

Lessons from Asa and Jehoshaphat



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From the course Bible Study Basics:

Three Foundational Steps of Bible Study



Welcome back to session four as we have been journeying through these leadership lessons that we are learning from the kings of Judah. I don't know about you, but I'm excited even as I reviewed them. I've studied this text over and over again, but every time I look at this, it strengthens me as a leader. And I'm excited about putting these things into practice. Remember, when you're studying the Word of God, there are three things that must happen. First of all, there is observation. You observe what is going on in the text. Then there's interpretation. What does this mean? What is the context in which we are looking at this text? So, we must understand it in its context—the immediate context and in the context of the entire Bible. Then finally, application. How do I apply this to my life? I pray that you are applying these principles to your life as we interpret, as we observe what's happening in the Bible.

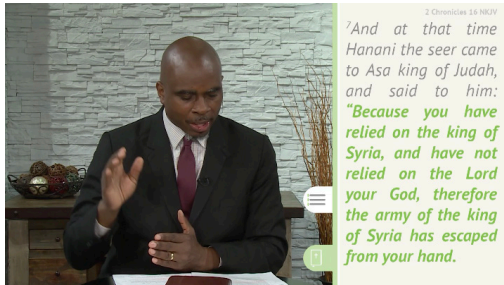
14. True leaders must never forget from where God has brought them.

We're going to continue just one more lesson in the life of Asa. We saw that Asa was a great king. We saw him and Judah defeat an army of a million men and three hundred tanks in the last session. We saw that he trusted God, and he relied on God when surrounded. But just as all of us, Asa was a man. He was a human, and he was flawed. And his final act was an example or a lesson that we can learn of what not to do. The final lesson that we learn from Asa of what not to do is that true leaders must never forget from where God has brought them. You can never forget where God has brought you from. One of your greatest assets is your memory, to remember. When Asa was surrounded by an army of one million people, as I mentioned a moment ago, and three hundred tanks of the Ethiopians, he trusted the Lord. But later, he was surrounded by a much smaller army. And instead of trusting the Lord this time, he went and started getting other alliances and other means. He had forgotten how God strengthened him

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TRUE LEADERS MUST NEVER FORGET FROM WHERE GOD HAS BROUGHT THEM.

2 Chronicles 16:7-10



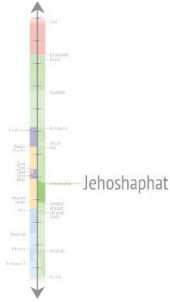
before. Something smaller than what he had faced, but he had forgotten. And we cannot forget. Instead of humbling himself, Asa punished the prophet of God for a rebuke that he came and rebuked him. When the prophet came and rebuked him, he did not humble himself when the prophet came to remind him of this very same lesson. He became hardened because he did not trust God anymore. He began to trust in his own abilities.

So often we can forget where God has brought us from and think, *You know what, I'm great. I've done this. I've pulled myself up by my own bootstraps. I've arrived. I've done this. I have experience. I have the knowledge. I've read all the books.* We must humble ourselves and remember where God has brought us from. Remember, the Scripture reminds us that the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth. This is actually in 2 Chronicles 16:9. "The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the entire earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him. In this you have done foolishly" the prophet told him, "therefore, from now on you shall have wars." He told him God is looking for an opportunity to show that He is God through your situation. And you have done foolishly by trying to take it in your own hand.

King David—going back to King David—he never forgot this. In 1 Samuel 17:37, King David rehearsed his song when he was on the battlefield: I know I can defeat Goliath, because once there was a lion. I killed that lion. There was once a bear. I killed the bear. And so the same God that delivered me from the paw of the lion, and the same God that delivered me from the paw of the bear can deliver me, in the Hebrew it says, "from the paw of this Philistine." David remembered where God had brought him from and compared his past victories to his current situation. We must do the same and never forget. Asa forgot what God had brought him from, and it caused calamity. As a matter of fact, God struck him with a foot disease that he died from as a result. And so this man who had such a great beginning and a great leadership life ended in a bad way because he was lifted up in pride and forgot.

