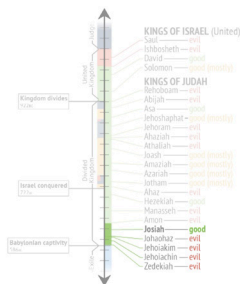


## Lessons from Josiah, Jehoiakim, and Zedekiah



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Well, you have survived. We're in session 9, and we're still together. Looks like you're going to graduate and get that certificate after all. I'm so glad you're still here. There are still some great lessons that we're going to look at from the kings of Judah. We're deep in the nation of Judah. We've gone far in the history. We're not focusing on historical settings and things of that sort, but going through different kings and learning from their lives lessons that we can learn, things to do, things not to do. I pray that you're applying them to your life and walking forward. When we ended in our previous session, we were discussing the life of King Josiah, the young king. Phenomenal king. By the way, Josiah is the last good king of Judah. This is the last chance to have a good king in Judah. He's the last good king of Judah. So that's very important to remember. And we saw earlier that Josiah understood the importance, or the value of God's Word more than anything.

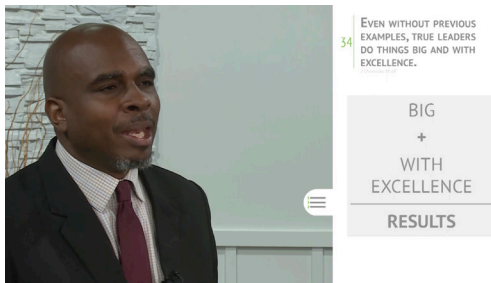
### 34. Even without previous examples, true leaders do things big and with excellence.



34  
EVEN WITHOUT PREVIOUS  
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God will give you  
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The next lesson that we'll learn from Josiah is that even without previous examples true leaders do things big and with excellence. They do things big and with excellence. Even if you didn't have previous examples, one thing that challenges many of us is that maybe you are in a leadership role and your predecessor did not do things at a grand scale, did not do things with all that they had. Or you felt they could be done better. Josiah, this young king, shows us that even without previous examples that you can still do things big and with excellence. Josiah's father, just to review, Amon, was an evil king. His grandfather, Manasseh, was an evil king for almost fifty-five years. However, Josiah transcended this toxic legacy. He transcended that and set something really great in order. Hey, you may be a parent, and you've had parents who've had challenges, and their parents had challenges. It doesn't mean you need to fall in that same row. Maybe all the businesses in your city are failing. You can do things grander. Sometimes we



fall in a rut. Maybe in your church, “We’ve always done things like this,” and done things in a certain way. But God will give you a greater way to do things, even without previous examples, even if everyone before you failed. You can do things great and big.

Josiah had never attended a Passover Feast in his life because no one in his life had even worshiped the God of the Bible. But after reading the Word of God, he followed God’s Word and had the best Passover since the days of Samuel and King David. We see this in 2 Chronicles 35:18. He had the greatest Passover, the Bible says, the greatest Passover Feast ever since the days of David and Samuel. We’re going back hundreds of years now is Josiah, this young king. His leadership style did not settle for good enough. Where did he get his example from? It was not his parents. It was not his grandparents. It was because he had the timeless, living, powerful, Word of God. And when he followed the Word of God, it set him at new heights.

I find myself many times, as a personal leader, at cultural odds, seeking to do things different than they’ve ever been done, but following an ancient pattern of the Bible itself, the Word of God. Following the pattern that God has set forth is so cutting edge. And God will give you the ability to do things big. Not just for big’s sake, but because we serve a big God. Not just to bring attention to ourselves, but to bring attention to the greatness of the God that we serve. Big and not just big, but with excellence, which means if there’s big and with excellence, results will follow. And that nation turned around and laid before God and said, “We want to worship God.” And they sanctified themselves; and the nation of Judah is now on fire because of this man of God, who chose to follow the works of God. What a great lesson.

It encourages me even right now with challenges that I’m facing today, because let me say this to you, just between you and I, no one else, just between us: There will be people consciously or subconsciously that will seek to ask you or tempt you to lower your vision, to do just little enough to get by, just do good enough. But that temptation is really to say, “Limit God. Don’t do more. You know, just do enough. You can just get by, and everyone will be happy.” But between you and God, push and press. Everyone will not be happy. Say, “As for me, I’m going to give God all that I have and do it to the best of my ability to His glory in Jesus’s name.” And I guarantee you, God—He will shine His face upon you. But most of all He will put His stamp of validation upon the



work that you have. Don't settle for good enough. Good enough is not good enough.

