles 14:8-15)
- C. Act III _____ God Brings Reform - about 21 years. (II Chronicles 15:1-19)
 - 1. Asa repaired _____ of the Lord in the Temple. (15:9)
 - 2. Asa led God's people in a passionate ceremony of _____ (15:12-15).
 - 3. Asa put his devotion to God over his devotion to his own _____! (15:16; see Luke 14:26)
 - 4. Although Asa was never able to completely rid the land of idolatry, his heart was undivided in its devotion to God. (15:17). Asa's _____ was flawed but his _____ was pure. Contrast this with King Amaziah (25:2).
- E. Act IV _____ God Brings Calamity - about 5 years. (II Chronicles 16:1-14)
 - 1. Conflict with Israel (16:1-10). He trusted in Syria rather than God. When the prophet warned him of his dangerous spiritual state, he refused to listen.
 - 2. Final disease (16:12-13)¹. Asa apparently died in _____.

III. Can We Lose Our Salvation? (Ezekiel 18:24-25)

A. Lesson's from Asa.

- 1. A good start does not guarantee a _____.
- 2. Partial devotion is not enough. Such a state is equivalent to spiritual _____.
- 3. God is not _____.
- 4. Asa the _____ ???

3. _____
¹This verse should not be taken to mean that God's people should not seek professional medical help. Rather, it lets us know how far Asa's spiritual condition had fallen. He no longer trusted God.

B. Blessed Assurance.

When it comes to the doctrine of the security of the believer, the biblical data is plentiful and intricately nuanced. Some verses seem to say the opposite of what others seem to affirm. Such a reality means that defining doctrine in this matter is a delicate affair. To remain on the narrow path of biblical truth, two ditches must be avoided.

1. _____ grace.
2. Eternal _____.

C. What the Bible says.

1. Some verses imply that the covenant with God, once made, can never be unmade:
 - John 10:27-29.
 - Romans 8:35, 38-39.
 - Philippians 1:6.
 - II Timothy 1:12.
2. Some verses imply that the covenant with God can be broken, like a divorce:
 - John 15:1-2, 6.
 - I Timothy 1:18-20.
 - Hebrews 6:4-6.
 - Hebrews 10:26-27.
3. A biblical synthesis:
 - Matthew 24:12-13.
 - I Corinthians 10:12.
 - II Corinthians 6:1-2.
 - I Corinthians 9:27.
 - II Peter 1:10.

It seems to me that the path of truth is to believe them both; to hold firmly that salvation is by grace, and to hold with equal firmness that the ruin of any man is wholly and entirely his own fault; to maintain the _____, and to hold the _____ also; to believe in the free agency of both God and man; neither to dishonor God by making Him a lackey to his creatures' will, nor on the other hand, to rid man of all responsibility, by making him to be a mere log or a machine. Take all that is in the Bible to be true. Never be afraid of any text that is written by the sacred pen. When you turn the pages over, I do hope you never feel as if you wish that any verse could be altered; I trust you never desire that any text might be amended so as to read a little more Calvinistic, or a little more like the teaching of Arminius. Always stand to it that your creed must bend to the Bible, and not the Bible to your creed, and dare to be a little _____ with yourselves, if need be, sooner than be inconsistent with God's revealed truth. (Charles Spurgeon).

TABLE TALK

1. Do you believe that Asa was finally saved? or lost? Why?
2. Why is the doctrine of the security of the believer so important?
3. Give an example of someone who has fallen into the ditch of cheap grace.
4. Give an example of someone who has fallen into the ditch of eternal insecurity.
5. How should a true shepherd preach the doctrine of assurance? Security of the believer?

JEHOSHAPHAT
When Compromise Is a Dirty Word
II Chronicles 17-20

I. The Family Tree.

A. The Three Chairs.

CHAIR ONE	CHAIR TWO	CHAIR THREE
Commitment (whole heart)	Compromise (divided heart)	Conflict (hard heart)
Spiritual	Carnal	Natural (unbelieving)
God first, self second	Self first, God second	Self only
Has a relationship with God	Has a responsibility to God	Has a religion (?)
Shaped by the Word	Shaped by other believers	Shaped by society
Firsthand faith	Secondhand faith	No faith

In the Bible, we see the outline of this _____ in various places. (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob), (Joshua, the elders, the elders' children), (David, Solomon, Rehoboam). But is this downward progression inevitable? Are our lives determined by our past? Or by our _____ ?