15. Leaders should follow the good examples that came before them.

I want to move now to Asa's son Jehoshaphat. People a long time ago before my time used to say "jumping Jehoshaphat." I don't know where they got that from, because in the Bible, he doesn't jump. But anyway, Jehoshaphat is the son of Asa, and he becomes



2 Chronicles 17:10-11
¹⁰The Lord was with Jehoshaphat because he followed the ways of his father David before him. He did not consult the Baals ¹¹but sought the God of his father and followed his commands rather than the practices of Israel. ¹²The Lord established the kingdom under his control.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (NIV)

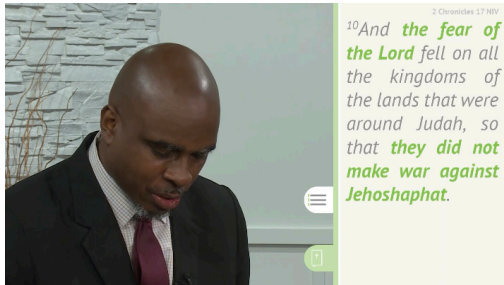
king after his father dies. He watches the good things that he does and watches how his father dies. And the first lesson that we can learn from Jehoshaphat his son is that we should follow the good examples that have come before us. We should follow the good examples that come before us. Jehoshaphat understood that he could follow the heritage that his father had set, the great things, the kingdom that he had built, the legacy that he had set forth, the patriarch of King David and his family line, and Asa, the positive example that he should follow. Because Jehoshaphat chose to follow God's way, the Lord established his kingdom.

One thing that's very challenging for us as parents, if you're a parent, or as a child is that we want our children to follow our good example. We want them to follow. It is a foolish person to say, well, I need to experience everything that you've experienced. I must learn my own way of figuring it out. No, wisdom is to be able to learn from the good and bad examples of others. Jehoshaphat understood this. And because he did this, God established his kingdom. And when we recognize . . . according to Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these other things shall be added." In other words, when we seek first the kingdom of God and follow God's things, God adds things that add bonus in our lives. Jehoshaphat recognized the importance of keeping the momentum of his father, Asa. He continued to follow the good things that his father did. He followed a king and recognized, now that I am king, I can continue in these great things.

I've done the same as I followed great leaders. One of my great mentors is passed away now. Bishop Carlis Moody is a mentor of mine. I follow in the great things that he has done. My own father, Vincent Matthews, Sr., I follow in what he has done. Another mentor of mine, Bishop Charles Blake, was my presiding bishop. I followed in the great things that he has done. I don't need to reinvent the wheel. I don't need people to know that I'm wonderful and I have my own great ideas. I follow in the paths of those who have sat before me. Jehoshaphat recognized this, and God blessed him for that.

16. When leaders choose righteousness, it can neutralize enemies.

Another lesson that we learn here from Jehoshaphat is that when you choose righteousness, it can often neutralize your enemies. "The fear of the LORD came upon all the other nations." They

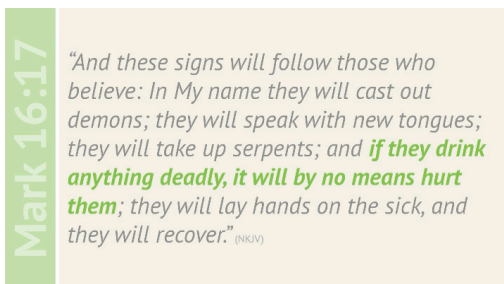


didn't fear Jehoshaphat, but they feared the God that he served. The God that he served shook them, and it gave him space to neutralize his enemies. They feared the God that he served, because he followed the great path. God gave him peace with his enemies. This reminds me, if I can tell you in my example of what God did for me. When I first started pastoring the church that I mentioned in the last session—

this Tabernacle Church in Tembisa, South Africa, by the way—when I first started pastoring there (and I give credit to my wife for being such a great leader to help in that), we had a welcoming dinner. And there were some ladies who decided to poison my wife—true story, poison. We didn't know. We had this great meal, and we ate and celebrated. And the next morning after the great celebration of me being installed as pastor, four women came to the door of our house at about between 6:30 and 7:00 a.m. They knocked on the door. I'm startled. I'm in the bed actually. I wake up, jump out of the bed. And my wife was eight months pregnant at the time. And I go and they're at the door. They said, "Oh, we're so sorry. We heard that your wife is sick." "No, she's not sick, but come on in." I wake up my wife, and I say there are women from the church here to visit us. We were a very small church at the time. And my wife came out, she was eight months pregnant. And when she walked in the room, they all jumped. Wow. And I didn't think anything of it. My wife was going to bring tea, and they said, "No, thank you." And they left.

