

FAITHFUL TO *THE LORD*

unit 15 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

God used Hezekiah and Josiah to lead the people back to Him, but they were not perfect kings. Jesus is the righteous King of kings who brings us to God by paying our sin penalty and giving us His righteousness.

BREAKING PATTERNS

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

2 Kings 18–24

RETURN TO WORSHIP

2 KINGS 18:1-6

1 In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah, king of Israel, Hezekiah the son of Ahaz, king of Judah, began to reign. 2 He was twenty-five years old when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Abi the daughter of Zechariah. 3 And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, according to all that David his father had done. 4 He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan). 5 He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel, so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him. 6 For he held fast to the LORD. He did not depart from following him, but kept the commandments that the LORD commanded Moses.

RETURN TO TRUTH

2 KINGS 22:1-2,8-11

1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jedidah the daughter of Adaiah of Bozkath. 2 And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the way of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. . . . 8 And Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD." And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it. 9 And Shaphan the secretary came to the king, and reported to the king, "Your servants have emptied out the money that was found in the house and have delivered it into the hand of the workmen who have the oversight of the house of the LORD." 10 Then Shaphan the secretary told the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read it before the king. 11 When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes.

2 KINGS 23:1-3,21-23

1 Then the king sent, and all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem were gathered to him. 2 And the king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and the priests and the prophets, all the people, both small and great. And he read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. 3 And the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people joined in the covenant. . . . 21 And the king commanded all the people, "Keep the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." 22 For no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah. 23 But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah this Passover was kept to the LORD in Jerusalem.

MAIN POINT.

We don't have to walk in the sinful paths of those who walked before us.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE

Since the Bible is the inspired Word from God, God's special revelation to humanity, the Bible is the ultimate standard of authority for the Christian. Because it is truthful in everything that it teaches, Scripture is humanity's source for wisdom, instructing us on how to live life well to the glory of God. Submitting to the authority of Scripture means that we are to believe and obey God by believing and obeying His Word.

DISCUSSION

RETURN TO WORSHIP

2 KINGS 18:1-6

- Do you think we have a right to blame some of our mistakes on the bad examples who came before us?
- Why do you think Hezekiah destroyed everything connected to idolatry? When do we need to do this too?
- How do we give our worship to the wrong things (v. 4)—even good things?

RETURN TO TRUTH

2 KINGS 22:1-2,8-11; 23:1-3,21-23

- What was Josiah's reaction to hearing the Word? How did it spark change?
- Why do you think we're able to read and hear God's Word and not be changed?
- Read John 1:1-4. What connections can you make between John calling Jesus "the Word" and the passage in 2 Kings?



BOTH KINGS STOPPED A GENERATIONAL CYCLE OF EVIL DISOBEDIENCE. IS THERE A CYCLE YOU NEED TO STOP? HOW CAN YOU?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

It can be difficult to break free from the bad examples you've watched in your family or in your friend group. Sometimes, culture feeds this idea that we're simply products of our environments. To some degree, this is true. Our environments do help shape a lot about us, like our personalities and our passions. They can even shape how we view the world. But they don't define us. We aren't stuck in them. Many people use their background as a crutch. Instead of trying to make a change, they settle for what they've seen displayed in front of them, even leading to a type of victim mentality—a feeling that they're helpless. But really, God's power living within you transforms you and makes you an entirely new creation (2 Cor. 5:17). So, if you've ever felt hopeless because of how you've grown up, rest in that truth. God has a purpose for you. He can use your background, whether it has been good or bad. He isn't limited by it one bit.



DAY ONE

JOHN 8:34-36

A slave is held captive and forced to work for and obey someone else. A slave is treated like property rather than being treated as a family member; a slave has no inheritance. In most cases, a slave has no voice and no ability to choose. A slave isn't free. And Jesus explained that anyone who has sinned even once is a slave to it.

Let's consider what this means for all of us. First, we've all sinned (Rom. 3:23). In our fallen state, we're drawn to sin. It enslaves us. The more we sin, the stronger our sinful desires grow; it's like an addiction. Sin isn't concerned with our freedom; it deprives us of choice. It lies to us. Our only inheritance from sin is death. We are all caught in humanity's cycle of sin. Even if we want to, we can't break the cycle on our own. We're not strong enough or good enough to stop sinning. It's why, without Christ, we keep returning to sinful behavior even when we know it's wrong—even when we know it hurts us and hurts others. But this passage reveals our greatest hope: Jesus sets us free. His death and resurrection broke sin's chains. When we call on Christ in faith and accept His gift of salvation, we then have the freedom to choose life instead of death. We have the power of the Holy Spirit living within us, who helps us when we're tempted by sinful desires. He convicts us, or helps us to see our sin, and He leads us to turn away from it. He gives us the power—a voice—to say “no” to sin and to choose a better way. Because of Jesus, we're no longer slaves but sons and daughters in God's family! We're coheirs with Jesus, meaning He shares His inheritance with us!

