

Put God First Part 10

Give Importance to God Word from the Life of King Josiah

“1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years. 2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left. 3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. 4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. 5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem. 8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. 9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem. 10 And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house: 11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed. 12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. 13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters.” (2 Chronicles 34:1-13 KJV)

King Josiah was a good example for us to reflect on how to put God and His Word and commands first and response properly to the Word of God. From 2 *Chronicles* 34 we can get the followings lessons:

1. To know God in your young age is a blessing: “1 Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem one and thirty years.” (2 *Chronicles* 34:1 KJV) Josiah the king started to reign and serve the Lord while he was eight years old, and who ultimately did marvelous things to the Lord. Therefore, for this reason be the more glad that the younger you are in seeking the Lord, then the more you are blessed in your life. I came to know God at the age of 34 years old and I always wish if God reveal to me Himself at a younger age to start to serve Him.

“2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.” 2 *Chronicles* 34:2 KJV) From what you read here about King Josiah how he did the right thing even he is young in age, then you need to change your mind setup and start to think in accordance to the Word of God that is in Bible, that your children are prudent and are in perfect age, and you need to train them, teach them and discipline them to live their life in holiness and in the fear of God, and that shall be your commitment and ministry.

2. Learn to seek God: “3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.” (2 *Chronicles* 34:3 KJV) Josiah started to seek God when he was 16 years old. * Seeking God is to know His Word, His commands and that you will discover His will. * When you start to seek God and read His Word you are drawing near to God and begin to see things better around you in the light of His Word and His will.

God is longing for His people to change their ways and serve Him only. You need to seek God and also teach your children the ways of God. You need to love the Lord and you need to desire that your whole family will serve Him only. Indeed your children and your spouse can do much for the Lord. King Josiah was only eight years old when he started to serve God and progress to seek God when he was 16 years old of age and started to do God’s will to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. when he was twenty years old. Your children are not too young to have a relationship with God; they are in the right age to be trained to live for God, to do God’s work and start serving the Lord in their young age and to progress forward to do His will.

3. Aim to make a difference: “2 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right hand, nor to the left.” (2 *Chronicles* 34:2 KJV) Josiah’s father and grandfather were wicked kings, Manasseh and Amon, and for sure he was surrounded by people who were following the wrong doings of the previous ruling kings. But he decided to follow the rightful steps of his father David who followed God. * You might be born in a family that worships idols and that follow worthless and harmful traditions, but you can and you should make a difference. * God had called you and you are never alone. If you do not turn to the right or to the left and serve other gods, the Lord God is always with you; He will empower you and will sustain you until His work is done. * Undoubtedly, wherever you are you have the position and authority in Christ and you should use that for God’s glory by doing what is right and needful.

4. Cleanup your lifestyle and the wrong lifestyle of God’s church: “3 For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images. 4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. 5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. 6 And so did he

in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about. 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.” (2 Chronicles 34:3-7 KJV) King Josiah clean up Judah and Jerusalem from the followings: *“in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images.”*

High places: Are places of worship not in the temple of God in Jerusalem where the people of God go and worship. In the high places of worship the people do what they want because the priests in the high places would agree with them just to please them and get their favor. *Don't do your own will but submit to the will of God.*

the groves: Are gardens around the places of worship to beautify the place in order to attract the people to come to them. *Don't do extra things, but use the Word of God to attract the people to come to God and to come to worship God.*

the carved images, and the molten images: Idols either human figures or animal or any created thing, figure, or certain sin like greed, love of money, immoralities, cultural and traditional practices, etc.

As you go deeper into the Word of God, you will realize that there are things and practices that you do or follow which are not in the Bible like putting up a Christmas tree, believing in Santa Claus, acknowledging Valentine Day and celebrations like mother's day, father's day, birthday parties, Christmas, New Year, food feasts, courting, dating, excessive use of media, gadgets, etc. * *These practices, which are related to worldly passions and paganism you need to forsake if you decided to put God first in your life.* When we read the Bible and there are things or ways and practices that the Word of God emphasizes and commands us to do, those things we should do and practice like observing the Sabbath by regularly going to church for worship, serving God in reaching new people, regular giving of tithes, first fruits and burnt offerings, instead of spending on birthday parties, buying Christmas tree, decorations, gadgets and gifts which are already like idols in the homes of worldly people. Let us honor God and put God first in our life by cleaning up our lifestyles, our families, and His church, and observing what God requires us to do in His Word.