B. Tree of Knowledge.

1. Jehoshaphat's family tree.

- a. Great-great-great-grandfather David. _____ devotion to God.
- b. Great-great-grandfather Solomon. _____ devotion.
- c. Great-grandfather Rehoboam had an _____ heart (II Chron. 12:1,14).
- d. Grandfather Abijah (Abijam). His heart was _____ devoted (I Kings 15:3).
- e. Father Asa. Began well, but ended badly. (II Chron. 14:1; 16:12).
- f. Himself, Jehoshaphat. *He walked in the way of _____ (II Chron. 20:32).*
- g. His Son Jehoram. He did _____ in the sight of the Lord (II Chron. 21:6).
- h. His Grandson Ahaziah. He too did _____ in the sight of the Lord (II Chron. 22:3-4).
- i. His Great grandson Joash. He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord (II Chron. 24:2).

2. Think about your family tree: both those who came before and those who are coming after you. Does your family fit in the "three chairs"? Why? Why not? See Psalm 71:18.

II. Good King Jehoshaphat.

Like Solomon and Asa, Jehoshaphat had many godly qualities that characterized his life at the beginning of his reign. We will summarize these qualities under two headings:

- A. He had a _____. He sought God in everything (II Chron. 17:3-4; 18:3-4; 19:2-3; 20: 2-4; 20:12; 22:9). (See II Chron. 7:14; Psalm 34:10; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7).
- B. He had a _____. We see this in his efforts in:
 1. Educational reform (II Chron. 17:7-9).
 2. Judicial reform (II Chron. 19:5-7).

III. Moral Compromise.

A. Marriage alliance with Israel (II Chron. 18:1).

Jehoshaphat arranged a marriage between his son (Jehoram) and the daughter of the king and queen of Israel (Ahab and Jezebel). The daughter's name was Athaliah. (See I Kings 16:30-33; 21:25 for a character reference on Ahab and Jezebel). Why would he do this? Perhaps:

- _____ it was a wise move. It could re-unite the divided kingdom.
- _____ it was brilliant. No longer would Israel be an enemy.
- _____ it opened new markets and increased trade.
- But _____ it was a disaster! Bringing Athaliah into the royal family of David was the moral equivalent of swallowing poison (II Chron. 22:10-12). Jehoshaphat's compromise almost snuffed out the _____.

B. Military alliance with Israel (II Chron. 18:2-3).

One compromise leads to another! However, seeking perhaps to mitigate his dance with the devil, Jehoshaphat pauses to ask what the Lord thinks about his alliance with Israel against Syria. *Inquire first for the word of the Lord* (18:4-8). One true prophet against 400 false prophets! (18:9-27). In blatant disregard of the prophet's warning, Ahab and Jehoshaphat went forward with their battle plans. Ahab was killed (18:33). Only by God's grace did Jehoshaphat survive, but he received a stern rebuke upon returning to Jerusalem: *Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the Lord?* (19:1-3).

C. Economic trade alliance with Israel (II Chron. 20:35-37).

IV. When Compromise Is a Dirty Word.

A. Jehoshaphat's fatal flaw.

B. Choices have consequences. Look at some of the horrific consequences that were the result of good King Jehoshaphat's moral concessions: his children turn out badly, the messianic line is almost destroyed, needless wars are fought, ships are destroyed, his witness and legacy are tarnished. When compromise lowers God's standards or mixes truth with error, the motives may be "noble" but the consequences are deadly. The consequences of moral compromise are sometimes _____ than the consequences of blatant immoral behavior!

C. Application: What can be done to prevent moral compromise?

1. Train your _____ . (Heb. 5:12-14). _____
2. Be _____ & _____. (I Cor. 16:13).
3. Be _____ ! (= be different). (I Pet. 2:9; II Cor. 6:14-18).

TABLE TALK

1. What did you learn from "the three chairs" and what do you intend to do differently because of this knowledge?
2. When is compromise a good thing? When is it a bad thing?
3. Do you know of a situation where a good person with good intentions compromised with evil and the results were disastrous? Discuss.
4. In what areas are you most susceptible to moral compromise? What steps are you taking to insure that your legacy is not tarnished like that of Jehoshaphat?

JOASH
Fickle Faith
II Chronicles 22-24

I. Thermometer or Thermostat?

A. What's the difference?

A thermometer _____ the temperature while a thermostat _____ it.

B. Good King Joash.

Joash behaved like a thermometer when God had designed him to be a thermostat. Although he was the king, he was a _____ more than a _____.