Three days later, to make a long story short—three days later, one of the women came crying. And she said, "I don't understand. I gave you enough poison in your wife's food," she was telling my wife, "I put enough poison in your food to kill three people. You were supposed to die, but you're not dead. God must be with you. But I'm afraid for the baby that's inside of you. Something's going to be wrong with that baby." And we declared right then Mark 16:17. The Bible says, "These signs shall follow those that believe. And in My name they shall cast out demons." But it goes on saying [that if] you eat anything deadly, it will not harm you. We said, "This baby will be okay, and my wife will live. This baby will be whole." And sure enough, my wife did not die. She did not even get a stomachache; and our baby was born two months later on time, healthy, and strong. He's a strong young man now.

What am I saying to you? It changed everything in that area, because there were other people who knew that she was poisoned. But it neutralized all the enemies because they recognized God



must be with these individuals. This is a real example in my life and leadership that I learned, and I said, “Wow. God is good.” And guess what? The woman who confessed to poisoning my wife became one of the key people who prepared all of my food when my wife was not around when we had services. She brought my plates. Some of you say, are you crazy? No, I just trust God. He neutralized that woman, because she recognized, Vincent is not powerful. Sharon is not powerful, but the God that they serve is powerful. We don’t know everything. We didn’t get a poison-sniffing dog to sniff the food. But we recognized that God will protect you. I hope that blesses someone.

17. Be careful of people that seek to use your legitimacy to protect themselves.

The last lesson that we want to learn from Jehoshaphat is to be careful of people that seek to use your legitimacy to protect themselves. In other words, watch the hangers on. Watch those who come to link to you and want to hang on, because they have an ulterior motive. Jehoshaphat was a good king. No spot on his life—the Bible says he was a good king. He’s a righteous king. He’s a good guy. But class, let me tell you something. Everybody’s not happy when you choose to do the right thing. There are some people who have their own motives. You must be careful. And we see this. We see that Ahab, the king of Israel—we haven’t talked about Israel for a while now. There’s a king in Israel now, Ahab. By the way, Ahab is seen by the Word of God as the most wicked king ever. Ahab set up a church service to convince his new friend Jehoshaphat that they should work together. It was a trap. He sets up a church service. He has all of these prophets, all of these people coming around prophesying saying, “Hey, look we should join together. We should work together. You need to join forces with me.” And everyone who wants to partner with you in leadership does not always have the right motives, and you must be careful who you partner with. And Jehoshaphat wisely said, “These prophets are all prophesying that this is a good thing. Is there not a real prophet of God?” And the prophet Micaiah came and told him what would happen. To make a long story short, there were four hundred prophets that told him that everything would be okay, but one prophet said that this is not right. Jehoshaphat sensed that this real prophecy was good and was from God, but he wanted to build a political alliance and work with this guy. He wasn’t sure.



17 BE CAREFUL OF PEOPLE THAT SEEK TO USE YOUR LEGITIMACY TO PROTECT THEMSELVES.

Watch the “hangers-on” because they have an ulterior motive.



Jehoshaphat

And we've got to recognize that there are true prophets and false prophets. The Bible talks about that. But Jehoshaphat allied himself with the wicked King Ahab. Ahab used his relationship with righteous Jehoshaphat to utilize his credibility to go to war and to say that everything was going to be okay. Jehoshaphat was not careful and was set up by bringing his reputation and his honor to a dishonorable man. In the next session, we're going to see what this means for your leadership. Be very careful of who you align yourself with as a leader.