“6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.” (2 Chronicles 34:6 KJV) King Josiah extended in his campaign to other places in *Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali*. In the same way we need to extend the cleaning to whatever people we can reach or to whatever area we can extend.

Further things we learn from King Josiah in the way he cleansed and purged the land from idol worship:

“4 And they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above them, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the

molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them.” (2 Chronicles 34:4 KJV) The cleansing was done in front of his eyes. He was with the workers and he supervised how the work was going on. It said, *they brake down the altars of Baalim in his presence;* means they did it in front of his eyes to be sure that is to be done properly and completely. In the same way we need to be sure that we had eradicated all the idols and remove them from the roots, like removing the mobiles and internet access from reaching into the hands of our youth and children. Supervising cleansing the laptops from games, videos, etc.

It said also *he cut down; and , he brake in pieces*, it means he was doing it by his own hands. We need to continue to do such work of cleansing the church with our own hands.

It said, *and made dust of them, and strowed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them*. He was keen to address what was done wrong upon those who did it. Those who do wrong they deserve that the wrong will be link to them and received the shame and the consequences of what they did.

“5 And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem.” (2 Chronicles 34:5 KJV) King Josiah cremated the bones of those wicked priests who were teaching and encouraging the people to worship idols. He linked to them the sin of the idol worship that they promoted people to do, and he brought shame and disgrace on them. *Cremation in the Bible is spoken upon the wicked, therefore we condemn cremation as a way for burial for the righteous people of God.*

“6 And so did he in the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali, with their mattocks round about.” 7 And when he had broken down the altars and the groves, and had beaten the graven images into powder, and cut down all the idols throughout all the land of Israel, he returned to Jerusalem.” (2 Chronicles 34:6-7 KJV) King Josiah went back home after he finished all the work round about. He used people and he was with them during the process of purging. *We need to be keen to be with the workers, doing and witnessing the process of purging to be done in a proper and complete way so we can be at peace and can go back to our places of rest.*

5. Edify and repair the temple of God: *“8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.” (2 Chronicles 34:8 KJV)* When he was 26 years old Josiah purified the temple of God and started to repair things in it. *We ourselves are the spiritual temple of God where the Holy Spirit dwell in us. We need to keep our bodies clean, our hearts and minds pure to be effective in our ministry or in the congregation that we are part of. We are called to edify one another in the body of Christ,* *“19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” (Romans 14:19 KJV)*

6. Work to resume the ministry of the Lord: *“8 Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purged the land, and the house, he sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, and Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah the son of Joahaz the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God.” (2 Chronicles 34:8 KJV)* Josiah when he was 26 years old he sent

men to repair the temple of the Lord in order for the service to restart and to continue. * There are things we need to repair and restore so that the true ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ will be resumed in His church. * Every worker in the church should persevere in order for the ministry to be resumed through reaching new people for Christ and to start new Bible studies.

7. Contribute financially to support God's work: "9 And when they came to Hilkiah the high priest, they delivered the money that was brought into the house of God, which the Levites that kept the doors had gathered of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim, and of all the remnant of Israel, and of all Judah and Benjamin; and they returned to Jerusalem." (2 Chronicles 34:9 KJV) Finance is needed to support and to carry on the work of God. "11 Even to the artificers and builders gave they it, to buy hewn stone, and timber for couplings, and to floor the houses which the kings of Judah had destroyed." (2 Chronicles 34:11 KJV) The people of God gave to the work of God. Even we today, we need to give faithfully our tithes, our offerings and our first fruits to support the work of God.