All right. Now we're going to move to a son of Josiah. Josiah ends up dying. He dies fighting against the Babylonians. And after this fight, he dies and his son . . . He has a son, Jehoahaz, who becomes king. We're not going to look at him. Jehoahaz becomes king for a moment. He's moved aside. And his son, Jehoiakim, becomes king. Jehoiakim becomes king. And there's a great lesson that we learn from Jehoiakim's reign. It's a phenomenal lesson that really speaks to us in our culture and the time that we live in, regardless of what nation you're watching this course from.

### 35. The enemy wants to change the identity of leaders.

The lesson that we learn from Jehoiakim's life is that the enemy wants to change the identity of leaders. The enemy wants to change the identity of leaders. Now that presumes me saying God's leader. You're God's leader for God's time. We see this in 2 Chronicles 36:4. Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, becomes king. But the interesting thing about it is that Jehoiakim's name is not really Jehoiakim. His name was changed from Eliakim. Now, the enemy, that's Satan, demonic forces, loves to change a person's identity in order to change their destiny. See, Jehoiakim means that pharaoh is my provider. "Pharaoh will provide" is what Jehoiakim means. But his original name, Eliakim, meant, "Yahweh is my provider." Now, we don't speak fluent Hebrew. We don't know the meaning of every name. But the enemy knew, "If I can tweak your name, I can tweak your destiny." So instead of saying— every time you called his name—"Hey, Eliakim," what Josiah named him, Eliakim, every time you say his name he will remember that Yahweh, the God of heaven, the God of the Bible is my provider. Now every time you say his name, Jehoiakim, it meant, "Pharaoh is my provider." So he stopped looking at the God of the Bible to provide for him, and he started looking at Pharaoh as his provider. He wanted to change his identity.

Isn't it interesting that we live in a time where identity is a very fluid concept, that many people are talking about identity? Whether it is gender identity, racial identity, nationality identity, all identity is under attack, and people don't know what they are or who they are. In doubt, many people are changing back and forth: "What am I? Who am I?" Even the understanding of what a Christian is. You know, a Christian is supposed to be someone who's nonjudgmental and never says that anything is wrong and



2 Chronicles 36:4  
*"The king of Egypt made Eliakim, a brother of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Necho took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt."*  
 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God.

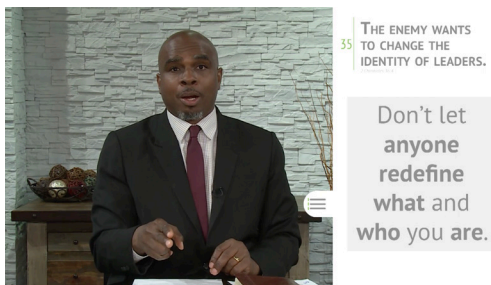


35 THE ENEMY WANTS TO CHANGE THE IDENTITY OF LEADERS.

**Eliakim:**  
 ↳ Yahweh  
 is my provider

**Jehoiakim:**  
 ↳ Pharaoh  
 is my provider





should always smile and never say anything tough, to be pretty weak and soft and lowly and humble. We've been redefined by someone else. I hope that makes sense to you.

Redefinition, how do we understand this? Well, because our name has been changed, most people are not holding to the name of Christ and holding to the God of the Bible or whatever else. Even the identity of our churches, what the purpose of the church is about. Many people are now looking at the church as some place where you go and you're supposed to enjoy and have good music. That's okay. I love good music and a good motivational speaking life coach. We don't even have preachers in the pulpit anymore pulling people from the pit. Yeah, all of these things are challenging. So once we've redefined what is a church, what is a Christian, what is a man, what is a woman, what is life, what is the world, you can be manipulated in those ways. We find ourselves there. And this is not a new trick of the enemy, because when you read Daniel 1—Daniel 1 is interesting because it says, "In the days of Jehoiakim these things happened." Okay? Babylonian captivity. Look at the context. Daniel happened at the same time. They took these Hebrew boys and took them into Babylon and made them eunuchs. Interesting thing is that when you look at Daniel 1:6 we see that their names also were changed, just like their king back at home. These boys are brought because they're intelligent, they have promise. They said, "Bring the smart kids so that we can use them in our educational system." They were using that educational system to reshape and reform the minds of the intelligent children so they could become good Chaldeans, good Babylonians. "So they can do what we need them to do." And it says in Daniel 1:6. It says these young children—Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, Mishael, these were their names—they changed their names to Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Their names were changed. And the same dynamic was there. They changed their names because the enemy wants to change the identity of the leaders.

