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2 Kings 15

“Principles from a Good King”

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After Israel became a divided kingdom there would eventually be 19 kings in Israel (northern kingdom), and 19 kings and one queen in Judah (southern kingdom). Of the 38 kings and one queen, there were really only eight “good” kings, and all eight were from Judah. A further commentary on the state of affairs during the time of the kings is that of the eight “good” kings, only one didn’t mar his testimony in some way. Remarkably, only one king didn’t stumble and tarnish his legacy, and the remaining seven “good” kings all have an asterisk by their name.

Jotham, the one “good” king is the focus of our study. His name in Hebrew is Yotam, which means, Yahweh is perfect. Interestingly, as good as Jotham was, we don’t know much about his life. In fact, there are only seven verses in [2 Kings](#) and nine verses in [2 Chronicles](#) that tell the story of Jotham’s life. He is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible other than [Isaiah 1:1](#), [Hosea 1:1](#), and [Micah 1:1](#), and these references are to prophets who ministered for the Lord during Jotham’s reign.

What we do know about Jotham says a lot about him. He was thrust into the limelight at the relatively young age of 18 when his father, King Uzziah, was struck with leprosy. He administered the country of Judah during the seven years his father was confined to a house for lepers. At the age of 25, when his father died, he officially became king, and he reigned for 16 years until his death at age 41. King Jotham had a quiet but effective reign. The evidence suggests that he wasn’t flashy or out to impress anyone. He built a few towns and had a few military victories, but otherwise, he was a pretty simple man whose life story can be summed up in the three principles we learn from [2:Kings 15:35b](#), which says: *“Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the Lord.”*

In this study, we'll learn how King Jotham strengthened what was weak, humbled what was proud, and did what was right before God, and how we can apply these principles in our lives.

Jotham Strengthened What Was Weak

1. Jotham surveyed the weak and vulnerable areas of the city and he fortified them.
 - a. The first point of defense against an enemy was the walls of a city.
 - b. The most vulnerable spot on the walls of a city were its gates.
2. Jerusalem is located on a hill, and the southern end is on a steep slope, so that a 90ft. slope and a 30ft. wall protected part of the city.
3. Jerusalem was very vulnerable in the northern part of the city, and historically that was the area that most of Israel's enemies attacked first, because there was only a 30ft. wall in that section.
4. Jotham recognized how vulnerable the city was in this area, so he took the necessary steps to strengthen the *"Upper Gate on the Northern Wall."*
5. Pastor Gary commented on the fact that our lives are like cities, in that we all have a weak area that needs special attention, and it will always be that weak area that we have to guard.
6. The Eye Gate
 - a. King David and Samson are two examples of men who struggled with the eye gate.
 - b. **Job 31:1** - *"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."*
 - c. It's not just that the Eye Gate relates to lust, because it could be the case that the problem is coveting or envying with the eyes.
 - d. The eye was the downfall of man according to **Genesis 3:6**, which says: *"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."*
 - e. **Mark 9:47** - *"[Jesus said,] if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell..."*
 - i. Obviously, Jesus was telling us to literally pluck out our eyes because that wouldn't eliminate lust!

- ii. What Jesus meant was that the eyes are just one gate to the heart, and what was needed was to deal seriously with sin.

7. The Ear Gate

- a. If you like to hear gossip, listen to hearsay, or believe rumors about others, then your weak point is the Ear Gate.
- b. It could be that you love to hear flattering statements about yourself.
- c. Maybe you like to eavesdrop or you do what you need to do always be “in the know.”
- d. Jesus accused the people of his day by saying that they were “*ever hearing but never understanding,*” because they heard the truth but turned a deaf ear to it.
- e. **John 10:27** - “*My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.*”

8. The Mind Gate

- a. A person’s thought life is the mind gate that needs to be guarded.
- b. Having thoughts that are impure, vengeful, fantasy-filled, hateful, prejudicial, prideful, or angry contribute to participating in sin of the attitude.
- c. Sin is not always an action; it can be an attitude.
- d. Every sinful deed originates in the mind.
- e. **2 Corinthians 10:5b** - “*... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*”
- f. **Romans 12:2a** - “*Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.*”
- g. **Colossians 3:2** - “*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*”
- h. **Philippians 4:8** - “*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things.*”

Jotham Humbled What Was Proud

- 9. **2 Chronicles 27:2a** - “*He did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the Lord.*”

- 10. King Uzziah reigned 52 years, more than three times Jotham’s 16 years.