8. Serve God with faithful people: "10 And they put it in the hand of the workmen that had the oversight of the house of the LORD, and they gave it to the workmen that wrought in the house of the LORD, to repair and amend the house." (2 Chronicles 34:10 KJV) In doing God's ministry we are called to choose to work with honest and faithful people who love God and live a holy life, and who do their best to serve God and accomplish the task. "12 And the men did the work faithfully: and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the Levites, of the sons of Merari; and Zechariah and Meshullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward; and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instruments of musick. 13 Also they were over the bearers of burdens, and were overseers of all that wrought the work in any manner of service: and of the Levites there were scribes, and officers, and porters." (2 Chronicles 34:12-13 KJV)

King Josiah was faithful in seeking and doing God's will and God had rewarded him by giving him His written Word. When King Josiah did all that and to the point that he brought the money to be used for the house of God, the Lord rewarded him by giving him His Word: "14 And when they brought out the money that was brought into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD given by Moses. 15 And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. 16 And Shaphan carried the book to the king, and brought the king word back again, saying, All that was committed to thy servants, they do it. 17 And they have gathered together the money that was found in the house of the LORD, and have delivered it into the hand of the overseers, and to the hand of the workmen. 18 Then Shaphan the scribe told the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath given me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king." (2 Chronicles 34:14-18 KJV) God placed in the hand of King Josiah the Book of the Law. In the same manner, today as we seek God and willingly doing His will and serve Him and contribute to His house, the Lord had placed the Bible in our hands to read it, meditate on it and apply in our life the precepts of God.

Hilkiah the priest found a book of the law of the LORD: You may say, How come? A temple without Bible? Many churches today are traditional in their teaching and the Bible used to confirm to the pattern of this world and not to condemn or to come out from the pattern of this world. They use the Bible to pick up verses to approve their idol worship and wrong practices.

Being given the Book of the Law, King Josiah did not just keep it, as many of the people are doing now, but he let Shaphan to read to him.

Let us now learn more from what King Josiah did after hearing what is written in the Book of the Law: Let us read, meditate and obey the Word of God in the Bible and proceed to do the following:

A. Repentance: "19 And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes." (2 Chronicles 34:19 KJV) Josiah was a king but he tore his royal robes as a sign of repentance. While you are reading the Bible and you will clearly see yourselves sinning against God and breaking God's law then you must repent.

B. Come and look for Bible Study: "20 And the king commanded Hilkiah, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Abdon the son of Micah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah a servant of the king's, saying, 21 Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD, to do after all that is written in this book. 22 And Hilkiah, and they that the king had appointed, went to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum the son of Tikvath, the son of Hasrah, keeper of the wardrobe; (now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college:) and they spake to her to that effect. 23 And she answered them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Tell ye the man that sent you to me, 24 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the curses that are written in the book which they have read before the king of Judah: 25 Because they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands; therefore my wrath shall be poured out upon this place, and shall not be quenched." (2 Chronicles 34:20-25) King Josiah sent for the clarification of God's law and confirmation of God's Message. He sent for Huldah for a Bible study to explain to him more clearly. * You must be like Josiah who inquired of the Lord about what is written in the Book of the Law. * You should not wait to be invited for Bible study but must desire to come for personal Bible Study so we can teach you and confirm to you the will of God and what God wants you to do in certain situations of your life. * As you decide to put God first in your decision making, surely God will give you His clear instruction through the Bible study and the counseling sessions that we will have with you.

C. Be humble and have a responsive heart: "26 And as for the king of Judah, who sent you to enquire of the LORD, so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel concerning the words which thou hast heard; 27 Because thine heart was tender, and thou didst humble thyself before God, when thou heardest his words against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, and humbledst thyself before me, and didst rend thy clothes, and weep before me; I have even heard thee also, saith the LORD. 28 Behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the

evil that I will bring upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of the same. So they brought the king word again.” (2 Chronicles 34:26-28) King Josiah had a responsive heart; when he heard the message of the Word of God he humbled himself and he realized all the wrong doings of the people against God. Imagine, the book of the Law of God, the Bible was lost and they are unaware of it. King Josiah when he heard that they found the Book of the Law and heard what is read from it he realized the great sin of what the people did against God and the great consequences of their sins. As a result of that the fear of God fell upon him and he rent his clothes, and because of his responsive heart God promised him that he will spare him troubles.