II. The Life and Times of "Good" King Joash.

A. Ascendency: Turning to God. (II Chronicles 22-23)

1. The Family Tree: Dysfunction Junction. (II Chronicles 21-22)

- a. Grandfather Jehoram (Joram). (II Chronicles 21:4-6)
- b. Father Ahaziah (Jehoahaz). (II Chronicles 22:2-4, 10-12)

2. Ding, dong, the witch is dead. (II Chronicles 23:1-15)

3. Jehoida rules as regent (II Chronicles 23:16-21)

B. Faithfulness: Living for God. (II Chronicles 24:1-14)

When Joash came of age, he assumed the reigns of power for himself. For over two decades, he lived for God. The Temple was restored and the nation was called back to the worship of the one true God. It appeared that Joash was going to be one of the great kings of Judah and leave _____ of godliness and justice.

C. Apostasy: Turning from God. (II Chronicles 24:15-27)

1. When Jehoida dies....

Up until this point in the story everything appears to be wonderful. However, the careful reader may have discerned a subtle hint in the text about what was coming. Once you know how the story ends, this verse takes on great significance. *And Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD _____*
_____. (II Chron. 24:2)

Suddenly we are introduced to a question of vital importance: What will happen to Joash once the influence of godly Jehoida (uncle, high priest, adviser, confidant) disappears? Will he continue to walk in faith and lead wisely? Jehoida's death will _____ about who Joash really is. The next verses give the tragic answer to our question (24:15-19).

God gave Joash multiple opportunities to repent. Perhaps Joash would reconsider his ways if the son of the man who had done so much for him spoke to him. But alas! (24:20-25). Some 800 years later Jesus referred to Joash's treachery in a speech to the Pharisees who, like Joash, were guilty of _____
_____ to the voice of God (Luke 11:47-52).

III. Fickle Faith.

Whether Joash had genuine faith and lost it, or whether he never had it at all and only “pretended” to be a “good” king, we see in his story a classic illustration of fickle faith. He couldn’t make a commitment and stick with it. In his life we find three characteristics of fickle faith.

- A. _____ faith. Is faith dependent upon the presence of friends, family or key leaders? Until a person has his own personal experience of Christ his faith is on a shaky foundation. (John 4:42)
- B. He never learned how to _____. As long as Jehoida was there to tell him what he needed to know, interpret the Bible, discern God’s will, Joash was “fine.” (Heb. 5:12 – 6:6)
- C. An obsession with _____. First, Joash wanted to please Jehoida. But when Jehoida died, he then wanted to please his new advisers. He learned to adapt to his social context like a _____ adapts to his. (Gal. 1:10)

IV. The Art of Self-Leadership. (from Bill Hybels, *Courageous Leadership*)

Joash was a thermometer when God expected him to be a thermostat! The reason he could not lead others is because he had never learned to lead himself.

- A. Is my _____ sure?
- B. Is my _____ clear?
- C. Is my _____ hot?
- D. Am I developing my _____?
- E. Is my _____ submitted to Christ?
- F. Is my _____ subdued?
- G. Am I overcoming _____?
- H. Are _____ undermining my leadership?
- I. Is my _____ sustainable?
- J. Is my _____ for God and people increasing?

TABLE TALK

1. How do you react to Joash? With sympathy? Or with anger? Why?
2. What makes a person a thermometer, a follower (like Joash)?
3. What makes a person a thermostat, a leader (like Jehoida)?
4. Are you a leader or a follower? Discuss.
5. Look at the three characteristics of “fickle faith.” Do any of these describe you? What do you plan to do about it?
6. Look over the ten questions on the art of self-leadership. Zero in on one question that seems designed for your current situation. Discuss it with a trusted friend.

AMAZIAH
A Divided Heart
II Chronicles 25

I. Meet Good King Amaziah.

A. A general statement about his life (vv. 1-2).

Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jehoaddan of Jerusalem. ² And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet not with a _____ (vv. 1-2)

Reading the account in II Kings 14:1-20 helps us to better understand what is meant.

And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, yet _____ his father. He did in all things _____ his father had done. (II Kings 14:3)

B. Godly and victorious (vv. 3-13).

1. Obedience to the law (vv. 3-4). Even though he was the king, he knew he was still _____.
2. Able to receive correction; teachable (vv. 5-10). Even good kings make mistakes. The point is not perfect performance but rather to be able to receive correction and amend your ways. Amaziah was _____.

C. Idolatrous and defeated (vv. 14-28).

1. The danger of success (vv. 14-16). Notice that Amaziah is no longer teachable. His heart is hard. What would prompt Amaziah to take the gods of the people he had just defeated in battle and bring them home to worship as his own?
 - _____.
 - _____.
 - _____.
 - _____.
2. God uses surprising channels to communicate his truth (vv. 17-19). But when a man is proud and his heart is hard, he becomes deaf to the words of God, regardless how they are packaged. *Pride goes before _____, and a haughty spirit before a _____.* (Prov. 16:18)

Christian beware! If we turn a deaf ear to the _____ God uses to communicate his truth (Bible, preaching, Christian counsel, etc.), then God may choose to speak to us in unorthodox ways: a talking donkey, foreigners, unbelievers, etc. The _____ is (at least part of) the message.