- **WHEN HAVE YOU FELT LIKE YOU COULDN'T STOP COMMITTING A CERTAIN SIN?**
- **HOW DOES IT FREE YOU TO KNOW YOU CAN'T BE GOOD ENOUGH OR STRONG ENOUGH TO BREAK SIN'S CYCLE?**

PRAY

GOD, I WAS ONCE A SLAVE TO SIN, BUT BECAUSE OF YOUR SON'S DEATH, I'M FREE. I'M FREE TO CHOOSE GODLINESS AND LIFE. THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME A PART OF YOUR FAMILY.



DAY TWO

EPHESIANS 2:10

Many of our parents and teachers encourage us to dream; they tell us we can do anything we put our minds to—that anything is possible if we work hard enough. Some of us figure out what we want to do at a young age. For example, maybe you already know that you want to be a doctor or a teacher. Maybe you're certain that you want to be an artist or own your own business. Maybe you want to work in construction or feel God calling you to ministry. But the reality for some of us is that no one encouraged us to dream; instead, some of us have been told we'll never amount to anything—that we're not smart enough or wealthy enough or good enough. We have no clue what we want to do; we believe we're incapable of doing anything that matters. And thinking about the future only gives us anxiety because we don't know why God created us.

What if we're overcomplicating things a bit? We feel pressure to figure out what we want to do for the rest of our lives when we're only in middle school or high school. But God simplifies it for us: We are His workmanship, and He created us for good works before we could even begin to make plans of our own. It all boils down to this simple truth! If we're God's workmanship, then we are like clay in His hands. God molds us and forms us over time. And what He created us to do is good: He created all of us to know Him, to make Him known, and to give Him glory. And we can do this in a million ways—as doctors and teachers and artists and stay-at-home moms and dads. We can fulfill God's purpose for us now, even while we're in middle school or high school. And the best part is that we aren't confined to other people's plans for us or by limitations they place on us. When we walk with the Lord and seek His will, He'll show us the way. And we can know with certainty it's going to be for our good and for His glory.

- **HOW DOES KNOWING GOD CREATED YOU FOR GOOD WORKS HELP SETTLE ANY ANXIETY YOU FEEL ABOUT THE FUTURE?**
- **WHAT ARE WAYS YOU CAN LIVE OUT GOD'S PURPOSE NOW?**

PRAY

**LORD, THANK YOU FOR HOLDING ME IN YOUR HANDS
AND FOR MOLDING ME. THANK YOU FOR CREATING
ME FOR GOOD WORKS. I WANT TO LIVE OUT MY
PURPOSE NOW.**



DAY THREE

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

Can you think of something you had to replace because it couldn't be repaired? Maybe you used the same ball glove for years but had to buy a new one when it became too worn. Maybe after having a wreck, your car was damaged so badly that it had to be replaced. Maybe your family's home caught on fire, and because nothing was salvageable, you had to start over. Sometimes replacing something is fun and exciting, but sometimes, it's painful, right? Especially when you weren't ready to let go of the old.

This week, we studied about the cycle of disobedience and idolatry in Israel. King after king fell into the same pattern of leading God's people away from the Lord. Despite a few kings who attempted to fix the situation, the nation was broken. In a way, it was beyond repair; God promised to make it new one day when Jesus returns. Like Israel, we were trapped in a cycle of sin. We were badly broken and beyond repair. So, God makes us new. He doesn't fix only parts of us that are bad; He recreates us! Then, God continues to sanctify us, or make us holy, as we walk with Him. The truth is that there is a major difference in fixing something and replacing it. God comes to live within us through the Holy Spirit. He walks with us, ridding us of the sinful remnants of who we were before knowing Him. This process of sanctification can be painful because letting go of some of our sinful habits is difficult. We may not feel ready to let go of the old. But we can trust God's hand when He molds us and shapes us. He is making something better in us than that which we leave behind. He is making us brand new.

