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“It’s easy to start well and then lose your focus and collapse spiritually. It’s easy to lose your passion. Remember: it’s not how you start the spiritual journey; it’s how you continue and how you finish it.

2 Chronicles 24 is a sad story about losing passion for the most important relationship in the universe: Relationship with God. It describes a man who had everything - riches, power, influence, a rich spiritual upbringing, meaningful work to do, and a good track record with the Lord. But he threw it all away.

Starting Well: Restoring Worship

Our story starts out on such an upbeat note. In verse 1, Joash became king at the age of seven, and he remained in office for the next 40 years. You’re probably wondering how a 7-year-old child runs an entire nation. Joash probably had plenty of help as he was groomed and trained to assume his kingly duties. Spiritually speaking, Joash started out on the right foot. 2 Chronicles 24:2 says, “Joash did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the years of Jehoiada the priest.” Joash attached himself to a spiritual mentor named Jehoiada. As long as he submitted to Jehoiada’s guidance, as long as that relationship was alive and growing, Joash was right in the eyes of God.

As soon as Jehoiada died, though, Joash’s spiritual life started to decline and there were disastrous consequences. Disciples need a discipler as students need a teacher. Life is a learning journey so we need a LIFE group leader to guide us. We need others to help us live a genuine Christian life. This is why Paul is always emphasizing this in his epistles or letters. It’s dangerous when we don’t have spiritual mentors to speak truth and encouragement into our lives. We also need to be open on being a mentor to someone else. Everyone needs mentoring relationships - no exceptions.

According to 2 Chronicles 24:4, “Some time later Joash decided to restore the temple of the Lord.” The key word in this passage is the word RESTORE. Whenever restoring the temple is mentioned in 1 and 2 Chronicles, the author is really talking about restoring a life of worship. It’s a push toward placing worship of God at the center of our lives. This is why I love the song “Jesus at the Center.” We shouldn’t just engage in worship when we feel like it or when we like what’s happening in our life. In fact, we shouldn’t limit our worship on Sundays. Worship should emanate in our life everyday.

Real worship has very practical results. It isn’t just about singing worship songs, having fellowship, and receiving sermons about God. In the Bible, our life is supposed to be a witness to the nations that Christ is alive. Real worship makes us step out of our comfort zone and live like Christ in words and actions. We have to model Christ to all people at all times. We should love people as Christ loved them. We should correct people as Christ would correct them. We should serve as Christ served. Our worship should entice people of this world to accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

What can we learn from Joash’s restoration of the Temple? Worship restoration leads to property restoration. We sometimes say things like, “The church is not the building; the people are the church.” That’s true! But people need to meet somewhere.

2 Chronicles 24:8-11-These verses show us that real worship changes the way we handle our money. Joash sets up a huge chest and makes an announcement: Come and fill up the chest, so that we can rebuild the temple. Worship changes our level of financial giving. That’s why a church’s concerns with budget aren’t just financial; it’s spiritual. Issues of finances are worship issues. This is why when we give our tithes and offering to God’s church, it’s not just about money, it is our worship to God.

Real worship also changes our attitude. It makes us want to serve God with diligence, passion, and enthusiasm. Commitment shows our attitude. Coming to church early involves our attitude. Serving involves attitude. The way we do things for the Lord involves attitude. In short, practical real worship speaks into all the nitty-gritty aspects of our lives.

Finishing Badly: Abandoning the Lord

Joash starts well by restoring worship, but all of that started to fall in 2 Chronicles 24:15-18. Here we encounter another key word in our story: **ABANDON**. Rather than do what is right in the eyes of God, Joash turns his back on God. His spiritual life collapses, and he starts to backslide. When I read this, it’s just like watching a movie with a bad ending.

After the death of Jehoiada, a group of officials came from Judah to flatter the king. Joash listens to their words, and together they abandoned the Lord and worshiped Asherah. The first thing that we can learn here is: Wrong set of friends could lead to wrong decisions in life. Joash started well because he was walking with Jehoiada. But when a group of officials surrounded him, he abandoned God.

This seems strange to us, but idolatry always lurks in our hearts. It’s the chief reason by which Christians backslide. The Bible calls idolatry the sin behind every other sin. According to the Bible, worshipping idols is at the top of God’s list of no-nos.

An idol moves to the core of your identity; you become its slave, and it becomes your master. What’s especially sad about idolatry is that God has promised to deliver us from slavery. God told us to put Him first, not only for His glory, but also for our own good. God wants us to be supremely satisfied in Him so that we don’t have to be enslaved by idols. Every idol enslaves and diminishes us. In John 10:10, Jesus said, “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full (NIV).”

Idolatry is not just statues. Idolatry is about things that would take your focus away from God.

When God is first in your life, He helps you in setting your priorities in proper order. Christianity doesn’t diminish your passion for other things; it unleashes your passion. How does God deal with us when we abandon him? He isn’t happy about it, but he doesn’t give up on us easily. He pursues us. 2 Chronicles 24:19 says, “Although the Lord sent prophets to the people (Joash and others) **to bring them back to Him**, and though they testified against them, they would not listen (NIV).” Isn’t that kind and patient of God? God always gives us a wake-up call.

In His goodness, God is always trying to get our attention. Sometimes it’s a whisper; sometimes it’s a heart-to-heart talk; sometimes He shouts to us through the megaphone of pain. The message for Joash was very direct: **if you’re not walking with God, if there is blatant sin in your heart, you will not prosper.** Joash was told that he wouldn’t get ahead by ditching God; he would always slide backward and never forward. The second part of the prophetic message for Joash is **that if he forsakes the Lord, the Lord will forsake him. This is the same with us: If we forsake God, He will also forsake us.**

Joash suffered from backsliding. Most of us don’t plan on falling so far; we just slip into it. There are consequences to our sin and our backsliding. God is a God of justice; therefore, there are always consequences.



- 1.) Where is God’s place in your heart right now?
- 2.) Can you describe your love for HIM lately?
- 3.) What are the things in your life that you think is making you lose your love & faith in Him ?
- 4.) Describe your lifestyle, has it brought you closer to God, why?