3. When our ears are deaf and our heart is hard the results are always tragic (vv. 20-28).

II. A Spiritual EKG.

Amaziah's problem was _____. His heart was not wholly devoted to God (v. 2). He was a _____ man and therefore unstable in all his ways (James 1:8).

Here is the general character of Amaziah: He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, worshipped the true God, kept the temple service going, and countenanced religion in his kingdom; but he did not do it with a perfect

heart (v. 2), that is, he was not a man of serious piety or devotion himself, nor had he any zeal for the exercises of religion. He was no enemy to it, but a cool and indifferent friend. Such is the character of too many in this Laodicean age: they do that which is good, but not with the heart, not with a perfect heart. (Matthew Henry's Commentary)

A. The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.

In Hebrew, "heart" refers to more than a muscle in the chest that pumps blood. It denotes the _____ of a person's life (Prov. 4:23). Modern terms that reflect this meaning are character, will, mind, personality.

B. Three diagnostic methods.

1. _____ examination (I Cor. 11:27-28; II Cor. 13:5).
2. _____ examination (Heb. 4:12-13).
3. _____ examination (Psalm 139:23-24).

C. Heart disease.

1. An _____ heart (Gen. 6:5).
2. A _____ heart (spiritual arteriosclerosis) (Ex. 8:15; Matt. 13:15; Heb. 3:7-11).
3. A _____ heart (Jer. 17:9-10). The only heart disease that is incurable is the heart that doesn't know (or refuses to know) that it is sick!
4. A _____ heart (Amaziah's disease, II Chron. 25:2). (I Kings 11:4; II Kings 17:33, 41; Matt. 6:24; 22:37; James 1:8).

D. A healthy heart.

1. A _____ heart (Psalm 63:1; Matt. 5:6).
2. A _____ heart (Psalm 9:1-2; 13:5; Prov. 17:22).
3. A _____ heart (Psalm 32:3-5; 51:17; Isa. 57:15; 66:2).
4. A _____ heart (Psalm 57:7; 112:6-8; Isa. 26:3-4).
5. A _____ heart (Psalm 24:3-4; 51:10-12; Matt. 5:8; I Tim. 1:5).
6. A _____ heart (I Sam. 16:13-14; Acts 15:8-9).
7. An _____ heart (Psalm 86:11).

What God wants. *For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is _____ toward him. (II Chronicles 16:9)*

TABLE TALK

1. What did you learn today about the heart?
2. Does evangelical theology today tend to justify and even normalize heart disease or cure it? What are the results of such a theology?
3. What about your own theology? Does it tolerate heart disease?
4. Look again at the symptoms of heart disease and those of a healthy heart. What is your spiritual EKG indicating?
5. Has this study brought comfort and peace to you...or has it been disturbing?

UZZIAH
Pride
II Chronicles 26

I. A Drama in Two Acts.

A. Act I. The blessings of seeking the Lord. (vv. 1-15)

1. Uzziah's godly character. (vv. 1-5)

- a. The defining characteristic of Uzziah's early years is his _____ heart. In the Bible it almost seems that seeking God is more important than finding him! Those who seek God are richly _____. (II Chron. 7:14; Psalm 34:10; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 7:7; Rom. 3:10; Col. 3:1; Heb. 11:6).
- b. He had a godly mentor (Zechariah). Uzziah illustrates the importance of surrounding oneself with godly counsel (mentor, discipleship leader, spiritual director, accountability partners, godly friends, etc.).

2. Blessings and prosperity (vv. 6-15).

As long as Uzziah sought the Lord, blessings flowed to everyone everywhere: militarily, economically, respect, building programs, technology, agriculture, etc. Uzziah is an illustration of the truth of Matthew 6:33.

B. Act II. The dangers of spiritual blessings (16-23).

1. The cause of his sin was _____. (v. 16). His fall was caused by a wrong response to God's blessings. God blesses us, not to make us proud but:
 - a. To _____ (Deut. 8:11-18).
 - b. To lead us to _____. (Rom. 2:4).
 - c. To enable us to _____ to others. (Gen. 12:1-2; Psalm 67:1-2).
2. The nature of his sin (v. 16). Assuming the role of priest. He felt a sense of entitlement and began to think that he was above the law.
3. The consequences of his sin (vv. 19-21). Leprosy and isolation. God has _____ for presumptuous pride.