Do you have a responsive heart, and be able to see sin of how God would see it? Is your heart would repent in front of God Almighty when the truth is revealed to you? Will you now humble yourself and truly repent of all your sins as the Holy Spirit speaks to you and minister to your heart and be turn from sin toward God?

Your response will truly make a difference; God is waiting for you and is putting you in a test to see your response; God is waiting to see your responsive heart so he will have mercy on you.

It is important that we learn to develop a heart that is responsive to the message of God that we receive in keeping with our reverence and fear to the Lord. Let us be sensible and respond promptly, and humbly accept God’s truth and favorable goodness. **“4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?” (Romans 2:4 KJV)**

D. Exhort others in our congregations: **“29 Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30 And the king went up into the house of the LORD, and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites, and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.” (2 Chronicles 34:29-30 KJV)** The king himself sent and gathered the people and read the Book of the Law and the Covenant to the people. *We learn from that as the Word of truth is revealed to us, then we must also exhort and educate others in our congregations. We should assist to impart the message of God and encourage people to always apply Biblical principles in everyday life.*

E. Renew your covenant and commitment with the Lord: **“31 And the king stood in his place, 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 with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.” (2 Chronicles 34:31 KJV)** Our covenant and commitment to God should be a radical one and against all forms of idol worship including cultural norms and traditions that contradict the Word of God in the Bible. *Now take all the idols out of your life and renew your covenant with God and start to serve the Lord wholeheartedly all the days of your life as King Josiah did.* **“33 And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in**

Israel to serve, even to serve the LORD their God. And all his days they departed not from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.” (2 Chronicles 34:33 KJV)

F. Motivate others to make covenant with God and to start to serve Him: **“32 And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers.” (2 Chronicles 34:32 KJV)** *Let us lead others in our church and congregations to renew their commitment with God to serve Him only. Let us encourage them to put God’s Law, the Word of truth as the first priority in serving God.*

My dear and beloved: Let us give importance to the written Word of God. Let us make a commitment to daily meditate on God’s Law and always consider God’s ways in every decision that we make. In this way we can keep our feet always in the right path that God wanted us to walk through. Let us pray, O Lord, **“18 Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.” (Psalm 119:18 KJV)** This is a wonderful prayer that we need to pray every day so that as we open our Bible and read the Word of God, the Lord will open our eyes and mind and we will perceive and see wonderful things in God’s perspective. When God opens our eyes, we see our sin clearly and that will lead us to repent profoundly. We renounce worldliness and corruption and throw all idols then we consecrate ourselves and put God as our first priority in life.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the Cross for my sins and rose from the dead to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for your Word that showed me clearly that I need to put you first by putting first your Word in my life by reading, meditating and obeying your Word.*

Confess your sins and renounce them. Lord I confess and renounce the following sins _____ . Lord I confess and renounce the following wrong principles and wrong priorities that came from lacking of reading God’s Word _____. Renounce all worldliness, worldly feasts and celebrations and all the traditional practices that are outside the Bibles and that take you from God’s Word.

Lord I commit myself to the principles that I learned from this message. Lord I commit myself to read daily my Bible and in sequence and in good amount. I commit myself to meditate and to obey what is written in God’s Word. I commit myself to start to seek you and to have a responsive heart and to repent of my sins when your Word and your will is revealed to me. Lord I commit myself to share what I learn with others who are far away from you to bring them the good news of Jesus. Lord help me to continue to go through the narrow way, Lord protect me from evil doers and provide all my needs. Lord give me the fruit of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, humility, self-control, patience, perseverance, long suffering, faith and faithfulness to go on and serve you in a better way reflecting the character of you Jesus in my life so others will see you while I am helping them in their troubles who need hands, efforts, and prayers.

Lord, I pray for us as a church to help us, protect us, and provide for us to go on in serving you and do your work and your will and applying your Word in full in our lives. Lord fills us once again with the Holy Spirit and enables us to evangelize and to reach new people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and with the Word of God.

Lord, we pray that you will enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church and to reach out new people and new places. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus' name, Amen.

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