- **WHAT PARTS OF YOUR OLD, SINFUL LIFESTYLE HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO SURRENDER?**
- **WHY DOES GOD MAKE US NEW RATHER THAN ONLY FIXING CERTAIN PARTS OF US?**

PRAY

**GOD, THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME NEW. I KNOW
I CAN'T FIX MYSELF; I'M TOO BROKEN IN MY SIN.
WHAT A GIFT THAT YOU'VE MADE ME A NEW
CREATION! THANK YOU FOR SANCTIFYING ME AS I
WALK WITH YOU.**



DAY FOUR

HEBREWS 12:28

Kingdoms here on earth crumble so easily. Look back at human history. Think about all the major world powers that eventually fell. Have you heard the saying, “Rome wasn’t built in a day”? What people mean when they say this is that it takes years and years to build something successful; it takes patience, determination, sacrifice, and consistency to build something that lasts. Except, Rome didn’t last. Though Rome was the major world power during Jesus’s lifetime, it eventually fell. Worldly kingdoms fall—even ones which seem invincible, even the ones we work so hard to build.

As believers, we are part of a kingdom which can never be shaken. Just think about that for a minute. The worldly kingdom you may be working so hard to build—kingdoms of success, popularity, athletic ability, even your family—won’t last forever. God’s kingdom will never crumble and fall. It will stand forever—for all eternity. Citizenship in God’s kingdom is a gift He freely gives us when we confess Christ as our Lord. But like those who build worldly kingdoms—actually, even more so—we’re called to build the kingdom of God. We’re called to invest in it and to sacrifice our own desires for it. We’re called to live as citizens of heaven here on earth so that others will see our lives and desire the hope we have in Christ. So, “offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe”—with holy respect and wonder—because you’re a part of an unshakable kingdom!

- **HONESTLY ASSESS YOUR LIFE: ARE YOU BUILDING YOUR OWN WORLDLY KINGDOM OR INVESTING IN GOD’S KINGDOM?**
- **HOW HAVE YOU SEEN YOUR OWN WORLDLY KINGDOM SHAKE OR CRUMBLE? HOW CAN YOU INVEST IN GOD’S KINGDOM?**

PRAY

GOD, I’VE WATCHED WORLDLY KINGDOMS CRUMBLE TO THE GROUND. I’VE BUILT KINGDOMS OF MY OWN WHICH DIDN’T LAST. HELP ME TO POINT OTHERS TO THE HOPE I HAVE IN YOUR UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM.



DAY FIVE

MATTHEW 18:8-9

Do you know your own weaknesses? For instance, maybe you strive to make healthy choices, but you're not able to resist a bowl of ice cream. Or maybe you need to save money, but you can't resist splurging on coffee each morning. The point is that we all have weaknesses. Even when we are strong in some areas, we are weak in others.

If you're honest, you probably know where you're weak when it comes to sin too. You know what keeps causing you to stumble in your walk with God. Let's take it a step further: You know which apps and websites open doors to other sites you shouldn't look at. You likely know which friendships tend to drag you down. You know the music that puts sinful thoughts and profanity into your mind. Yet, you keep going back. Jesus explained that we must cut off the things that keep causing us to sin. Imagine hearing Jesus speak this at the time; it was probably very alarming. And while Jesus wasn't suggesting we physically cut off our hands and feet or gouge out our eyes, He was making a radical point that applies to us today: Sin is serious, so serious that we must do whatever it takes to refuse it. We learned this week that the people in Israel kept going back to the same idols and false gods. They were caught in a cycle because they never stopped the cycle completely. They made efforts and improvements, but they didn't turn their hearts toward the Lord; they never cut off the path which led to idolatry. How often do we do the same thing? We make efforts, but we never cut off the way back to our sin. Jesus explained that we must. Those websites or apps—block them; turn over your phone. Those friendships—put boundaries in place and seek godly friendships. That music—quit listening to it and replace it with worship music. Cut off the way, and walk in a better direction.

- **WHAT KEEPS LEADING YOU AWAY? WHY DO YOU KEEP RETURNING TO IT?**
- **HOW CAN YOU TAKE REAL STEPS TO CUT OFF THE WAY TO THESE SINFUL HABITS?**

PRAY

GOD, I KNOW I HAVE WEAK AREAS. HELP ME TO SEE THEM. HELP ME TO CUT OFF THE WAY TO THE SINFUL DESIRES THAT KEEP DRAWING ME IN. I WANT TO WALK IN FREEDOM AND POINT OTHERS TO FREEDOM TOO.