II. Pride: The Most Deadly Sin.

A. The origin of pride.

1. Ezekiel 28:12-17. Two things stand out in Satan's fall:

- a. All of his blessings were a gracious _____ from the God who created him.
- b. Something in his _____ caused him to draw the wrong conclusion from these blessings. The biblical word to describe this heart attitude is pride.

2. Isaiah 14:12-15. In this passage, Satan's fall is attributed to three things:

- a. _____ . *I... I... I... I... I...*
- b. _____ . *I will... I will... I will... I will... I will.*
- c. _____ . *I will make myself like the Most High....*

B. The cause of pride.

1. Spiritual _____.
2. Self - _____.
3. Becoming my own _____.
4. Self-_____. *Better to _____ than to serve in heaven* (Satan, in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*).

C. The consequences of pride. (I Peter 5:5; Prov. 16:18)

No sin is more satanic in its nature than this one. No sin is more anti-God and anti-Christ than this. *God opposes the proud...* (I Peter 5:5; James 4:6). No sin will send us more certainly to hell than this! Pride always leads to destruction (Prov. 16:18)

D. The cure for pride.

1. _____ the truth.
2. Know _____. It is impossible to know God and be proud at the same time! Anyone who claims to be Christian and yet is proud, is either a liar or is worshipping an _____.
3. Know _____ (Rom. 12:3). Humility comes naturally when we remember that:
 - We are created beings. We are not _____.
 - We are _____.
 - Everything good that we have is a _____. (Rom. 12:3).
4. _____ God and his blessings. (Daniel 4:30-33, 37; I Cor. 4:7).
5. _____ yourself. Don't wait until God humbles (humiliates) you! (II Chron. 33:23; 36:12). Humble yourself! (II Chron. 7:14; 33:12; James 4:10).

The Proud Person	The Humble Person
It's all about me.	It's all about God and others.
Gets joy from promoting self.	Gets joy from promoting others.
Get's angry and defensive when confronted.	Is responsive when confronted.
Loves to talk.	Loves to listen.
Cockey about what they know.	Humble about all they don't know.
Seeks to place blame.	Seeks to take responsibility.
Compares self to others.	Compares self to God.
"Lord, change them."	"Lord, change me."
Covers up sin.	Confesses sin.
Concerned with image.	Concerned with truth.

TABLE TALK

1. Which do you consider to be more dangerous spiritually: affliction or prosperity?
2. The Bible says that God's blessings are intended to make us humble, repentant and generous to others. Is this what usually happens? Why or why not?
3. Without mentioning names (!) describe someone you know who is proud. What do they "smell" like? Now, describe someone you know who is humble. What is their "aroma?"
4. What are some specific things you can do to "humble yourself?"

HEZEKIAH
Bitterness
II Chronicles 29-32

I. Introduction.

- A. A Life Worthy of Notice. Hezekiah was one of the few truly great kings of Judah! A surprising amount of space is devoted to his life and reign: II Kings 18-20; II Chron. 29-32; Isaiah 36-39. For a while it almost seemed that a new _____ had arisen! (II Chron. 29:1-2)
- B. Meanwhile, Up in the North. Hezekiah's reign came just after the Assyrians defeated Israel in 722 BC and took many of its inhabitants into exile. This disaster serves as the backdrop for all that Hezekiah sought to accomplish in Judah. Would God's judgment fall on Judah too? The only hope was _____, _____ and _____ (II Chron. 7:14).

II. First Period: Revival and Reform (II Chron. 29-31).

There is great significance in the fact that the first official act of Hezekiah as the new king was to restore worship in God's Temple. He opened the doors of the Temple that his father Ahaz had shut (II Chron. 28:24; 29:3). Several steps were involved in leading the nation back to God:

- A. Empower _____ (II Chron. 29:4-11).
- B. Clean out all the _____ (II Chron. 29:15-19).
- C. Offer _____ (II Chron. 29:20-24).
- D. Rediscover _____ (II Chron. 29:25-30).
- E. _____ (II Chron. 30-31). It takes more than revived hearts to restore the nation. There must be a re-formation of structures, theologies, and practices.
- 1 The Passover restored (II Chron. 30).
 - 2 Organization of Priests and Levites... with financial support (II Chron. 31).

III. Second Period: Deliverance from the Enemy (II Chron. 32:1-23).

- A. The Assyrian attack (II Chron. 32:1-19). He inspired the nation to courage and faithfulness (vv. 7-8). In the face of threats and psychological warfare, Hezekiah and the people kept trusting in God.
- B. Deliverance! (II Chron. 32:20-23)

IV. Third Period: A Chink in the Armor (II Chron. 32:24-33 and II Kings 18-20)

- A. A Prophetic Announcement (II Kings 20:1).

