

September 20, 2015

2 Chronicles 14 - 16

*“The Sin of Self-reliance”*

Pastor Gary Hamrick

Too many times we try to handle things in our own strength. We consciously or subconsciously think, “I’ve got this,” only to find out that we don’t. Life’s challenges demand that we rely on the Lord and turn to him for his help and guidance, because any other approach is simply the sin of self-reliance. A poignant example of this is the story of King Asa’s life, which is the topic of today’s study with Pastor Gary.

### Historical Background

1. The books of **1 & 2 Chronicles** follow the southern kingdom of Judah.
2. The kings of the southern kingdom after David were Solomon, Abijah, and Asa.
3. Asa is listed among the good kings of Judah, and he reigned 41 years, which was the third longest of any of the kings of Israel or Judah.<sup>1</sup>
4. Asa did a lot of good things and he loved the Lord, however, he had one major flaw that marred his testimony when it showed itself near the end of his life.

### Things Asa Did Right

5. **2 Chronicles 14:2-6** - *“Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God. He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stone and cut down the Asherah poles. He commanded Judah to seek*

---

<sup>1</sup> There were 19 kings in Israel; and not one of them is considered to be have been a “good” king. There were 19 kings in Judah, but only eight are considered to have been a “good” king, overall.

*the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to obey his laws and commands. He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him. He built up the fortified cities of Judah, since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the Lord gave him rest.”*

6. Asa was living a life that pleased the Lord, so the Lord gave him peace.
7. **Proverbs 16:7** - *“When a man’s ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.*

#### Asa Removed All The Influences Of Idolatry

8. **2 Chronicles 14:3** - *“[King Asa] removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.”*
9. The reason there was idolatry in the land, was because his father Abijah, his grandfather Rehoboam, and his great-grandfather, Solomon, had allowed idolatry to not only exist, but also thrive.
10. It began with Solomon, who permitted his pagan wives to bring the worship of their gods into the nation.
11. Asherah was the female goddess of fertility, who was worshipped by the Sidonians, Phoenicians, Philistines, and even the ancient people of Iraq.
  - a. In Iraq, Asherah was called Ishtar.
  - b. The Canaanites used the name Ashtoreth.
  - c. An Asherah pole was a phallic symbol.
12. Asa even confronted his grandmother, Maacah, who made an Asherah pole!
  - a. **2 Chronicles 15:16** - *“King Asa also deposed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive Asherah pole. Asa cut the pole down, broke it up and burned it in the Kidron Valley.”*
13. Asa decided there would no longer be any representation of idolatry in the land.
14. Pastor Gary said the basic definition of an idol would be anything that takes our affection away from the Lord.

### Asa Restored The Priority Of God And His Word

15. **2 Chronicles 14:4** - “[King Asa] commanded Judah to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, and to obey his laws and commands.”
16. Pastor Gary challenged the congregation to ask a number of important questions, including:
  - a. Is God’s Word central to my life?
  - b. Does the Word of God have its rightful place of priority?
  - c. Do I turn to the Word of God to understand it and apply it to my life?
  - d. Is the Word of God the handbook I use for faith and practice regarding how I raise my children, manage my finances, etc.?
  - e. Do I allow God’s Word to speak to me on a regular, daily basis?
17. The entirety of **Psalm 119** is devoted to the intrinsic benefits and blessings of God’s Word when we read it and do what it says.
  - a. Among other things found in this psalm, we see that the Word of God provides encouragement, counsel, comfort, salvation, wisdom, direction, protection, truth, etc., etc.
  - b. **James 1:22** - “Do not merely listen to the word... do what it says.”

### Asa Renewed The Nation’s Covenant With God

18. **2 Chronicles 15:12-15** - “[The people] entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul. All who would not seek the Lord, the God of Israel, were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. They took an oath to the Lord with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the Lord gave them rest on every side.”
19. Asa’s passion for God and his Word was commendable on some level, but it wasn’t sustainable.
20. Pastor Gary said, “Once you invoke law, in relation to God, law then becomes religion, and you have stolen relationship.”
21. Law is only a good regulator, but it isn’t a very good motivator, although it can be in the short-term.

22. Love is a good motivator, and a relationship with the Lord that's based on love is sustainable, because we are more motivated to follow after the Lord knowing that he first loved us and now we love him.
23. How un-motivating would it be if [John 3:16](#) said: "For God was so legally obligated to the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."
24. It was the love of God that motivated him on our behalf to send Jesus to die on a cross for our sins.
25. We must understand that God is always the initiator and the pursuer.
26. If a person's heart is not connected to the Lord, they won't, in the long-term, be a follower of the Lord.
27. Asa taught the people to rely on the Lord.

