



CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS

JUNE 23 2012

Scripture Story: 2 Kings 21; 22; 2 Chronicles 33.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings*, chapter 32.

manamojo



Photo by Audrey Goforth

flashlight

"Born of a wicked king, beset with temptations to follow in his father's steps, and with few counselors to encourage him in the right way, Josiah nevertheless was true to the God of Israel. Warned by the errors of past generations, he chose to do right, instead of descending to the low level of sin and degradation to which his father and grandfather had fallen" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 384).

keytext

"In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God."

(2 Chronicles 33:12, 13, NIV)

what do you think?

What do you think are the most essential qualities in a leader?

Rank them in order of importance (1—most important; 8—least important).

- confident
- compassionate
- humble
- selfless
- courageous
- honest
- wise
- persevering

What are the three qualities you ranked to be the most necessary in a leader? Why?

Who do you know that exemplifies these qualities, and how have you seen such attributes in action?

did you know?

Seventeen magazine reported 64 percent of teenage girls say they are as religious or more religious than their parents (December 2005). According to the Barna Research Group, 78 percent of teens said parents had a lot of influence on their religious experience (1999). To be sure, this influence can be positive or negative. But at what point do you begin to assume responsibility for your relationship with God on your own?

cities in Judah.

“He got rid of the foreign gods and removed the image from the temple of the Lord, as well as all the altars he had built on the temple hill and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the city. Then he restored the altar of the Lord and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the Lord, the God of Israel. The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the Lord their God.

INTO THE STORY

“The Lord spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. So the Lord brought against them the army commanders of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. In his distress he sought the favor of the Lord his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. And when he prayed to him, the Lord was moved by his entreaty and listened to his plea; so he brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord is God.

“Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified

“The other events of Manasseh’s reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel. His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all are written in the records of the seers. Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

“Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made. But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the Lord; Amon increased his guilt.

“Amon’s officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.”

(2 Chronicles 33:10-25, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

Circle and identify the three different generations of kings mentioned in this passage.

Briefly describe what the text says about the kind of people they were. (Use only the words and phrases in this passage.)

Manasseh _____

Amon _____

Josiah _____

What are some words or phrases that are repeated in this story?

This story is mostly about (choose three): obedience to God, influence of parents/leaders, results of sin, blessings of faithfulness, selfishness and idolatry, moral courage. Which one do you see exhibited the most among God's people today? Explain.

Some might perceive God's punishment of Manasseh to be harsh, but the ultimate result was his repentance. Compare the religious experience of these three kings and consider how God dealt with each of them and how they responded to His promptings. How has God found ways to arrest your attention when you were growing distant from Him?

What do you think is the most difficult challenge for a king/leader?

To what degree do parents shape their children's faithfulness to God?

Which verse do you think conveys a key lesson or point of this story?

punch lines

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (**Romans 12:1, 2, NIV**).

"Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, 'I find no pleasure in them'" (**Ecclesiastes 12:1, NIV**).

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up" (**James 4:10, NIV**).

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing" (**Matthew 23:37, NIV**).

"I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest, and repent" (**Revelation 3:15-19, NIV**).

other eyes

"The best time to plant a tree is twenty years ago. The second best time is now."—Chi-

nese proverb.

"Character is what you are in the dark."—Dwight L. Moody,

19th-century U.S. evangelist.

makingitreal

Sabbath

Read and respond to the activity in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. Which quality did you choose as a primary attribute of a leader? Why? First Peter 5:6 promises that success and abundant living are the result of humility. Read this passage and write it out in your own words. Reflect on the lives of people in the Bible who followed this principle.

Sunday

As you read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study, you will notice three kings who responded to God in three different ways. What key insights emerge in this story for you? What is the message you think God is trying to say to you in this week's lesson?

Monday

The *Key Text* from 2 Chronicles 33:12, 13 demonstrates how God will use any means necessary to bring His people back to a right relationship with Him. Clearly, the choice to respond to God's voice, the still small voice or the roaring wake-up call of discipline, is ours to make. Manasseh responded to an abrupt wake-up call of being captured, tortured, and ridiculed. Amon chose not to listen and respond. Are there areas of your life in which you are getting a wake-up call? What are they?

Tuesday

Read the quote from *Prophets and Kings* in the *Flashlight* section of this lesson. Think about your legacy of faith. How have your parents and leaders shaped your walk with God? What are some examples you want to follow? What are some patterns you need to avoid?

Examples to follow: _____

Patterns to avoid: _____

Wednesday

As you read the passages listed in the *Punch Lines* section of this week's lesson, which verse speaks most prominently to you today? Why do you think this verse is particularly relevant to you today? What can you do this week to respond actively to the message in this Scripture?

Thursday

In *Prophets and Kings* we are told that Josiah had "few counselors" urging him in the right direction. Do you ever feel alone in your desire to be more devoted to God? Take some time this week to find someone you admire as a spiritual leader. Ask them to share with you one spiritual insight that God has revealed to them. Also, ask them how they would like for you to pray for them so that they can continue to be faithful and filled with God's Spirit.

Spiritual Insight

Prayer Request

Friday

Reflect on the three kings referred to in this lesson and consider how God labored with each of them to different ends. Consider the many ways God has labored with you, patiently prompting you to deeper devotion. Are you listening to His voice? How are you going to respond?

Scripture quotations credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings, chapter 32.

A special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings* has been created just for you by the White Estate and the Pacific Press Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.