Hezekiah was 39 years of age. He had walked in obedience and faithfulness and had led the nation in revival and reformation. There was much work still to be done. Think how you might have responded in a similar situation. What might your response have been?

- B. A Bitter Response (II Kings 20:2-3).

It was his bitter spirit that revealed the true condition of his heart. This was the chink in his armor that permitted the enemy to come in like a flood. We get an even greater insight into Hezekiah's emotional state in the hymn of thanksgiving he wrote after his recovery recorded in Isaiah 38:9-20 (note vv. 15, 17).

- C. A Compassionate Reply (II Kings 20:4-11).

God heard Hezekiah's cry and healed him, overlooking (?) the bitterness that lay behind his prayer. Although he had just announced that Hezekiah was about to die (II Kings 20:1), God _____ (?). He allowed him to live an extra 15 years.

D. A Sobering Consequence.

The consequences of getting what he wanted were sobering. Two tragic events occurred during the 15 years of extended life that were granted to Hezekiah.

1. The visit from the Babylonian envoys (II Kings 20:12-19). About 115 years later, the Babylonians would return... and destroy Jerusalem!
2. During those 15 extra years, a son was born (II Chron. 33:1-6, 9). Reigning longer than any other king in Judah's history (55 years), Manasseh _____ the reforms of his father and led the nation into idolatry... and the judgment of God.

E. Application: How do I apply this story to my life?

The story of Hezekiah's healing challenges our theology at numerous levels. Reflection on his life will cause many to re-examine their basic assumptions about the sovereignty of God, prayer, predestination, freedom, etc.

1. Be careful _____ (See Numbers 11; Psalm 106:15).
2. Be alert to the poison of _____ in your own heart (See Heb. 12:15).
3. Steps to victory over bitterness.
 - a. _____ bitterness as a sin (I John 1:9).
 - b. Ask God to help you tear down _____ (II Cor. 10:4-5).
 - c. _____ the offender (Eph. 4:31-32).

TABLE TALK

1. What is the difference between a revival and a reformation? Why is this distinction important?
2. Does the story of God "changing his mind" and healing Hezekiah fit into your theology? Why or why not?
3. Has God ever answered a prayer of yours that you came to regret? What did you learn?
4. Is there an area in your own life where bitterness has taken root? What are the consequences? What are you going to do about it?

JOSIAH
Spiritual Deafness
II Chronicles 34-35

I. The Last Best Hope of Judah.

Though few recognized it at the time, Josiah's reign was God's _____ of hope to his people. For three centuries God had been giving his people the opportunity to repent and reform their ways so that their fate would be different from that of Israel. With Josiah, God gave his people one last and glorious opportunity to get it right (II Kings 23:25).

II. Long Live the King! (II Chron. 34:1-2)

A. At age 16, Josiah began to seek the God _____ (34:3). Describe what a seeking heart looks like. What are its characteristics?

- _____.
- _____.
- _____.
- _____.

B. At age 20, Josiah began to _____ the land (34:3-7 and II Kings 23:4-20). Josiah transformed his "seeking heart" into national policy! He knew that if Judah was going to be restored to a right relationship with God, the first thing to do was to rid the land of idols.

- He had to _____ the land of bad things before God good fill it with good things.
- He had to _____ before he could build.
- He had to deal with _____ before it was possible to walk in righteousness.
- He had to cut out _____ before health could be restored.
- He knew that _____ must precede revival.

C. At age 26, Josiah _____ true worship.

1. The Temple is _____ (34:8-13). Now that the land had been purged of idols, Josiah began to do the most essential work of all: repairing the Temple and restoring it to its proper function. Proper worship is foundational in everything!
2. The Book is _____ (34:14-18). The most significant event that occurred during the renovation of the Temple was the discovery of "The Book." It is ironic that the Book of God was lost in the Temple! The rediscovery of a God who speaks changed everything!
3. Spiritual counsel is needed (34:19-22). The king calls for Huldah, the prophetess. One wonders why he sought counsel from a woman! Jeremiah and Zephaniah were also contemporaries. Why didn't he call them? This shows both the humility of the king and the spiritual stature of Huldah.
4. Huldah's counsel (34:23-28).
5. The fruit of obedience.
 - a. The _____ with God was renewed (34:31-32).
 - b. The _____ was celebrated (35:1-19).

III. Revival and the Word.

- A. Revival leads to the _____ and the Word leads to _____.
- B. When God's Word is neglected... spiritual life _____.
- C. Revival not based in God's Word is _____.
- D. God's Word is _____.