Listen, you're a leader; you're not a boss. You're a leader; you're not a prime minister. You're a leader; you're God's leader. You're there in stewardship of God's people whether they're born again or not, whether they look like you or not. You're God's leader; don't let anyone redefine what and who you are. Because if he does, the enemy will manipulate that. You will be controlled. Jehoiakim's name was changed because he was a colonial emissary of the oppressive nation who had taken power over their country. Daniel, Hananiah, Azariah, and Mishael, commonly known as Shadrach,



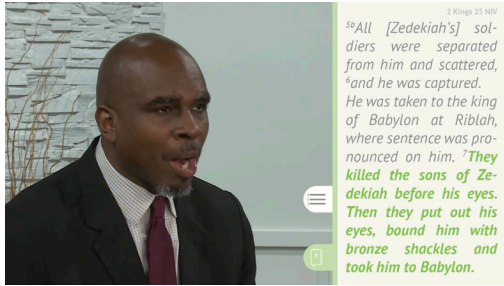
2 Chronicles 36:15-16  
 15 *The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.*

Meshach, and Abednego, even though their names were changed, they never forgot who they really were. Even though their names were changed, they always remembered who they were; and so they never bowed to the music of the oppressor. They never ate the food of the oppressor, because they recognized who they are. God needs leaders who remember who we are in these days. Wow.

### 36. Leaders who reject God's words and warning can reach a point of no return.

And then finally for this session, we're going to move from Jehoiakim—whose name was changed, and his identity was changed, whose destiny was changed—to King Zedekiah, his brother, who later becomes king. This is the final king of Judah. And there are some lessons that we can learn from him as we come to the close of this session. But the one lesson that we'll learn from him in this session is that leaders who reject God's Word and His warnings can reach a point of no return. Leaders who reject God's words and warning can reach a point of no return. Second Chronicles 36:15–16 demonstrates this. Zedekiah and the nation, Judah, now mocked the evangelist that came door to door. Jeremiah was the evangelist. Jeremiah was coming, preaching and sharing with the men and women of God, saying, "You've got to repent. Things are not right. We've got to pray. We've got to turn right or we're going to be in trouble. These Babylonians are at the door. They're trying to change us. They're trying to destroy us." But Zedekiah and the other people laughed at him. They closed doors. They even imprisoned him. True leaders do not reject God's words and warnings in spite of their method. Maybe they didn't like Jeremiah. Jeremiah spoke in different kinds of ways and approached them in different ways. But this leader rejected the Word of God, and it took him to a point of no return. He was listening to people who made him happy. They said, "Oh, there's no problems. Things are going to be okay. Things are going to be wonderful." But if you read the book of Jeremiah, God commissioned Jeremiah as a young man. And he was a prophet for forty-eight years to Judah, to the nation of Judah, warning them that, "If you do not stand for God, it may not happen today, but there will come a day when you will wish that you could follow the God of the Bible, and you will not be able to come back."

I believe this is the message to our nations today, that the word of holiness and living for God and following God first more than anything, putting God first in our families, bonding together, if we don't, we can come to a point of no return. Many people are



walking dead. I'm not talking about some zombie movie from some inoculation or from some disease. Many people are walking dead. They have rejected God so much they've passed that point where they're literally headed to imminent destruction. This is what happened to Zedekiah. After rejecting God, Zedekiah was left alone to fend against his enemies. He did not have God on his side. He did not have God fighting for him. And when his enemies came they surrounded him, and they killed his sons before his eyes. Then they gouged his eyes out. The last thing that he saw was the killing of his family. He had made fun of the prophets, allowed Jeremiah to be ill-treated, had put Jeremiah in wells and holes in the ground, had flip-flopped and did all kinds of things. He was the king of imprisonment. And now his fall from righteousness was very tragic. He finds himself blinded just like Samson did; he was blinded and grinding and bound. The exact same thing happens to Zedekiah.