#### Asa's God-reliance Turned Into Self-reliance

28. Asa learned to rely on the Lord at a young age.
29. [2 Chronicles 13:13-18](#) provides the details of the account of Asa's father, Abijah, leading his men to victory because "*they relied on the Lord.*"
  - a. The nation of Judah was outnumbered 2-to-1, and 500,000 of Israel's 800,000 men would die before the battle ended.
  - b. The reason Judah was victorious was because they sought and relied on the Lord.
30. [2 Chronicles 14:9-15](#) provides the details of the account of Asa following the lead of his father.
31. Unfortunately, time has a way of eroding our principles if we aren't careful.
32. Asa became a man, who over time, basically came to the place where he said, "I've got this!"
33. Approximately 20 years later, we read in [2 Chronicles 16:1-3](#), that Asa came up with his own battle plan, and he no longer turned to the Lord.
  - a. Asa is at a place in his life where he viewed his circumstances as being something he could handle.

- b. Asa looked at the situations and challenges of life as being something he could handle/solve.
34. Instead of turning to the Lord, Asa made a plan to pay a neighboring country to break their alliance with Israel, and make an alliance with him, so they could join forces.
35. Technically speaking, Asa got a victory, but he did it through his own craftiness and scheming, instead of relying on the Lord.
36. Obviously, the Lord saw this, so he sent the prophet Hanani, with a message that brought Asa back to the time 20 years earlier when he trusted the Lord for the victory.
- a. **2 Chronicles 16:7** - *“At that time Hanani the seer [prophet] came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: ‘Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the Lord your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. Were not the Cushites and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen? Yet when you relied on the Lord, he delivered them into your hand.’ ”*
37. Pastor Gary said, “When you see faithfulness of God working in your life, write it down! Take note of it! A similar thing might happen 20 days or 20 years later, and the Lord, who was faithful then, will be faithful again. Trust him again. Faith builds on itself.”
38. **2 Chronicles 16:9** - *“For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen [to encourage and fortify] those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war.”*
39. When people are confronted with truth, they either humble themselves or they become angry, which was Asa’s reaction to the Lord’s message given by Hanani.
- a. **2 Chronicles 16:10** - *“Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.”*

#### Asa’s Final Legacy

40. **2 Chronicles 16:11-13** - *“The events of Asa’s reign, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was*

*severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the Lord, but only from physicians. Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his fathers.”*

41. The issue is not that he sought help from doctors; the issue is that he never sought help from the Lord.
42. To the end, Asa held on to the “I’ve got this and I really don’t need the Lord” mentality.
43. It’s interesting to note that Asa was afflicted in his feet, because the ability to stand is a posture of strength, so God took that from him.
44. For two years Asa had time to consider his situation and his self-reliance, and make a decision to humble himself and rely on the Lord.
45. We’re left to wonder, if in the course of those two years, if he humbled himself, would the Lord have healed him physically, restored him spiritually, and returned the kingdom to him?
46. [Isaiah 50:10](#) - *“Who among you fears the Lord and obeys the word of his servant? Let him who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the Lord and rely on his God.”*

#### Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Chronicles 14:2-6](#) and [2 Chronicles 15:12-15](#) to provide the foundation for this study.
3. What is your definition of an idol?
4. Is there a hobby, relationship, or anything else that is taking your affection away from the Lord?
5. How has the Holy Spirit helped you remove idols in your life?
6. Read and discuss [Proverbs 16:7](#).

7. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's challenge concerning the importance of the Word of God. (See #17 above)
8. Has there been a time in your life when you tried to live by "the law"?
9. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's remark about religion and relationship. (See #20 through #23 above)
10. How has the Lord worked in your life when you've experienced times when the odds were stacked against you?
11. How has the Holy Spirit helped you become less self-reliant and more God-reliant?
12. Read and discuss Pastor Gary's quote: "When you see faithfulness of God working in your life, write it down! Take note of it! A similar thing might happen 20 days or 20 years later, and the Lord, who was faithful then, will be faithful again. Trust him again. Faith builds on itself."
13. Read and discuss [2 Chronicles 16:9](#).
14. Read and discuss [Isaiah 50:10](#).
15. Close your time in prayer as the Holy Spirit leads.

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