IV. Josiah's fatal flaw.

A. What went wrong? (35:20-27).

Like the other "good" kings of Judah, Josiah did not _____. If the outcome of a football game is determined in the fourth quarter, then Josiah's final chapter leaves a big question mark over his life. Of all the good kings of Judah, Josiah's flaw is the most difficult to understand. The text does not explain Josiah's motivation for going to battle but the result of his decision was disastrous for him and for the nation!

B. Three attempts to "explain" what happened.

1. Josiah did not pause to _____ (Prov. 3:5-6).
2. He naively assumed that God's promise made him _____. Compare II Chron. 34:28 to 35:23-24.
3. He was _____. It appears that Josiah missed God's message because he couldn't stomach God's messenger! (35:21-22) All of his life Josiah had listened for the voice of God. He heard God speak through the Book discovered in the Temple. He heard God speak through a woman prophetess. But hearing God's voice through the mouth of a pagan Egyptian was just too much! But God is not _____. On other occasions in Scripture, strange as it may seem, he chose speak through very unorthodox messengers!
 - a. _____, king of Persia (Isaiah 44:28; 45:1)
 - b. _____, king of Babylon (Jeremiah 25:9; 27:6; 43:10)
 - c. _____ (Matthew 2:1-12)
 - d. Balaam's _____ (Numbers 22:28-30)

C. God Speaks.

1. Through _____ (Psalm 19:1-4).
2. Through our _____ (Romans 2:14-16).
3. Occasionally through _____ (donkeys, pagans, star-gazers, etc.).
4. Through _____. While other sources of God's word may be ambiguous and unclear, the written Word is inerrant and authoritative.
5. Through _____ (John 1:14; Heb. 1:1-2).

TABLE TALK

1. Josiah was 16 when he began to seek God. How old were you? Do teens have a special capacity to hear God's voice?
2. Does the story of the woman prophetess Huldah bother you? How hard is it for a man to take spiritual counsel from a woman?
3. Have you ever "lost" the Book? Did it happen "in church"?
4. How do you account for Josiah's tragic demise?
5. Describe a time in your life when you missed a message God had for you because you didn't like the messenger (a nagging wife, a preacher with poor grammar, a Bible-thumping neighbor, a liberal democrat, a teenager with a guitar, etc.).
6. Can God make a promise that doesn't come true? In what sense are his promises conditional on our response? Why is this question important? What is at stake in how we answer?

MANASSEH
A Wretch Like Me
II Chronicles 33: 1-20

I. The Good Kings of Judah.

A. The Good Kings.

Over a period of about 350 years (930-587 BC) the Southern Kingdom of Judah had 20 different kings, all descendants of David. Only eight of these kings “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord.” The rest were evil. The stories of these kings introduces us to the historical reality that God’s people have always been led by leaders who are a _____ of good and evil.

1. The summation of a person’s life in the Scriptures is based not upon professional success, wealth or power but rather upon _____.
2. Though all of these kings were a composite of good and evil, Scripture dares to give a summary statement of their life. Ultimately a person’s life will be deemed either “good” or “evil.” The Bible speaks in terms of _____.... not both/and.
3. A person’s moral character is ultimately measured not by some human standard of conduct but rather _____.

B. The Moral Flaw.

Each of these kings had a moral flaw that brought pain and hardship into both the king’s life and the life of his family and nation. Rather than glossing over these faults, the Bible _____ them! Amazingly, no two kings had the same moral flaw. Each one had his own unique issues.

1. Solomon. Lust.
2. Asa. Unbelief.
3. Jehoshaphat. Moral compromise.
4. Joash. Fickle faith.
5. Amaziah. Divided heart.
6. Uzziah. Pride.
7. Hezekiah. Bitterness.
8. Josiah. Spiritual deafness.

II. Good King Manasseh?

A. Troubling Contrast.

At first glance, Manasseh seems to be just another “bad” king in Judah. But on closer look, his life is unique in two respects:

1. The _____ of the worst. Both the length of his reign (55 years) and the depth of his sin are unparalleled in Judah’s history (II Kings 24:3-4; II Chron. 33:9; Jer. 15:4).
2. His _____!!! At the end of his life (the 4th quarter) he humbled himself, repented, and found favor with God. We could say that he thus joined the list of the “good” kings of Judah. What a dramatic contrast this makes with the other “good” kings of Judah. They all started out well but ended badly. Manasseh started out badly and ended up being blessed by God!