11. Uzziah was a very accomplished man and [2 Chronicles 26](#) tells us he had success in:
 - a. Battle - [26:6b](#)
 - b. Building towns - [26:6b](#)
 - c. Building towers - [26:9](#)
 - d. Digging cisterns - [26:10](#)
 - e. Farming the land - [26:10b](#)
 - f. Fortifying an army - [26:11-15](#)

12. [2 Chronicles 26:16](#) - *“... after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the Lord...”*
 - a. When Uzziah became prideful he tarnished his otherwise good reign and good reputation by going into the Temple, and acting like a priest when burned incense to the Lord.
 - b. When the priests confronted him about this, he flew into a rage and the Lord afflicted him with leprosy.
 - c. He must have thought that since he was the king, he could do anything he wanted.
 - d. He lived the rest of his life (seven years) secluded from everyone.

13. Pastor Gary said he thought Jotham was greatly impacted by his father’s pride, which led him to guard his heart against a prideful attitude.

14. Jotham didn’t have the kind of prosperous and prolific reign that his father did, but that’s okay, because Jotham died with things his father never had: humility, integrity, and dignity.

15. It’s possible to be both successful and a person of humility, integrity, and dignity.

16. Pastor Gary said, “To die with character is more important than to die with accomplishments.”

Jotham Did What Was Right Before God

17. [2 Chronicles 27:6](#) - *“Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the Lord his God.”*

18. The success Jotham experienced in life was directly attributed to his relationship with God.

19. Other translations of [2 Chronicles 27:6](#) help bring an understand to what it means to walk *“steadfastly before the Lord...”*
 - a. King James Version (KJV) - *“he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.”*
 - b. New Living Translation (NLT) - *“he was careful to live in obedience to the Lord his God.”*
 - c. The Hebrew translation is hekin derekhav, which means, to fix, fasten establish, or a course of life.
20. Jotham carefully fixed the course of his life on the Lord!
21. If we want to fix the course of our life on the Lord we need to make the right decisions, monitor our life, and take responsibility for staying on course.
22. To *“walk steadfastly before the Lord”* means that you make the Lord your immoveable reference point and that all other things in life, including decisions, actions, goals, relationships, friends, career path, and choices, are all adjusted around the Lord as the fixed reference point.
23. Pastor Gary commented on his observation that our country has a terrible habit of having a moveable moral reference point, and an even worse trend is being seen in churches and denominations, which should have God as the standard by which everything else is judged and determined, that are moving away from, abandoning, or redefining the standard.
24. When this happens, the boundary is readjusted to suit the lifestyles people create for themselves as well as the choices people make.
25. [Proverbs 22:28](#) - *“Do not move the ancient boundary stone set up by your forefathers.”*

The Conclusion: Jotham Did What Was Right

26. He fixed the course of his life on the Lord, who is the immoveable, immutable, non-negotiable, absolute truth and standard for right and wrong.
27. If we want to be wise, we would do well to adjust everything to walk in line with the Lord’s ways and the Lord’s will, and not the other way around.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Kings 15:32-35](#) and [2 Chronicles 27:5-8](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. Read and discuss [Job 31:1](#) and [Mark 9:47](#).
4. Share examples of times when you've dealt seriously with sin in your life.
5. Have you enlisted the help of a spouse, family member, or friend to help you strengthen weak areas in your life?
6. Read and discuss [John 10:27](#) and focus on ways you can listen to Jesus' voice.
7. Read and discuss the Scriptures Pastor Gary shared concerning the mind gate. (See #8 above)
8. What do you need to do to better guard your eye, ear, or mind gates?
9. Do you think these are primarily areas of weakness for men, women, or both?
10. What are some of the ways people make choices that put them in a vulnerable place when it comes to the eye, ear, and mind gates?
11. Read and discuss [2 Chronicles 26:16](#).
12. How has a prideful spirit caused you to sin?
13. How has the Holy Spirit helped you deal with pride?
14. Share examples of times when you've learned from others, like Jotham did when his father was struck with leprosy, and avoided the serious consequences of sin.
15. Are there people you know who are both successful as well as being a person of humility, integrity, and dignity?
16. What are some of the characteristics you've seen in that person's life?

17. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's comment: "To die with character is more important than to die with accomplishments."
18. Do you have a strong desire to do what's right before the Lord or are you easily led astray?
19. Read and discuss [2 Chronicles 27:6](#). (See #19 above)
20. What are some of the decisions you've made in your life that helped you fix the course of your life on the Lord? (See #19 through #25 above)
21. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).