B. A Wretch Like Me (II Chron. 33:1-20).

1. Idolatry (vv. 3-5, 7).
2. The occult (v. 6).
3. Child sacrifice (v. 6).

4. Violence (II Kings 21:16).
5. Refusal to listen (v. 10).

C. Amazing Grace (II Chron. 33:11-13).

Just as Saul was perhaps the most unlikely candidate for conversion in the New Testament, so Manasseh was in the Old Testament. Who could have imagined that this wicked king would humble himself and pray and seek God's face? And even more astounding, who could have imagined that God would have accepted a scoundrel like this? The prodigal son had come home and the Father had welcomed him!

_____ everywhere still struggle to accept this!

D. Fruits of Repentance (II Chron. 33:14-20).

1. He sought to make _____ for the evil he had done (v. 15).
2. He _____ the altar of the Lord and re-established true worship in the Temple (v. 16).
3. He sought _____ those he had once misled, in the right path (v. 16).
4. The Scriptures twice assert that God was _____ by Manasseh's repentance (vv. 13, 19).

E. Yet Even Forgiven Sin Has _____.

Though God forgave Manasseh and restored him to favor, the consequences of his reign of terror could not be erased. The people continued to practice idolatry (v. 17). His influence continued to cast a dark shadow on future generations. His son, Amon, imitated the evil ways of his father (II Chron. 33:22). Judgment and destruction still came on Jerusalem (II Kings 24:3-4; Jer. 15:4).

III. Application Today.

- A. No sin is _____ than God's grace (Rom. 5:20). "Only when grace is recognized to be incomprehensible is it grace." Karl Barth.
- B. The _____ of sin. Even forgiven sin can sometimes carry very heavy _____!
- C. God's megaphone. God had tried to speak to Manasseh through the prophets, the Scriptures, and the Temple, nothing seemed to get through. So finally God "spoke" to him through _____. When he was in distress, he turned to God (II Chron. 33:12). (Contrast II Chron. 28:22).
- D. The key that unlocks the door (II Chron. 7:14).
 1. Manasseh _____ himself (II Chron. 33:12, 23).
 2. He _____ (II Chron. 33:12-13, 18-19).
 3. He sought God's _____ (no specific reference but the reality is present).
 4. He _____ from his wicked ways (II Chron. 33:15-16).

TABLE TALK

1. How do you respond to the fact that all eight "good" kings finished badly? What is God trying to say through this?
2. How do you respond to Manasseh's conversion? Do you find this story comforting? Or does it disturb you? Why?
3. If you were God, would you have forgiven Manasseh? What does your answer reveal to you about your concept of God?
4. Tell of a personal experience you may have had when you discovered that though sin may be forgiven...unfortunate consequences yet remain.
5. Describe a time in your own life when pain and suffering enabled you to hear more clearly what God was trying to say to you.

ROYAL LESSONS FROM THE GOOD KINGS OF JUDAH

1. The heart of the matter is _____.
 - *For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.* (II Chronicles 16:9)
 - *Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name.* (Psalm 86:11)
2. Being _____ and _____ are perhaps the best qualifications for a godly and fruitful life.
 - *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 5:3)
3. The only spiritual condition that is incurable is _____.
 - *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* (I John 1:8-9)
4. Godly _____ is indispensable. We are the sum total of the voices we heed and the books that we read.
 - *Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.* (Psalm 1:1-2)
5. Each of us has an area where we are particularly vulnerable to temptation: a character flaw, a weakness, a predisposition to failure, _____. Can you name yours?
 - *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.* (Luke 22:31-32)
6. Through moral failure may be common, it is not _____.
 - *Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.* (I Corinthians 10:12-13)
7. How we _____ is more significant than how we begin. The game is over or lost in the 4th quarter.
 - *But the one who endures to the end will be saved.* (Matthew 24:13)
8. Though God understands our human frailties and fallen nature, he never _____.
 - *You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.* (Matthew 5:48)
 - *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.* (Hebrews 12:14)
 - *but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'* (I Peter 1:15-16)

9. Thank God for _____ and _____!
- *do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives... For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:5b-6, 11)*
 - *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. ⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. (James 1:2-4)*

10. It ain't over till _____.

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. (Hebrews 10:36-39)



Smoke

By: George MacDonald

*Lord, I have laid my heart upon thy altar
But cannot get the wood to burn;
It hardly flares ere it begins to falter
And to the dark return.*

*Old sap, or night-fallen dew, makes damp the fuel;
In vain my breath would flame provoke;
Yet see-at every poor attempt's renewal
To thee ascends the smoke!*

*'Tis all I have-smoke, failure, foiled endeavour,
Coldness and doubt and palsied lack:
Such as I have I send thee!-perfect Giver,
Send thou thy lightning back.*

